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Space and Power in Eighteenth-Century Ephrata, Pennsylvania

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SPACE AND POWER IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EPHRATA,
PENNSYLVANIA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Courtney Birkett

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Ephrata was an eighteenth-century religious community in south-central Pennsylvania. For years it has been assumed that the placement and nature of the communal buildings was dictated by mystical concerns. However, documentary evidence of the events that took place within the community and the prominent individuals involved, combined with archaeological evidence of the exact locations of each of the main buildings, suggests an alternative explanation. The built environment of Ephrata was shaped not only by ideological concerns but also by the efforts of groups or individuals to illustrate power relationships in the community and to exercise control over the society.

SPACE AND POWER IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EPHRATA,
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ephrata today is a small town in Pennsylvania, not far from the better-known metropolis of Lancaster. On the outskirts of town is a little-known historic site, now called Ephrata Cloister but once known simply as Ephrata. This religious community, founded by German mystics in the eighteenth century, was the original Ephrata, after which the town was later named.

Many German religious sects were in existence both in Germany and in America at the time of Ephrata's founding, and the community shared some beliefs found elsewhere in both countries as well as incorporating some of the idiosyncratic beliefs of its founder, Conrad Beissel. The Ephrathites were Anabaptists, practicing adult baptism, and Sabbatarians, keeping Saturday as their sabbath rather than Sunday. Besides being of a mystical turn of mind, striving for communion with God, they were also eschatological, expecting the imminent second coming of Christ, and, at least ideally (reality could be a bit different), very ascetic, eschewing most creature comforts and living hardworking, sleep-deprived, vegetarian lives. There were three orders of community members: the celibate brothers, the celibate sisters, and the married householders who lived on farms outside the community proper but shared in worship with the celibate orders who formed the core of the society.

Several contemporary documents survive describing Ephrata and the lives of the brothers and sisters. Principal among these is the official community chronicle, the *Chronicon Ephratense*, a somewhat idealized history written by Brothers Lamech and Agrippa (Brother Peter Miller). The diary of Ezechiel Sangmeister, a brother who grew disenchanted with life in Ephrata and left the community for a time, tells another side of the story. Sangmeister has acquired a reputation as something of a malcontent, surely in part due to his constant griping, but probably also as a reaction on the part of later readers to his less than ideal portrait of Ephrata. Besides these two major sources, many travelers' accounts survive as well, as Ephrata was something of a tourist attraction in its heyday. Many people were fascinated by the way of life of this unusual sect and were eager to see it firsthand.

The celibate orders died out in the late eighteenth century and the married householders took over the property, later transferring it to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Despite the disappearance of the original Ephrata, interest in the community did not wane. Many later authors have examined it, in whole or in part, with varying degrees of scholarship. One influential turn of the century writer, Julius Friedrich Sachse, did much to shape future perceptions. He drew together a great body of material, but did so rather uncritically, incorporating a considerable amount of legend in addition to historical information and perpetuating a number of folkloric ideas that still trap the unwary. E. G. Alderfer's late twentieth century work on the Ephrata phenomenon is probably the best and most comprehensive of the later works, although not without a few flaws, such as occasional over-reliance on Sachse.

To add to the documentary record, a considerable amount of archaeological work has been done at Ephrata, beginning with investigations conducted over several field seasons in the 1960s. Interest was renewed during work in preparation for the installation of a fire suppression system in the 1980s, and from 1993 to 2003 excavations were conducted on the property every summer.

I initially became interested in Ephrata after working there during two field seasons, as both a field school student and as a volunteer. Later, when I began to look at the landscape, I was intrigued by the spatial relationship between Bethaus and Kedar, which were oriented at odd angles to each other. I tried to find some explanation for it. By the time I decided the reason was impossible to find, I had begun to think about other facets of the landscape, such as the way the arrangement of the buildings illustrated issues and relationships in the community that were never explicitly stated in words. During my research, I discovered that others had had similar ideas. Janet White, in particular, attributed some aspects of Ephrata's layout to power struggles in the settlement (2000:67-70). However, she approached the issue mainly as an architectural historian. While she presents valid arguments, this line of thinking can be extended to reveal more about the expression of power, which was not necessarily limited to her focus, the time of the Eckerlin/Beissel conflict (a divisive power struggle between Beissel and a faction of brothers over control of the settlement and its way of life). Here I have combined the analysis of historical records with recent archaeological findings, following Rapoport (1990) in applying the idea that the built environment at Ephrata was at least partly determined by power relations among the inhabitants. Historical documents used include the primary and

secondary sources mentioned above (the *Chronicon*, Sangmeister, outside observers' accounts, etc.), and the reports from the past ten years of archaeological work in particular, as well as those from previous investigations, were of great help.

Little of the original Ephrata remains today, but the few buildings that still stand are quite impressive. Once nearly a dozen large communal structures stood on the property. Built almost entirely of wood, their size and appearance represented a unique architectural tradition in the American colonies. These communal dormitories and *saals* (buildings used for worship services) have long captured the attention of writers. Several have asserted that there was some significance behind the arrangement of the buildings and their relationships to each other. Most believed it was some kind of mystical meaning, reflecting a particular strain of Ephrata's thought, that was illustrated in the shapes and sizes of the structures and in the angles at which they met each other. Despite little in the way of evidence, the "mystical angles" idea in particular was popular with most authors throughout the past century, reflecting these same authors' fascination with the mystical side of Ephrata in general as well as their emphasis on an idealized portrait of a harmonious, spiritual community.

