

Dedication of
The SPRINGS
Mennonite Church



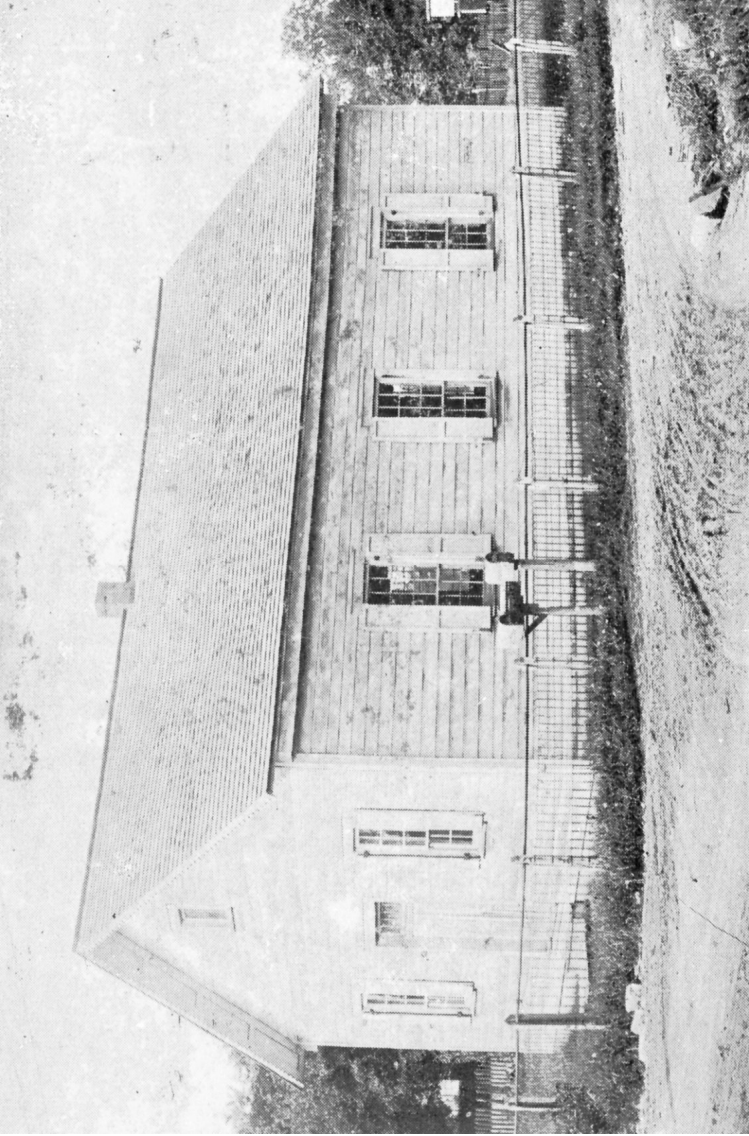
Sunday, September 12, 1954

MORNING, AFTERNOON AND EVENING

Dedicatory Service - Sunday Afternoon

- SPEAKERS -

PAUL ERB and RICHARD MARTIN



Pictured above is the original Keim or Mennonite Union Meeting House built at St. Paul in 1859 at a cost of \$535.00.

