

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Chester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Orthodox Meeting House

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Birmingham Orthodox Meeting House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Birmingham Rd., Southeast of the Intersection of 15087 & Pa. Rt. 926 (St. Road)

CITY OR TOWN:  
West Chester

STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42      COUNTY: Chester      CODE: 029

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Yes:  Restricted,  Unrestricted,  No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Carl G. Lenk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Birmingham Road

CITY OR TOWN:  
West Chester

STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Chester County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:  
10 North High Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
West Chester

STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN:  
Harrisburg

STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Birmingham Township Manuscript Collections, Chester County Historical Society.  
 Brinton, J.H. Diary: September 1855 - January 1872. Manuscript. Chester County Historical Society.  
 Doherty, Robert W. The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America, New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1967.  
 Furthey, J. Smith and Gilbert Cope. History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: Louis B. Everts, 1881.  
Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Quakerism at Birmingham: 1690-1940, West Chester: Birmingham Friends, 1940.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	N	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . . . . .	0 . . . . .		39 54 04	W 75 35 43	
NE	0 . . . . .	0 . . . . .				
SE	0 . . . . .	0 . . . . .				
SW	0 . . . . .	0 . . . . .				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .721 Acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY For: Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

NAME AND TITLE:  
 By: Eleanor Webster, Consultant Harvey Freedenberg, Student Aide PHMC

ORGANIZATION: Tri-County Conservancy of the Brandywine, Inc. DATE: July, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Box 141

CITY OR TOWN: Chadds Ford STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Orthodox Meetinghouse at Birmingham was erected in 1845. Members of the meeting contributed labor and materials as well as money. The serpentine stone came from Chalkley Bell's Quarries in Westtown Township. Edward Brinton contributed the lumber for the roof. The Building cost \$2310.83. It seated approximately 200 persons.

The single story building provides a contrast to the architecture of the neighboring eighteenth century Birmingham Meetinghouse. Its windows are large and the entire building is filled with light. A simple pent porch extended over each doorway on the north elevation. There were two doors in each frame.

Birmingham Orthodox Meeting rejoined with Birmingham Meeting in 1923. In 1938 the Orthodox Meeting was sold and soon thereafter it was converted into a private residence.

The interior has been altered greatly to adapt the meetinghouse to domestic requirements. Great care, however, was taken to preserve the exterior appearance of the meetinghouse. The original panelling has been used in the den.

The sheds on the eastern side of the house have been removed. On the north side two dormer windows give light to the second floor.

The north elevation illustrated in the accompanying photograph, remains the way it was, in 1845. Porches, doors, frames, windows, and doors are original. The flashing and roof has been replaced.

The Orthodox Meetinghouse is an interesting statement of the changes in Quaker architecture between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike some of the early buildings its large windows provide ample light. The proportions of the building are more classical than the early structures, and are a statement of the rural application of the classical revival in architecture, tempered by the simplicity of the Quaker faith.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE																																							
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AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate) <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Education</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Political</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Engineering</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Historic</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Industry</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Science</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Invention</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Art</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Literature</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Theater</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Commerce</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Military</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Communications</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Music</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music			<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE <p style="margin-top: 10px;">             The Hicksite-Orthodox Controversy or "Great Separation" of 1827 was a major crisis in the history of the Society of Friends of America and in the religious development of the United States in the nineteenth century. On the surface, the schism appeared to be a simple one between two factions within the Society of Friends expressing conflicting views on the sect's doctrines. While doctrinal questions did play a role in the dispute closer examination reveals that the split came about as a result of a complexity of factors within the total environment of Quaker social, economic, political and cultural life.           </p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">             In 1819, Elias Hicks addressed the Men's Meeting at Pine Street, Philadelphia with a strong anti-slavery and anti-worldly speech. Hicks was a farmer-minister from Long Island and a spellbinding orator who advocated renunciation of secular concerns on the part of Quakers. Hicks believed that man should turn his attention away from the outer world and focus upon the spirit of Christ which dwelt within his soul. The focal point of his doctrine, then, was emphasis on the concept of the "Inner Light" and rejection of external formal worship as irrelevant to salvation.           </p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">             Hicks' dogmatic approach to doctrine alienated those Friends not in sympathy with his views. In 1822, he visited the Philadelphia area again, and this time Orthodox leaders accused him of being unfit for the ministry and tried to silence him on the basis of his religious beliefs. Essentially, the Orthodox wished to reconcile Quaker practices with their activities in the secular world. Among the Friends they comprised the group which had immersed itself most completely in politics and commerce. They were searching for a rationalization of Quaker dogma which would give sanction to worldly affairs and supported, among other things, an emphasis on belief rather than overt religious behavior. The Orthodox intimated that secular success might well be used as a guide to one's spiritual progress and argued that the well-to do should occupy leadership positions within the church.           </p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">             A significant element within the Society of Friends--generally the small farmers of Chester and Delaware Counties and the less prosperous artisans of Philadelphia--rejected the Orthodox view. Their arguments against extremes of secular involvement were given expression in the preaching of Hicks, but it should not be assumed that he was in any sense the leader of an organized movement.           </p>																																							