There are indeed some mystical elements in Ephrata's built environment. However, most of the placements of and relationships between buildings can be shown to have more practical, down-to-earth explanations. I have endeavored to show that the types and designs of the buildings constructed at Ephrata, as well as their locations within the community and relationships to each other, were not only reflections of the community's ideals but also, and possibly to an even greater degree,

reflections of power relations and social control within the settlement. This falls in line with the theories of thinkers such as Rapoport (1990) who posit connections between the spatial arrangement of communities and concepts such as status and power within the community.

Anthropology has long been interested in expressions of power and social control in societies, which affect nearly all aspects of life, from relationships between different social segments to material culture and spatial patterning. The more sites at which these elements are understood, the more general principles can be determined and applied to new sites, illuminating them in turn. While Ephrata is not quite like any other group, it shares some similarities with other intentional communities and sectarian religious groups, and some similar themes can be discerned.

Though they held different religious beliefs, the Shakers, like the Ephrathites, believed in equality among members. Archaeology is still working to answer the question of whether this equality truly held in practice (Starbuck 1998:7), but historical and archaeological evidence does demonstrate the intersection of ideology, architecture, and some minor forms of control. Among the Shakers, men and women kept for the most part to their separate spheres, even having individual doors to buildings for each sex. Evidence for these segregated doorways shows up in the archaeological record (Starbuck 1990:159). The ideals of straightness and rightness are also visible in the Shaker emphasis on cutting food square, following straight paths and turning corners at right angles instead of cutting across diagonally, and even lying straight in bed (Hayden 1976:69). Ideology and spatial expressions were closely associated in Shaker communities.

The Quakers, although not an intentional community separate from the rest of the world, did have their own meeting houses. Like Shaker buildings, colonial Quaker meeting houses often had separate doors for the sexes, who worshipped together but were afterward divided by a partition while business was conducted (Garfinkel 1995:81). In addition to this, in some meeting houses, curiously enough, there existed raised ministers' galleries, in seeming contradiction to the Quaker idea of egalitarianism in worship (Garfinkel 1995:79). Both of these features call into question just how egalitarian colonial Quakers really were, with some members raised above others during services and men and women being separate and not necessarily equal. The professed ideals and the practice do not entirely match up, not unlike the situation at Ephrata.

The Amana colonies in Iowa were not egalitarian and not as obviously differentiated from the outside world, but space in their towns was manipulated to keep outsiders on the outskirts and turn the inhabitants inward toward the community. While public streets diverted outside vehicle traffic away from residential areas, "foot streets" in the interiors of blocks focused the residents' attention in that direction. In two of the Amana towns, Main Amana and South Amana, the only access to the churches and schools was by these foot streets, thus protecting the central communal institutions in the interiors of the blocks. The housing arrangement also permitted easy supervision of individuals by other members of the community, influencing people to act in socially acceptable ways (Hayden 1976:238).

The spatial demonstration of power is visible in societies other than intentional communities. On antebellum plantations, field hands' housing was

located not only with consideration to easy access to the fields, but also in such a way that the plantation owners and overseers could easily supervise activity around the living quarters (Orser 1988:324). The same arrangement appears even in postbellum situations involving tenant occupation and labor (Orser 1988:329). Such landscape and housing plans are found internationally among plantations, not only in the southern United States but also in Jamaica, for instance (Delle 1998:159). This housing arrangement, intended to increase productivity among laborers who were constantly being observed, also emphasized the power of the watcher over the powerless watched.

In colonial Annapolis, space was also arranged with an eye to demonstrations of social power. The statehouse and state church were each placed on hills, with streets radiating out from around both of them. Both the elevation and the central location of each of these buildings were statements about institutional power in the city (Leone 1988:243). The formal gardens of rich Annapolitans, as well, reflected ideas of the social order. Believing that society, like nature, followed natural laws, gardeners, in demonstrating their understanding of the laws of nature, also demonstrated their understanding of social workings and, to their way of thinking, justified their “natural” high position in the social order (Leone 1988:255).

In many communities, therefore, whether small or large, religious or secular, utopian or not, there are visible links between patterns in the community layout or in the architecture and in patterns of social interaction.

But back to Ephrata. Until recently, most commentators have been content to treat the community from a historical perspective, analyzing only the events reported

in the primary sources. Lately White (2000) and Warfel (2001, 2002), although coming from different disciplines, both begin to look beyond the historical narrative to a fuller understanding of Ephrata. Earlier writers were hampered by the limited archaeology done at the times of their writing and therefore by an incomplete knowledge of the built environment in which the brothers and sisters lived. The combination of archaeology with use of the documentary evidence enables new kinds of insights somewhat at variance with the harmonious portrait painted by Ephrata's apologists. It now appears that a number of members of the community were not as peaceable or obedient as formerly believed.

Only fairly recently have sufficient data become available to demonstrate that issues of power and control in the community were reflected in its structures. The historical documents are full of incidents where people or groups within the Ephrata community came into conflict, despite the fact that this was contrary to what the inhabitants believed in and endeavored to achieve. The fact that Ephrata was not without strife has long been known. However, the documents are rather vague on the locations of many of the buildings, some of which were popularly believed, after their demolition, to have stood somewhere other than where they actually did. Only within the last decade has archaeology revealed the true locations of some of the most prominent and significant structures. With this knowledge, combined with the documentary knowledge that particular buildings were associated with particular influential individuals and factions, some interesting relationships can be discerned. Groups' relationships with one another are visibly illustrated more permanently in architecture. The Zionitic Brotherhood elevated on its hill, the opposing faction of

Beissel and the sisters grouped together in the valley, and, in a later phase, Beissel's final cabin overlooking all three dormitories of his loyal subjects, all reflect efforts to assume power, to maintain power, or to exercise control over parts or all of the society.