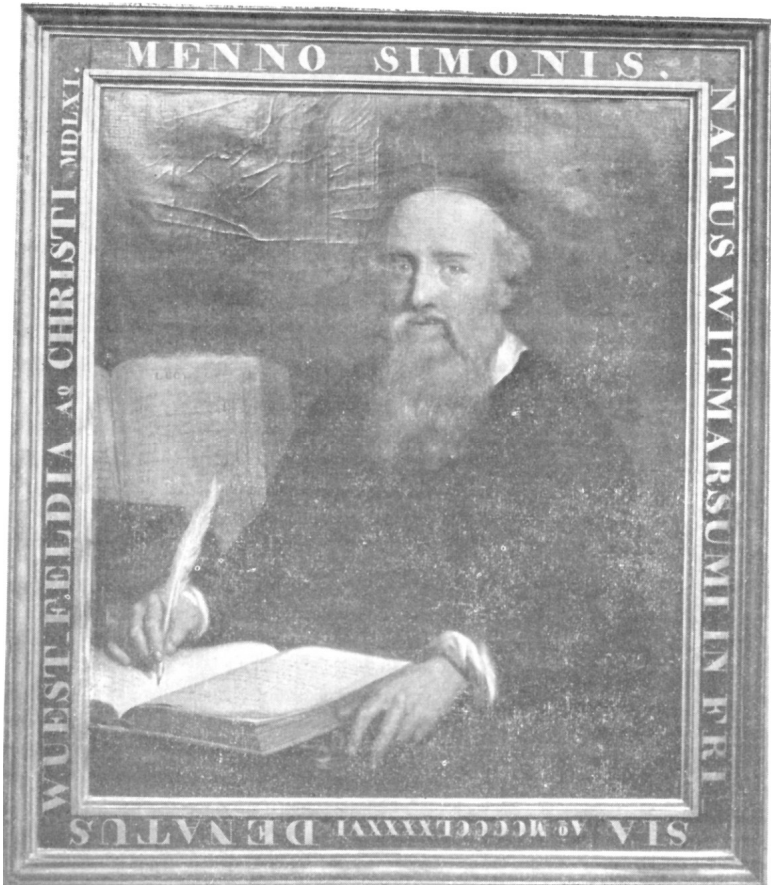
THE MENNONITE CHURCH

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1525 during the early days of the Reformation, the brotherhood of the Swiss Brethren (forerunner of the Mennonite Church) had its beginning's in Zurich, Switzerland, when Conrad Grebel, a devout young man educated in three of Europe's leading universities, broke with the contemporary reformers. Grebel with George Blaurock and Felix Manz, and their rapidly increasing followers, insisted on a more radical and complete break with the corrupt church practices of the time than did Luther and Zwingli; they aimed to found a "true church" and a "free church", governed not by the state but by the Bible alone, and particularly by the New Testament. They founded a fellowship of believers only, who were baptized as adults on confession of faith and lived a life of commitment and discipleship under the watchwords of obedience, simplicity and love.

Though they called themselves Swiss Brethren, their opponents called them Anabaptists (re-baptizers), and persecuted them without mercy because they did not join the great religious movements of the day. During the first ten years after their founding five thousand Anabaptists were put to death by burning, drowning, stoning, crucifixion, burial alive, and many other inhuman methods. Large numbers of those who were left fled into Alsace, France; into the Palatinate in Germany; and eastern Europe. Here they often hid in rugged and unsettled mountains, carrying on their worship in deep forests by night.

But here too they were not long left in peace, so they sought for religious freedom in the newly settled "Land of Promise". Their migration to America began in 1683 when William Penn and the Quakers gave them a tolerant and peaceful reception in Pennsylvania. Thereafter thousands emigrated to this state and gradually migrated westward and northward, so that today there are in North America about 250,000 members of the various branches of Mennonites, located in about forty states, and several provinces of Canada. Of this number, about 71,000 belong to the main trunk of the Mennonite Church of which the Springs congregation is a member.



MENNO SIMONS (1496-1561) for whom the Mennonites are named.

Menno Simons, although not the founder of the Mennonite Church, was such a prominent leader that this body of believers was named after him. Born in Holland four years after Columbus discovered America, Menno Simons became a Roman Catholic priest in 1524, but on January 30, 1536 he publicly renounced Romanism and shortly thereafter was baptized by Obbe Philips as a member of the Anabaptist brotherhood in Holland. About a year later Menno Simons was ordained as an Anabaptist minister, thus for conscience's sake, exchanging a life of ease and honor as a priest, for a life of homeless-homelessness, poverty, and continuous danger of violent death, with a reward of one hundred gold guilders upon his head.