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(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE	
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COUNTY	
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(Number all entries)

8) Significance (continued)

From 1822 to 1827, the rift between Hicksites and Orthodox increased. Neither side attempted to control its growing animosity and it seemed only a matter of time before an open break occurred.

The Yearly Meeting which convened in Philadelphia on April 16, 1827 provided the opportunity for the final separation. Each faction came to the Meeting possessed of a suspicious view of the intentions of the other. The possibilities for a reconciliation were slim. Orthodox leaders controlled almost all the positions of leadership and influence, thus, Hicksites began to explore the possibility of organizing a Yearly Meeting of their own. They began to gather in another meeting house in Philadelphia while the regular Yearly Meeting was still in session and expressed their opinion on a split in the following statement: "we feel bound to express to you...that the period has finally come in which we might look towards making a quiet retreat from this scene of confusion."

For more than a century these Quaker factions would not be reconciled. From Philadelphia, the schism quickly radiated outward into Indiana, Ohio, Maryland and New York, sparking disputes among Friends residing in these states.

Among other problems the structure of government within the Society of Friends was one of the factors which helped bring about the schism and mitigated against its resolution once it occurred. In truth, the Society lacked any institutionalized mechanism for resolving internal disputes. Its decisions were based on precedent and thus had the features of an institution which develops slowly through practice rather than along the lines of any formal procedures. The society was loosely organized and precise relationships between the various meetings were ill-defined. Technically, all Quaker decisions were supposed to be unanimous and the Friends had no means of resolving serious points of difference.

The construction of the Birmingham Orthodox Meeting House is a manifestation of the furor the Hicksites Controversy generated in the Society of Friends. For a century the feelings between the two groups of Friends were so strong that the meetings were held separately, first at either end of the meeting house and finally in separate buildings.

Robert Doherty, in The Hicksite Separation puts the conflict over meeting-houses into perspective:

"One of the crucial struggles between Hicksite and Orthodox Friends was for control of meetinghouses. A small, active, highly motivated minority could capture a meetinghouse. In some cases this actually happened. It was easier for a member of that meeting to continue to worship in the same place. If he was not highly motivated, he might be unwilling