The Ephrathites were spiritual, but they were also human. The structures they left behind stand (or stood, as the case may be) as mute testimony to this human side of a religious community that had its share of interpersonal problems. More worldly interpretations of the cultural landscape round out the portrait of this early American intentional community that struggled to make its ideals reality.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EPHRATA

Born in the late seventeenth century in Germany, Georg Conrad Beissel was trained as a baker but took a lively interest in religious and mystical matters. His involvement with the religious underground eventually led to banishment from the Palatinate, and in 1720 he left Germany for America. He ultimately settled in Pennsylvania, where he became involved once again with sectarian religious groups.

In 1732 Beissel left the congregation he was leading and departed to live in the wilderness at what would become the site of Ephrata. At the time the place was known by its Delaware Indian name, Koch-Halekung (Serpents' Den), which survives in the name of Cocalico Creek. When he arrived, Beissel found a solitary brother, Elimelech, who gave Beissel the house he had built there (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:64).

For a time Beissel lived the life of a hermit, writing hymns and cultivating his spiritual thought. He was not able to enjoy his solitude for long. After a few months several members of his previous congregation joined him. Three brothers built a second house for themselves and a third for two sisters, Anna and Maria Eicher, who had been with Beissel since 1726. Their sense of propriety impelled them to build the sisters' house on the other side of the creek (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:65-

66). (The Eichers had already “caused much remark in the country” by leaving their father’s house to join Beissel, “especially since [Beissel] had to be with them very much” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:34).)

Beissel was not completely happy with this state of affairs, saying that the increase of the community was “against his conscience” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:64). However, he was unable to stop the flow of the “awakened” from the surrounding regions who came to join the settlement. A community grew up, without any plans regarding the future, which the inhabitants called “das Lager der Einsamen,” the Camp of the Solitary (Alderfer 1985:50).

In 1735 the first building intended for communal use was built and named Kedar. Four women, calling themselves the Order of Spiritual Virgins, took up residence on an upper floor, while four men were quartered in a lower story, signaling the beginning of a shift from solitary life in individual cabins to a more monastic, communal existence. Besides providing living quarters, Kedar was used for ritual functions, such as the communal “love feast” or *agape*, a ritual meal imitating the practice of the early Christians, and midnight watches or *Nachtmetten* (night meetings), held at the hour at which the congregation expected the advent of the Last Judgment. At first these meetings lasted four hours; when this proved too much they were shortened to two. In the autumn of 1735 all the solitary anchorites who had been living scattered in the area moved into the settlement (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:77-78). This is possibly also the year the first gristmill was built. Its flour, originally intended only for the use of the settlement, developed such a reputation that outsiders began to purchase it (Alderfer 1985:58).

The unsegregated living situation had increased the already strong disapproval of the Camp's neighbors, for "no one would believe that matters could go on properly thus" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:76). Soon a widower by the name of Sigmund Landert offered to fund the building of another prayer house, so that Kedar could be used solely as the women's convent, in exchange for the reception of himself and his two daughters into the settlement (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:79). The building, called Bethaus (prayer house), was built, along with an adjoining dwelling for Beissel, but after a few years both buildings were razed and Beissel moved in with the Spiritual Virgins (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:80).

In 1738 work began on a convent for the men upon a hill called Zion, from which the eventual occupants took the name of the Zionitic Brotherhood. Also at this time the Camp of the Solitary received the name Ephrata from Beissel, who said that "here his Rachel, for whom he had served so many years, was buried, after she had borne to him Benoni, the child of anguish" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:108, cf. Gen 35:18-19).

Ephrata was now essentially a monastic community, consisting of celibate sisters, the Spiritual Virgins, under Prioress Maria Eicher; celibate brothers, the Zionitic Brotherhood, under Prior Onesimus; and married householders, who lived outside the settlement but worshiped with the celibate orders. The transition to monastic life was not easy for everyone. At first the brothers thought they had lost their freedom, and several of the sisters, when the prioress was appointed over them, ran away (but later returned) (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:109-110).

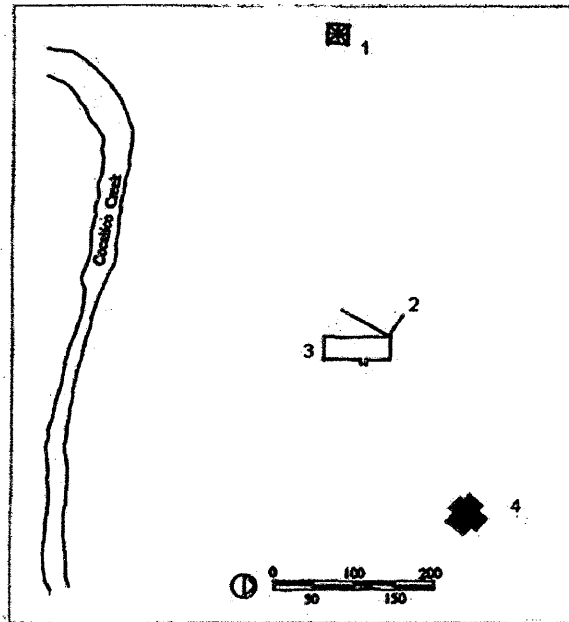


Figure 1: Ephrata in 1738. 1=Zion, 2=Bethaus, 3=Kedar, 4=almonry (Modified from White 2000).