The Springs Mennonite Church

The first Mennonite congregation in the Casselman Valley area was established almost 175 years ago. It had its beginning about 1780 near Meyersdale, Pennsylvania. At this time extremely primitive pioneer conditions were still prevalent in this thickly wooded district, the area of present Springs consisting of two farms; the George Folk farm with buildings near the present J. J. Otto residence and the Peter Bitsche (Beachy) farm, now the Amos J. Yoder farm. From its founding in 1780 until 1853 the small congregation, then known as "The Society of Mennonites", met in private homes and was under the wing of the Lancaster, Pa. conference.

The first minister was Jakob Seiler (later Saylor), a former Amish minister from Germany who was ordained by the Lancaster bishops to serve in the Meyersdale area. Later Peter Forrey (Fahney) and Joseph Gunty (Gundy) were ordained; but after the death of Saylor and Forrey the church declined, and from 1808 (when Gunty joined the United Brethren) until 1853 the congregation was entirely without a resident minister. During this 45-year period the waning brotherhood was served by itinerant ministers who traveled forty to sixty miles on horseback from the adjoining counties of Fayette, Westmoreland, and Cambria, as well as northern Somerset County. Among these are family names which are no longer existent in Mennonite circles of this area. There was, however, one bright spot in this period of spiritual ebb. In 1846 a Sunday School was started in the little log school house which stood on the present grounds of the Springs School, and was led for some time by Artman of Germany who conducted the opening exercises in his native language as well as classes, in German and English. Some time later this work was transplanted to the Cross Roads school several miles away under the leadership of Samuel Yutzy.

On September 6, 1853 a great boost was given the depleted brotherhood of twenty-two members when Henry H. Blauch, whom we can consider the spiritual father of the Springs Mennonite congregation, was ordained to the ministry. In 1853 John Folk was ordained as the first deacon of the church. From 1853 the membership grew so rapidly that the congregation met for services in school houses and in the German Baptist meeting house in West Salisbury. Blauch understood how to encourage organic growth in the church, and the Lord blessed his tireless efforts so that the membership grew from 22 at his ordination to about 250 in the entire Casselman Valley district at the time of his death in 1904.

By 1859 it was thought necessary to construct a church building; and the Keim meeting house, or "Mennonite Union", a structure 30 by 35 feet, costing \$535.00, was built at St. Paul. To this project the Reformed Church contributed \$200.00, and the building was shared by both Reformed and Lutheran congregations. In 1874 the Mennonite Union was the scene of a preliminary meeting looking toward the formation of a Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference, now officially known as the Allegheny Mennonite Conference. When

this body was organized in 1875 at a meeting near Johnstown, David Keim was ordained as the first bishop of the congregation at St. Paul, having been ordained as a minister about five years previously.

In 1877 it was decided to build a meeting house in the Springs vicinity, so a building committee consisting of John Folk, Samuel Folk, and Jeremiah Hershberger was appointed to direct the erection of this structure. On December 8, 1877 this committee entered into an agreement with E. J. Miller & Bro., contractors, to build a church 35 by 48 feet for a contract price of \$570.00. This did not include framing lumber and various other materials; which brought the total cost to about \$1115.00. This structure, first known as the Folk and later as the Springs meeting house, has been in constant use to this day, though growth of the congregation and the demands of an expanding program have necessitated several major changes. In 1916 the building was remodeled and lengthened at a cost of \$1963.00. and in 1925 a basement was excavated under the church at a cost of \$7000.00. Later this excavation was extended to care for an ever growing Sunday School program and the needs of the Women's Sewing Circle.

A significant barometer of growth is the Sunday School enrollment. In 1890 the enrollment was 50; by 1892 it had reached 100; by 1909, 194; by 1915, 228; by 1951 when steps were taken to investigate the possibility of providing additional facilities, the enrollment had reached 264. Another important barometer is the outreach of the congregation through its mission points and daughter churches. There are now five independent churches (Oak Grove, Casselman, Glade, Gortner, and Pinto) and nine mission points in operation, all outgrowths of the Springs congregation which furnished the initial workers and many of the first member families. At the present time more than forty positions in ten other churches and mission points are being filled by members of our brotherhood. In the last few years about twenty members of the congregation have transferred their membership to daughter congregations to serve in areas of greatest need. And so the church continues to grow, and we trust and pray that more members will be inspired to serve in the future, both in local mission fields and abroad.