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(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE	
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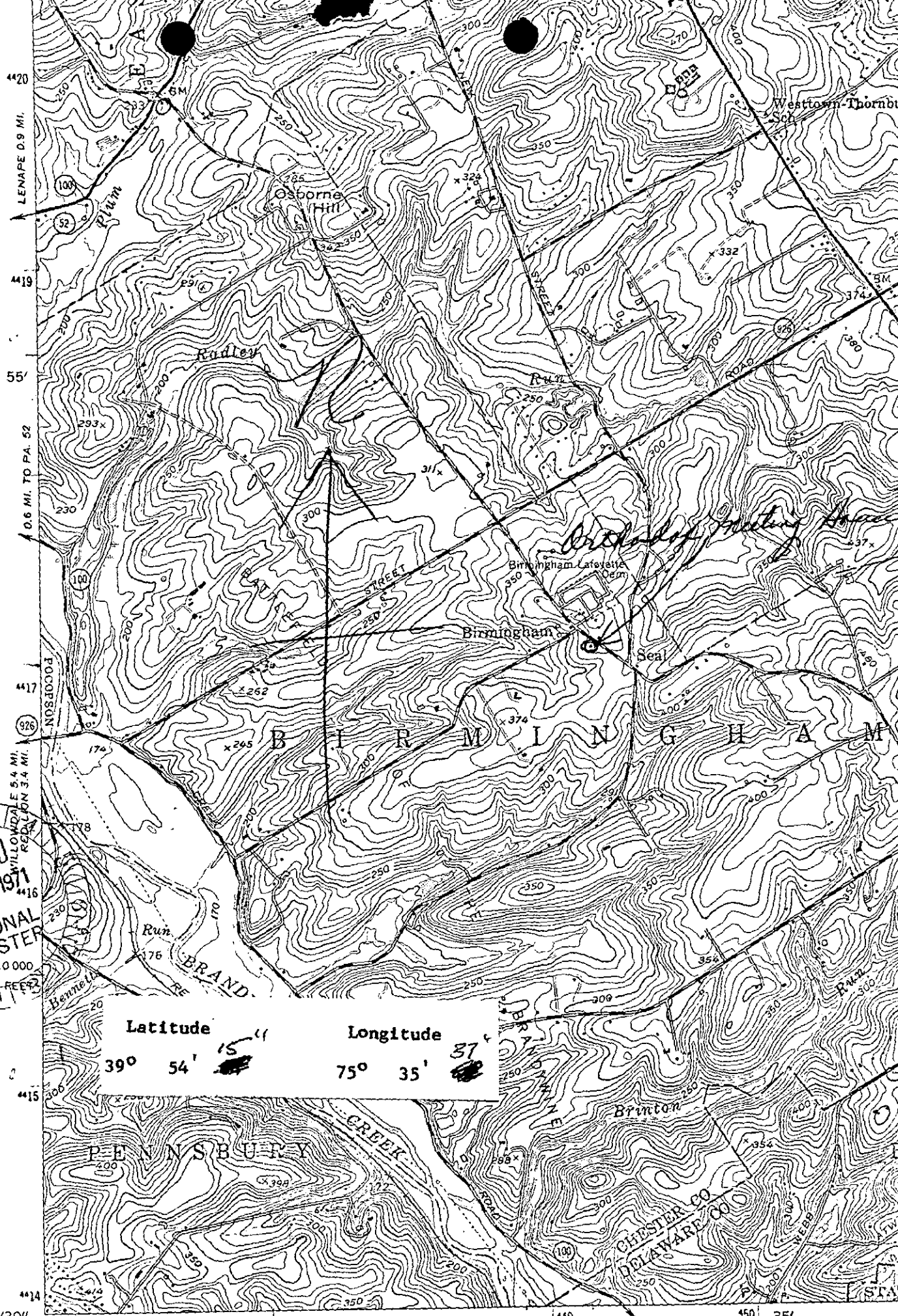
(Number all entries)

8) Significance (continued)

to put forth the effort necessary to find a new place of worship. It seems likely that possession of the meeting house brought with it the attendance of some passive members. This would partially account for the choices of Hicksite and Orthodox Friends who do not seem to fit the general characteristics of their respective groups."

The Birmingham Orthodox Meetinghouse, built in 1845, was located in an area of nominal Hicksite strength in Chester County. Evidently, Orthodox Friends were excluded from the meeting by Hicksites and found it necessary to construct their own place of worship.

The Hicksite Separation was an important religious controversy in Quaker history and graphically illustrated some of the tensions that plagued the conscience of separatist sects in the early part of this nation's history.



420  
 419  
 55'  
 417  
 416  
 415  
 414

LENAPE 0.9 MI.

0.6 MI. TO PA. 52

5.4 MI. TO LONDALE  
 3.4 MI. TO READING

210 000

RECEIVED  
 MAR 11 1971  
 NATIONAL REGISTER  
 210 000

Latitude  $39^{\circ} 54' 15''$   
 Longitude  $75^{\circ} 35' 37''$

39°52'30" 75°37'30" 47 2 600 000 FEET 49 CHADDS FORD 0.2 MI. 450' 35' W. CHESTER

West Chester Quadrangle

NE/4 West Chester 15' Quadrangle

1954

Photorevised 1960