For a while most of the settlers used the prayer house on Zion, leaving Kedar to the sisters, but soon Beissel decided that the congregation needed its own prayer house, as using Zion would “only be to its disadvantage.” Accordingly, a new prayer house was built in the valley below Zion in the summer of 1741 and named Peniel after the place where Jacob received the name Israel (Gen 32:30) (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:127).

There were four brothers – by blood as well as by faith – in the settlement: Emanuel, Samuel, Israel, and Gabriel Eckerlin, who went by the monastic names of Elimelech, Jephune, Onesimus, and Jothan respectively. The Eckerlins were very influential among the brothers, and their plans for what Ephrata should become were

drastically different from Beissel's intentions for his community. It was only a matter of time before the two factions came into conflict.

As Prior in Zion, Onesimus cut sleeping hours and increased the workload of both solitary orders until the brothers felt like slaves and wished for the old solitary cabins and the autonomy that went with them (Alderfer 1985:88). The Prior also became embroiled in a power struggle with Beissel, who eventually needed the help of the other brothers to put him back in his place (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:170).

It appears as though Beissel deliberately set Onesimus up for censure by the community. Beissel had special ritual robes made for the Prior, in contrast to his own simplicity, gave him the title "The Brother," and even offered him his own house near Kedar. This last did not please the sisters, who resented Onesimus's attempts to bring them under his power. For most of a year Beissel stayed quietly in retirement while the Prior led services in Peniel (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:173-174).

The Eckerlins and their supporters also set about making improvements (in their eyes, at least), to the workings of the Ephrata economy. Prior Onesimus managed to have about 240 acres granted in his name to be held in trust for the brotherhood. The Eckerlins also added a second gristmill, a sawmill, a fulling mill, and mills for linseed oil and paper. Ephrata was soon becoming an economic force, with markets in Philadelphia and Wilmington and a reputation for high-quality products, all in contrast to Beissel's idea of Christian poverty (Alderfer 1985:90).

Under the brothers' regime, cultivation of the land was intensified and livestock were brought into the community, which had previously rejected what it

regarded as animal slavery. Soon the celibate orders were working long hours, with sisters as well as brothers laboring in the mills. Outside help was also hired. With the hectic pace of this little industrial revolution, there was no time left for contemplation or mysticism, some of the ideas at the foundation of the Ephrata community (Alderfer 1985:93). It comes as no surprise that Ephrata's self-produced history, the *Chronicon Ephratense*, reports that "it became evident that a spiritual separation had taken place between the Superintendent [Beissel] and the Prior" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:179).

The Eckerlins also formed a plan to bring the householders into the settlement by having them divorce and live as members of the solitary orders while their farms became communal property. At first Beissel went along with this plan, approving of the projected celibacy and propertyless poverty of the householders. A two-part convent building, Hebron, was ready by December 1743 (Alderfer 1985:95). The plan soon crumbled, however, as the householders were reluctant to give up their land and longed for the children left behind on the farms (Alderfer 1985:98). Beissel advised the couples to return home. By November 1744 Hebron was being deserted. The householders' divorce papers were burned, and Hebron was turned over to widows until the middle of 1745, when they exchanged places with the sisters in Kedar. Hebron was renamed Saron after the former Spiritual Virgins' new name, the Order of the Roses of Saron (Sharon) (Alderfer 1985:99).

Onesimus's power began to crumble in the summer of 1745, when the prominent brother Peter Miller, in league with Gabriel Eckerlin, challenged the prior's actions. Soon brothers were renouncing their obedience to the prior, and his

night watch ceremonies were discontinued (Alderfer 1985:103). In early August Gabriel was appointed as a temporary successor to his brother. Now that Onesimus had lost power, many shunned him. The disgraced prior bribed the prioress to intercede with Beissel for him, but her efforts were unsuccessful. Onesimus's writings were burned. Finally he and his adherents were placed under the ban, and Onesimus was formally relieved of his office. It was agreed that he should leave for a while to manage the fulling mill and then return as an ordinary brother, but instead he fled to Virginia with his brother Samuel (Brother Jephune) (Alderfer 1985:104).

Gabriel Eckerlin had a short stint as Zion's new prior before being deposed in his turn and leaving to join his brothers in Virginia on the New River. Emanuel (Elimelech) also came in for censure and fled to a hermitage several miles away (Alderfer 1985:105).

After the Eckerlin power was broken, the brothers from Zion were moved into Kedar until a new convent, Bethania, was built for them in the valley (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:194). Zion was associated too strongly with the Eckerlins, so the remnants of the Zionitic Brotherhood henceforth became the Brotherhood of Bethania (Alderfer 1985:118).

After the fall of the Eckerlins, Ephrata was once again peaceful and committed to its ideals. However, some of the Virginia exiles returned to the community in the 1760s and reoccupied Zion (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:IX:10), and although the returnees remained apart from the rest of the community, relations between the two groups were never particularly good.

In 1768 Conrad Beissel died and Ephrata lost its founder and spiritual leader. He was succeeded by Peter Miller, but Miller lacked the charisma that had attracted new members to Beissel, and he could not prevent the decline of the community. He died in 1796, only a few weeks before the sisters' prioress, Christina Hagemann, the successor to Maria Eicher. Their positions were not refilled. The solitary orders in general were dying out and the lay congregation taking over (Alderfer 1985:172).

