

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE 1803 HOUSE OF EMMAUS, PENNSYLVANIA

By Richard T. Farmer, RA of Emmaus, PA

In 1803 Jacob Ehrenhardt, Jr., age 43, and Susanna Saeger Ehrenhardt finally decided to construct the house of their dreams - a house for them and their four daughters, Barbara, Anna Marie, Anna Eleonora and Susanna. The house was constructed on a knoll at the base of South Mountain, just outside the original Moravian village of Emmaus, Pennsylvania with a good view of the Moravian Church from the front door of the house. The house is oriented perfectly on the axes of true north, south, east and west with a small creek flowing by. Its Germanic architectural elements include local field stone, a finely carved wooden doorway entrance, fire place surrounds fire places in rooms, brick jack arches over the windows, and a well-crafted shutter system.

The ancestors of the Ehrenhardt's came to the new world from central Europe as a result of population growth, natural disasters, wars, inheritance practices, high taxes, debt and religious intolerance. The Ehrenhardt's of Emmaus were aristocratic farmers educated in Moravian traditions and had the benefit of becoming acclimated to the uniqueness of The New World. Although of Germanic heritage the Ehrenhardt's were influenced by the English customs that had been well established in The New World. Judging from the special architectural elements of their new house they were aware of the material culture evident in a planned Moravian community.

The plan of the House contains large interior spaces for special functions - spaces for work, sustenance, display and leisure.

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They chose to construct a house with distinguishing Federal style architectural elements. The Germanic influenced structure displayed the influence of the Renaissance that had spread to England and The New World.

- The House is two stories;
- The side-through passage provides access to prominent spaces;
- The architecture mingles English and German styles - personal possessions were also mingled (German immigrants assimilating The New World, a process of Americanization);
- The interiors are filled with an abundance of renaissance moldings and refined architectural materials;
- The construction may have been documented using refined drawings that matched a Moravian standard.

THIS WAS NOT AN ORDINARY PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FARM HOUSE.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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