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**“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set”—
Proverbs 22:28.**

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The New Church Building

For some years the facilities of the Springs Mennonite Church have proved inadequate, especially for Sunday School work. Though the present building was constructed in 1878 when the enrollment of the Sunday School was a mere “handful”, and the idea of Sunday School for all had not yet penetrated the church, the modified building was still serving in 1951 for a Sunday School enrollment of 264 and a church membership of over 300. The ordained brethren as well as other church and Sunday School leaders keenly felt the need of expanded facilities; and after much prayer and careful consideration

presented the problem to the congregation. On June 29, 1951 the congregation appointed a preliminary building committee which was to carry on investigations. Members of this body were: Roy Otto, bishop; Walter Otto, pastor; Alva R. Yoder, deacon; Cleman E. Folk, Daniel H. King, Myron G. Miller, trustees; Homer M. Yoder, treasurer; Aaron G. Miller, Sunday School superintendent; and Allen Otto, Young Peoples' Organization chairman.

This committee spent many hours in consideration of the suggestions of the brotherhood; inspected many churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Ohio; and discussed two alternatives: (1) remodeling the old church building, or (2) building a larger structure better suited to the needs of the congregation. The first possibility was soon dismissed as impractical, since it would have been far too costly for the benefits derived, so plans were made for the financing of a new church building to be constructed on a large plot of ground offered by Mr. and Mrs. Allen J. Wengerd, members of the Springs congregation.

On May 27, 1952 the committee set up on the church parking lot miniature church buildings with the ground plans of two possible sites, and also presented a sketch of general architectural plans for the new building. On June 1, 1952, at a full meeting of the congregation, the committee recommended that a new church be erected in accordance with the preliminary plans, and that a sum of \$25,000.00 in cash and pledges be available before the project be started. On June 28 these recommendations were accepted by a large majority; and by October 19, as a result of active solicitation on the part of the building committee, the above-named goal was reached. On February 6, 1953 the preliminary committee was elected as a permanent committee to take full charge of the erection of the church. This committee was then organized with Walter Otto, chairman; Aaron G. Miller, vice-chairman; and Homer M. Yoder, secretary-treasurer.

The committee lost no time in getting the work started. Already in the fall of 1952 drainage work was completed. Excavation for the footers was started on May 27, 1953 and by the latter part of July the basement wall was completed and the steel floor joists placed. The cornerstone was laid in the evening of July 29 in connection with a special service at which the guest speaker was Paul Erb, Scottsdale, Penna., editor of the Gospel Herald, official organ of the Mennonite Church. By winter, brick and carpenter work were sufficiently completed so that the building could be closed, and soon thereafter the furnaces were installed to facilitate wiring, plumbing and plastering before spring. On May 28 the cabinet-maker began the finishing of the woodwork to blend with the new pews and other furniture. Since a variety of artisans and skilled men are found among the brotherhood, much of the actual work was done by members of the congregation, while ten Mennonite firms and individuals were among those who furnished materials.

The building committee has deeply appreciated the splendid interest and sacrifice of the brotherhood and friends of the church in making the building dream a reality. There has been no solicitation

Dedication Program

September 12, 1954

MORNING

9:30—Sunday School.

The congregation will convene at the old church for a final period of worship and fellowship before moving as a body to the new church.

11:00—Sermon—Richard Martin, Elida, Ohio.

AFTERNOON

2:30—Song Service and Devotion

Dedicatory Sermon—Paul Erb, Scottdale, Pa.

Litany of Dedication

Dedicatory Prayer

Dedication Offering

Introductions and Responses

Benediction

EVENING

7:30—Song Service and Devotion

Greetings from Guests

Sermon—Richard Martin, Elida, Ohio

Special music will be furnished during the day by members of the Mennonite Crusaders, Harrisonburg, Va.