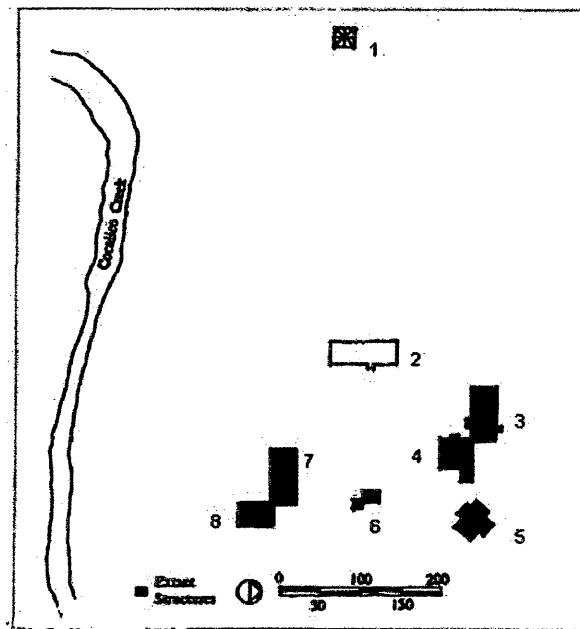


Figure 2: Ephrata with Beissel firmly in control once more. 1=Zion, 2=Kedar, 3=Saron, 4=Peniel, 5=almomy, 6=Beissel's cabin, 7=Bethania, 8=Bethania saal (Modified from White 2000).

In 1814 the householder congregation incorporated as the Seventh Day Baptist Society of Ephrata, and much of the acreage was converted to working farmland (Warfel 2001:3). In 1939 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acquired the property and conducted restorations of the surviving buildings (Alderfer 1985:191). Today the Ephrata Cloister is a historic attraction.

CHAPTER III

THE BUILDINGS OF EPHRATA

KEY FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE

The buildings of Ephrata are more than lifeless lumps on the landscape. They both influenced and illustrated forces at work in the community: issues of power and social influence that ordinarily leave little material trace. Each structure can be seen to make a statement of some sort. Some examination of each of the buildings in the Ephrata community may be useful before attempting to see what statements they made or meanings they held.

Kedar

As the Ephrata congregation grew and drew together as a community, the need for a building for communal meetings and worship became clear. Individual cabins were no longer adequate. In 1735 the first of Ephrata's large communal structures was built and named Kedar.

Kedar, a large wooden structure built with post-in-ground technique, was both a dwelling place and a location for community functions. On the ground floor several brothers were lodged, and two stories above them lived four sisters. On the floor between the living quarters were halls for meetings and ceremonial love feasts (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:76). At 84 by 30 feet, Kedar was one of the

largest, if not *the* largest, post-built structure in colonial America (Warfel 1999:2). Some have thought the use of post-in-ground construction techniques on a building this size to be odd. Warfel believes this relatively impermanent architectural style was used because of the builders' expectation of the imminent parousia (1999:29) – the building would not be needed for long if the world was about to end. However, other explanations seem possible, such as the greater speed and ease of the post-in-ground method compared to alternatives. The Ephrathites may not have considered this architectural style as impermanent as it appears in hindsight. This type of building may not last the ages and thus appears impermanent from the viewpoint of several centuries later, but the builders probably did not intend to build for posterity. Like most houses built today, Kedar would last long enough to serve its purpose. At any rate, however long the need for Kedar was originally projected to be, the building stood for over half a century, shored up by many repair posts. Indeed, as Warfel points out, Kedar was maintained longer than its natural lifespan, longer than might be expected for purely practical purposes (1999:29), especially when Beissel was never reluctant to commission the building of other, newer large structures or the tearing down of problem buildings. Artifacts found in post molds and holes point to a demolition date in the early nineteenth century (Warfel 1999:12-13). Kedar had stood at the heart of Ephrata nearly since the settlement's beginning. Possibly it was seen as a symbol of the community, as it had briefly housed both men and women of the solitary orders, as well as serving as a location for religious services. Perhaps it was preserved merely for sentimental reasons. Whatever the case, it is worth noting that Kedar's lifespan coincides with that of the solitary orders in Ephrata and its

demolition took place around the time the householders acquired the property, when the old way of Ephrata was finished.

There are several interpretations that can be applied to the choice of the name Kedar for this building. A letter written by Johannes Kelpius, the founder of the community of Wissahickon hermits with whom Beissel had lived before striking out on his own, reads in part

“...we are living on strange (foreign) soil, exiles from Paradise, travellers in this world, nowhere secure, exclaiming with David: Woe is me! who am wandering so long, dwelling with the Cedariani (that I sojourn in Meshech, That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!) i.e. in darkened tents (tabernacles), Psalm 120,5...From which cause we desire this dark tabernacle of our earthly house to be dissolved, in order that we may obtain an edifice, bright and glorious” (Sachse 1917:56).

It seems not unlikely that Beissel was familiar with these sentiments and chose the name to reflect a rather pessimistic view of life on earth, or to symbolize what the community strove to surmount. In a dissertation on Ephrata, Jeff Bach, pointing to the citation slightly later in the same letter of 2 Corinthians 5:1 (“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”), thinks the name reflects the belief that in this house the brothers and sisters could prepare for their future heavenly bodies through their ascetic practices, which were designed to eliminate earthly appetites (1997:263). Possibly all of these explanations had their place in the layers of symbolism surrounding the name.

It is interesting to note that Kedar seems to have been something of a “lost” building until archaeological investigations revealed its footprint in the valley in the center of the Ephrata community. Until then, many people appear to have assumed it

was located farther to the west, on the hill later occupied by Zion. Dale Biever, who conducted excavations on the property in the 1960s, wrote that “[t]his building was supposedly located on the side of Zion Hill” (1970:6). This is where it appears on a map included as part of a letter from an M.H. Heinicke (appended to Warfel 1990), and Julius Friedrich Sachse names Kedar among the buildings pictured on the hill in an early depiction of the community (1971:I:257) (Figure 3). This association of



Figure 3: Seal showing buildings on Zion Hill, traditionally identified as Berghaus, Kedar, and Zion (Sachse 1971:I:257).

Kedar with Zion may have arisen because both supposedly served as hospitals during the Revolutionary War (although there is no archaeological evidence for Kedar having functioned in this manner), and, once both buildings were gone, structures serving this function were assumed to have been in close proximity. Alternatively, the erroneous assumption could have been caused by these being the first two large

dwelling structures in Ephrata, which might logically be thought to be close to each other.

Bethaus

Bethaus (“prayer house”) was built in 1737 to provide a separate place for worship, so that Kedar might be used solely as the sisters’ convent. The *Chronicon* calls it “a sightly structure,” decorated with texts in calligraphy, with halls for *agapai* and meetings, and a gallery “occupied by gray-haired fathers” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:80) (unlike later galleries, which were used by the sisters). Like Kedar, Bethaus was wooden, but, in contrast to the earlier structure, it was built on a limestone footing. Possibly this more labor-intensive, but more permanent, method of construction was chosen because a house of worship was considered more important than living quarters (Warfel 1999:29).

Another oddity about Bethaus is its relationship to Kedar, constructed at a 29-30 degree angle to the larger building (Warfel 1997:23). All other prayer houses in Ephrata were built at 90 degree angles to their associated dormitories, and such an unusual angle is not seen anywhere else in the community. If there was a reason behind it, no record of it has survived.

The most notable historical aspect of Bethaus is its demolition only four years after it was built, in 1741. The reason for this remains open to interpretation. The *Chronicon* states vaguely that “the cause...can scarcely be comprehended by human reason” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:80) without stating what this cause was. A popular explanation is that Bethaus was being used as a place for trysts between the Spiritual Virgins and solitary brothers or men from the neighborhood (Ernst

1963:141). (This is the reason that will most likely be given a visitor, demonstrating that the salacious gossip so often spread about Ephrata during its heyday remains lively two hundred years later.) Sachse believed the Eckerlins engineered the razing of Bethaus for their own sinister reasons (1971:I:381). In the most recent comprehensive history of Ephrata, Alderfer mentions the trysting legend and suggests as an alternative that the Eckerlins persuaded Beissel to order the destruction in order to emphasize the dominance of the brotherhood (1985:88). Since Bethaus was razed in 1741, only a year after Zion's own prayer house was constructed, this suggestion may hold some merit. Other reasons are possible, however (see Chapter 4).

Berghaus

Not much is recorded about the Berghaus ("hill house"), a sort of communal solitary cabin occupied by four brothers: Onesimus (Israel Eckerlin), Jotham (Gabriel Eckerlin), Nehemiah, and Jabez (Peter Miller). These, whom the *Chronicon* calls "the choicest of the Brethren," built themselves a house against the hillside and named it after its location. For a time all love feasts were held in this house, which could accommodate more people than a solitary cabin, and all guests were lodged there, which caused resentment among the other brothers (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:106).

With the increasing population, the solitary cabins were no longer large enough to hold congregations or other meetings, and so these functions moved from Berghaus to the newly constructed Kedar. Berghaus fades from view after the construction of Zion.

Zion

While the sisters were consolidated in Kedar, most of the brothers still lived scattered around the settlement, until a newly joined brother, Benedict Yuchly, resolved to employ his fortune in the building of a convent for the brothers. The general feeling was that the best site for this building was in the valley, with convenient access to the water of the Cocalico. However, Beissel differed in opinion and chose a site on the hill within the property limits of the Berghaus. The Berghaus brethren were not particularly pleased with this, but the project went ahead nevertheless. Construction was begun in May 1738 and by October the first brethren moved in, although the house was not completed or fully occupied for several more years (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:107-108). By August of 1740 most of the remaining solitary brothers had moved in, and Onesimus was appointed prior over them (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:120).

The brothers' convent, named Zion after the hill on which it was built, was most probably a traditional German half-timber building, with wooden framing surrounding stone held in place by mud daub (Warfel 2001:16). Unlike Kedar, Zion had a limestone footing, which in places was mortared to the bedrock itself (Biever 1970:16, Warfel 2000:15). The topsoil on Zion Hill is thin, with bedrock close to the surface, and the limestone used in construction came from nearby quarry pits (Warfel 2000:22). Zion was built to last.

Zion's dimensions were 60 by 35 feet, slightly smaller than those of Kedar, but the brothers planned a 40 square foot addition, which would have given them the biggest building in the community (Warfel 2001:26). In addition to more living

space, a burial vault was also planned (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:142).

These plans never came to fruition because of the upheaval surrounding the fall of the Eckerlins.