Litany of Dedication

Minister: To the glory of God the Father, by whose favor we have built this house; to the honor of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior; and through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the worship of God in prayer and praise; for the preaching of the Word; for the observance of Christian ordinances; for the comfort of those who mourn:

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the building of Christian homes; for the nurturing of children; for the guidance of youth; for the encouragement of Christian fellowship.

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For a testimony in this community to the saving power of Jesus Christ; for the knowledge of sins forgiven; for hearts, filled with love and missionary zeal to prepare souls for the return of Christ who will give us a future home in heaven;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the faith of our forefathers and as a witness of faith to future generations in this community.

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

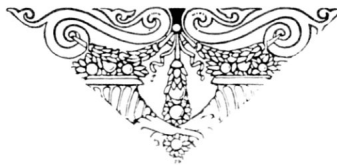
Minister and Congregation: We the people of this church and congregation, now consecrating ourselves anew, dedicate this entire building in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

for funds from sister congregations, and the local brotherhood has given unstintingly of labor, materials, and funds. The Sunday School, the Youth Fellowship, the Womens' Sewing Circle and other organizations of the church have contributed liberally and worked hard and long to give the program a boost. Especially does the entire congregation, and particularly the other members of the building committee, appreciate the contribution of the pastor who not only served as chairman of the building committee, but also since May 1953 has given full time to the project as construction foreman. It can be truthfully said that the teamwork and cooperation of the membership has reached an all time high, and that the common goal involved in the building program has drawn us all closer together.

Not only has the membership of the local congregation put its shoulders to the wheel, but other members, of the Springs community, as well as good friends of the church in neighboring communities, have given invaluable aid in the building program. These include businessmen, public minded citizens, descendants of late members of the congregation, friends of our friends, and in general people who believe in the tremendous value of the church in today's, sin cursed world. To all who have given so much time, materials, and funds as well as prayers for the success of the project, the building committee and the congregation extend a most heart felt vote of thanks. It has been a real pleasure to feel the ties of church brotherhood and community fellowship strength through this mutual effort and sacrifice. It is our hope and prayer that the new church may truly be dedicated to the cause of Christ, not only in word on September 12, 1954, but in vital life and witness in years to come.

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“So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work.”—Nehemiah 4:6.



INTERESTING FACTS CONCERNING

The Congregation and the Building Program

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH IN THE CASSELMAN VALLEY

- 1780—Establishment of the first Mennonite congregation in the area near Meyersdale.
- 1784—Peter Bitsche (Beachy) settled on farm part of which is now owned by Amos J. Yoder.
- 1788—George Folk settled on farm and erected building's near present J. J. Otto residence.
- 1790—Jacob Seiler identified himself as a minister of the society called Mennonites in his will of Feb. 20.
- 1846—Sunday School started in log school at Springs.
- 1853—Henry H. Blauch ordained minister.
- 1853—Church services held in German Baptist meeting house at West Salisbury.
- 1856—John Folk ordained first deacon.
- 1859—Keim meeting house (or Mennonite Union) built at St. Paul
- 1870—David Keim ordained minister.
- 1874—Preaching services begun in school houses in Maryland.
- 1875—Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference organized.
- 1875—David Keim ordained first Mennonite bishop in Casselman Valley.
- 1878—Folk meeting house built at Springs.
- 1879—Annual meeting of Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference held at Springs first time.
- 1889—Casselman meeting house built near Grantsville, Md.
- 1891—First quarterly business meeting held.
- 1892—First weekly teacher meetings held Saturday evenings.
- 1893—Keim meeting house (or Mennonite Union) at St. Paul sold to Lutherans.
- 1896—Reorganization of "Bible Reading" (later known as Young People's Meeting). Original date of organization not known.
- 1899—Mission stations established at Gortner and at Forks (now Glade) in Maryland.
- 1900—Oak Grove church built west of Grantsville, Md.
- 1901—Parsonage built at Springs.
- 1904—Death of Henry H. Blauch, the last minister to preach in German.
- 1905—Name changed from Folk to Springs Mennonite Church.
- 1908—Glade church built near Bittinger, Md.
- 1908—A number of Springs families move to Pinto, near Cumberland, Md.
- 1910—Preaching services begun at Pinto, Md.
- 1910—First city mission worker from Springs.
- 1913—Sunday School and church services every Sunday morning. Church previously held alternate Sunday evenings.
- 1915—Springs Sewing Circle organized.
- 1916—Springs church repaired, enlarged and rededicated.
- 1917—Pinto accepted by conference as mission station.
- 1918—First relief worker sent to Europe under Friends' Service Committee.
- 1921—Laughlin Mission opened in Maryland.
- 1924—Midweek prayer meetings begun at Springs Church.
- 1926—Church building constructed at Pinto, Md.
- 1930—First services at Lagear Mission. Evening meetings at Laughlin Mission.
- 1931—First services at Bear Hill Mission in Maryland.
- 1935—First services at Maynadier Mission in Maryland.
- 1936—First service and dedication of Fairview Mission in Maryland.
- 1938—First services held at Blackhawk Mission (later Meadow Mountain), in Maryland.
- 1938—First services and dedication of Dry Run Mission in Maryland.
- 1939—Lagear Mission taken over by Glade congregation.
- 1943—Laughlin Mission taken over by Church of the Brethren.
- 1944—Daughters of Dorcas sewing circle organized.
- 1944—Sunshine Girls sewing circle organized.
- 1946—Springs Church redecorated. New pews and furniture dedicated.