Beneath the dormitory, Zion had two cellars against its west wall, both accessed by ladder and ventilated by air shafts. One also had a built-in shelf and a small storage alcove, similar to features surviving to the present in the cellar of Saron, while the other did not (Warfel 2000:18, 2001:18). A cellar of a different kind was discovered beneath what would have been the addition to the dormitory. Instead of the usual ladders, stone steps were provided at the entrance. In addition, the cellar was composed of one large room with a small anteroom, reminiscent of a burial vault uncovered in the nearby cemetery. It is quite possible that this cellar was originally intended to function as the tomb the Zionitic Brotherhood had planned for their use. After the brothers' fall from grace, the structure ended up being used as another storage cellar (Warfel 2002:12-13).

(Zion was not the only building to have cellars. In addition to the one existing in Saron, a cellar belonging to Bethania was partially excavated in 1965 (Biever 1970:29). More recently, a stone-lined cellar hole was found near one of the remaining solitary houses (Warfel 1990:101). These probably represent only a portion of the cellars that originally existed. Sangmeister mentions two others, and in the process gives the impression that these cellars represented a definite hazard: Beissel fell down the steps of his cellar and injured his foot (Sangmeister 1826:IX:34), and Brother Rufsinus fell in Sangmeister's own cellar and was knocked out (Sangmeister 1826:IX:56).)

It was only a matter of time before Zion had its own prayer house. It was awkward for the brothers to come down into the valley to Bethaus, whose proximity to the sisters' convent, combined with the necessity of nighttime visits for the night meetings, gave rise to the usual rumors, which Ephrata's neighbors were ever ready to revive (Sachse 1971:I:378). In 1739 the fathers of two new brothers offered to furnish the material to build a prayer house for Zion. The mason work was done in six weeks and the building raised up in December 1739 (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:119).

The Zion prayer house, "a large and sightly structure," contained the usual accommodations. The ground floor consisted of a large room for the congregation, containing a seat for Beissel and an upper gallery in which the sisters sat, while the brothers sat below. The second floor was a second large hall, this one used for love feasts, and the third floor had eight cells for brothers' living quarters (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:119-120). In September 1740 the first midnight prayer meeting was held in the Zion prayer house, and henceforth the brothers and sisters held separate worship services (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:121).

It was long believed that the Zion complex was intentionally burned after its stint as a Revolutionary War hospital in order to stop the spread of camp fever. This belief probably arose from the *Chronicon's* cryptic summary of its fate: "This handsome Prayer-house, in which were manifested forth many wonders of God, did not stand more than 38 years, being converted into a hospital during the war of the Americans, after which it was never restored again" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:119). Restored or not, archaeological evidence suggests it was not in fact

destroyed, though it was most likely abandoned. An 1815 survey plat (Figure 4) shows two large buildings still standing on Zion Hill, one of which appears in a state of considerable disrepair. In addition, excavations in the area not only did *not* reveal a significant amount of burned material (Warfel 2000:29), but did reveal the presence of pearlware, which, with manufacturing dates between 1790 and 1840, demonstrates that the Zion area was still in use after the Revolutionary War and into the early nineteenth century (Warfel 2000:13).



Figure 4: 1815 survey plat showing Zion complex (Warfel 2000).

Peniel

After the Zion prayer house was built, the congregation of householders began to meet there for worship. Since the brothers also used that building, the sisters were left alone in Bethaus. Beissel, dissatisfied with the situation, expressed the opinion that the congregation needed its own prayer house and that it would be to its disadvantage to continue to use Zion's. The projected new prayer house would be the third in half a decade and the fifth large communal dwelling/worship structure. The Zion brothers supplied lumber, and in 1741 the new prayer house, Peniel, was built in the valley. About this constant building the chroniclers remarked, "In this way God

kept the householders in the settlement in continual straits” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:127). In December Peniel was consecrated by a meeting and a love feast, and Elimelech was appointed its superintendent. Services for the entire community were held there from 1741 to 1746 (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:157).

As in the other prayer houses, the ground floor of Peniel was a hall for meetings. Overhanging this room were galleries screened with lattice, behind which the sisters sat hidden from the view of the rest of the congregation (Sachse 1971:I:400). Later, after Peniel was given to the sisters, the space between the galleries was floored over to make a second large room above the lower hall. The lower hall was used for public services and the upper for private meetings among the sisters (Sachse 1971:I:403). The original appearance of the building has since been restored.

Several elements of folklore grew up around Peniel. Most dramatic is the story that some of the Zionitic Brotherhood walked upside down on the ceiling to demonstrate their occult powers, leaving footprints on the underside of the northern gallery (Sachse 1971:I:407). Most persistent is the idea that no iron was used in the prayer house’s construction, with wooden nails employed instead, partly because of the expense of iron, but also because iron was “unholy” (Zerfass 1975:15). Supposedly iron represented night and darkness, but the root of the tradition is probably the comparison of Peniel with the temple in Jerusalem and the belief that no iron was used in the construction of the latter (Sachse 1971:I:401-402), based on 1 Kings 6:7: “...there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the

house, while it was in building.” At any rate, numerous archaeological finds of nails disprove the no-iron legend.

Hebron/Saron

In 1743 the householders built “a great convent adjoining their chapel” in an effort to integrate with the celibate community. Like the other convents, it had individual chambers as well as a hall for love feasts, but unlike the Solitary housing, it was divided into two halves with separate entrances, so that both sexes could live in the same structure without contact with each other (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:158). The building was named for the location of the tombs of the patriarchs, signifying, according to some interpretations, the end of conjugal life for its inhabitants (Sachse 1971:I:469).

When the householders dissolved their experiment, Hebron was given to the sisters, renamed Saron (Sharon), and renovated to remove the partition between the two sides of the house. These alterations and repairs were completed by the beginning of July 1745 (Sachse 1971:I:475).