- 1948—Dedication of Meadow Mountain Mennonite Church, near Swanton, Md.
 1948—Mennonite Youth Fellowship organized at Springs.
 1948—First voluntary service worker from Springs congregation.
 1951—First relief worker sent to Europe under Mennonite Central Committee.
 1953—Dedication of church at Red Run in Maryland.
 1953—Mission work started in homes at White's Creek near Listonburg, Pa.
 1953—First meetings held in church building at Bear Creek in Maryland.

Ordained Men of The Congregation

Henry H. Blauch, Minister—1853	Noah E. Miller, Minister and Bishop—
John Folk, Deacon—1856	1912
Jonas Blauch, Minister—1862	William E. Haning, Deacon—1929
David Keim, Minister—1870	Roy Otto, Minister—1930
W. C. Livengood, Deacon—1874	Simon J. Maust, Deacon—1931
David Keim, Bishop—1875	Resley Tressler, Minister—1937
David Maust, Minister—1882	Roy Otto, Bishop—1938
Daniel H. Bender, Minister—1887	Alva R. Yoder, Deacon—1943
Harry M. Gelnett, Minister—1887	Walter Otto, Minister—1944
Gideon D. Miller, Minister—1891	Darrel Otto, Minister—1949
Daniel W. Maust, Deacon—1891	Paul E. Bender, Minister—1949
Edward Miller, Minister—1899	

Facts and Figures or the Building Project

The building lot donated by Mr. and Mrs. Allen J. Wengerd has a road frontage of 283 1/2 feet with a depth of 278 feet. The building is of brick and hollow tile construction, having a 13 inch wall, with load bearing tile partitions in the basement. The size of the building is 42 by 100 feet and with the balcony there is a seating capacity of 400 persons. The main floor and basement floor are of concrete covered with asphalt tile. Two oil fired furnaces are used for the heating system; the one is hotwater radiant heat in the basement floors; the other is steam heat for the main floor. The ceilings are of acoustical plaster on metal rib lath while the walls are plaster on hollow tile. The entire basement is lined with pale green glazed tile and the wood paneling, door trim and doors are of mahogany. Seven fabricated steel trusses are used for the roof construction and the roof is asbestos shingles.

Materials used during the construction included approximately—

91,000 brick	26 tons plaster
22,000 tile	37,000 board feet framing lumber
1.342 tons limestone chips	4 miles electrical wire
204 tons sand for building	2/3 mile electrical conduit
86 tons sand for walks	8000 tons ground fill for parking
853 bags cement for building	area
952 bags mortar cement	5,434 gallons oil for parking area
663 bags cement for walks	

It is almost impossible to give due recognition to all who have labored so faithfully during these fifteen months of actual construction to make possible this church building for the Springs community. The building committee is grateful not only for the splendid work done by the brick masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, and others, but also for their part in maintaining a most genial atmosphere during the entire time of construction.

SUPPLIERS of MATERIALS

FOR THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING

- ART GLASS COMPANY, CRESAPTOWN, MD.—Window Glass
- BARKLEY LUMBER AND BUILDERS SUPPLY, LISTONBURG, PA.—Doors
- SAM BEACHY & SONS, SALISBURY, PA.—Arc Welding
- BETHLEHEM STEEL COMPANY, POTTSTOWN, PA. — Floor Joists and Steel-Tex
- C. A. BRILHART LUMBER CO., SCOTTDALE, PA.—Plaster, rib lath and insulation
- CAMDEN ARTOCRAFT COMPANY, CHICAGO, ILL.—Curtains
- CAMERADIO INCORPORATED, PITTSBURGH, PA.—Public Address System
- CLAPPER'S, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Roofing, Doors, Lumber, etc.
- FIHOFF CONCRETE PRODUCTS, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Concrete Treads
- NATHAN GLOTFELTY, ACCIDENT, MD.—Lumber
- HEIPLE SUPPLY COMPANY, SOMERSET, PA.—Plaster
- HISER SUPPLY COMPANY, CUMBERLAND, MD.—Eaves Trough and Conductor Pipe
- JOHNSON MEMORIAL COMPANY, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Corner Stone, Keystone, Sills and Caps
- JOHNSON & SON, BERLIN, PA.—Carpeting
- KEYSTONE LIME COMPANY, SPRINGS, PA.—Limestone Gravel
- KEYSTONE LUMBER COMPANY, PITTSBURGH, PA.—Mahogany Lumber
- DANIEL H. KING, SPRINGS, PA.—Lumber
- L & Y PLUMBING COMPANY, PINTO, MD.—Plumbing and Heating
- LILLER BROTHERS, CUMBERLAND, MD.—Oil for Parking Area
- MILLER BROTHERS, SPRINGS, PA.—Ventilating System
- HUBERT E. MILLER, SPRINGS, PA.—Lumber
- JOE MILLER & SON, DAVIDSVILLE, PA.—Window and Door Frames—Roof Work
- MILLER MACHINE WORKS, SPRINGS, PA.—Steel Roof Trusses, Railing, Steel, etc.
- ASA ORENDORF, BITTINGER, MD.—Lumber
- OTTO BRICK & TILE WORKS, SPRINGS, PA.—Brick and Tile
- GLEN OTTO, SPRINGS, PA.—Paint
- DICK REICH, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Asphalt Tile Floors
- CLARENCE RODAMER, SPRINGS, PA.—Sand, Cement, etc.
- ROCKWOOD MANUFACTURING CO., ROCKWOOD, PA.—Hardware
- SAUDER MANUFACTURING CO., ARCHBOLD, OHIO—Pews and Furniture
- SEABER ART & DECORATING CO., WESTERNPORT, MD.—Painting and Decorating
- SOMERSET DOOR & COLUMN CO., SOMERSET, PA.—Outside Doors
- PAUL H. STRENG, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Concrete Floor
- S. S. SUSSER, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Chairs
- ALLEN STANTON, BITTINGER, MD.—Lumber
- SHIPLEY HARDWARE COMPANY, MEYERSDALE, PA.—Miscellaneous Materials
- TRESSLER BROTHERS, SPRINGS, PA.—Water Well
- TRI-STATE ELECTRICAL SUPPLY COMPANY, CUMBERLAND, MD.—Wiring Material and Fixtures
- WILSON & PUGH COMPANY, CUMBERLAND, MD.—Hardware



In the above picture is the Springs Mennonite Church as it appeared soon after its construction in 1878. The bottom picture shows the church as it appears today, several changes and additions having been made throughout the years.