Figure 5: Saron, Peniel, and Beissel’s cabin today, with Kedar outlined on the ground in front of them.

Bethania

After the fall of the Zion-based Eckerlins, when sites for a new brothers' convent were being proposed, many people favored a location already occupied by an orchard. Matters proceeded as far as the uprooting of the trees, but Beissel vetoed the choice (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:193). He wanted the brothers' new dwelling to be near the sisters', but the brothers desired more space between the two. Eventually Beissel's wishes won out, and the building, Bethania (Bethany) was located "so near the Sisters' house, that conversation could be carried on from one to the other" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:194). (Evidently the Ephrata region was extremely quiet in the eighteenth century, or the Ephrathites had unusually loud conversational voices, as the two structures were, although relatively close, still some distance apart.) The building of Bethania was begun in March 1746 and completed in May, and the lumber employed in its construction was the building material originally intended for the addition to Zion (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:194-195).

Although Bethania resembled the other convent buildings in such matters as dimensions (74 feet by 36 feet and three and a half stories high) (Biever 1970:24), and interior accommodations, in one small way it stood out from the rest of the architecture. Instead of the walls rising straight up to the beginning of the roof, the third floor was slightly recessed (Figure 6). No reason for this peculiarity has been recorded, although its appearance has been compared by some to German Romanesque basilicas, with the recessed third floor suggesting a nave with side aisles (Wertenbaker 1963:315).

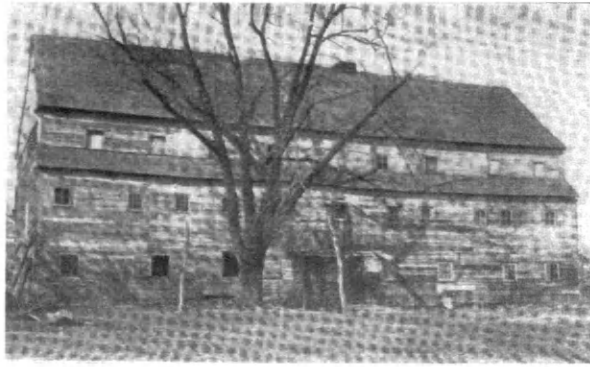


Figure 6: Bethania (Zerfass 1975).

Like most of the other structures, Bethania was another half-timber wooden building, although in the nineteenth century it did acquire a slate roof instead of the usual wooden shingles. As such, its lifespan was not indefinite. By the late nineteenth century it had deteriorated enough to cause its abandonment, and in 1908 it was razed by order of the church elders (Biever 1970:25).

Bethania Saal

After the raising of Bethania, there was enough building material left over to construct an accompanying prayer house. Its frame was raised in November and all timbers were in place in five weeks (Sachse 1971:I:481). Its relationship to Bethania was the same as that of Peniel to Saron, with the southeast corner of the convent joining the northwest corner of the prayer house.

Oddly enough, the roofline of the prayer house was probably parallel to that of Bethania, instead of perpendicular as in the case of Saron and Peniel. This was deduced from the sloping line of weathering detectable on the eastern end of Bethania in photographs taken after the demolition of the prayer house, showing where the latter's roof line had been, and by comparing the archaeological footprint of the

building with that of Peniel and noting the relationship of the roofline in the existing building to the layout of the rooms below (Biever 1970:43). Evidently the concept of a prayer house was not set in stone. However, for the most part Bethania's prayer house resembled existing prayer houses, with latticed galleries and benches on the main floor for the congregation. There was also, according to contemporary visitor Israel Acrelius, the Sanctuary, a small curtained room to the right of the altar which only Beissel could enter (Reichmann and Doll 1953:55).

For unexplained reasons this prayer house was demolished around 1837 (Sachse 1971:I:486). Possibly this was because by that time Peniel was sufficient for the needs of the congregation, as it was almost exactly the same as Bethania's prayer house, but bigger (Biever 1970:43).

Other Buildings

An almonry was built in 1730 for the purpose of feeding the poor and lodging visitors (Zerfass 1975:10). Unusually for Ephrata, it was built of stone. It still stands today, not far to the north of Peniel. Thus the almonry, Peniel, and Hebron, the buildings that at some point in their lives served people outside the celibate orders, were conveniently located in the same area.

Before the large living structures were built, an indeterminate number of solitary cabins stood scattered around the settlement, inhabited mostly by celibate brothers. After Zion was built, the *Chronicon* reports that the brothers began to tear down their former abodes, but that some became workshops (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:121). The remains of two of these workshops were uncovered during the 1966 excavation in the vicinity of Bethania. Both structures, floored with stone and

mortar, measured nineteen by sixteen feet, and the artifacts associated with them (scissors, files, gouges, the end of a folding rule, a brass book corner), along with an almost complete absence of domestic debris, indicate that this was a craft area (Biever 1970:46-47).

When the workshops were excavated, the foundation of another building was found intersecting the northeast corner of one of them. This north-south foundation wall, measuring forty-one feet in length, was built mostly of dry-laid limestone. Three brick-filled postholes were also found in conjunction with this wall, all three feet from the foundation. No corner or east-west wall was found, and no artifacts besides brick (Biever 1970:48-49). Hence the full dimensions and purpose of the structure remain unknown. At the time some suggested that this was the site of Kedar (Biever 1970:50). There is, however, a second possibility. Several documents mention a second house inhabited by sisters: Ezechiel Sangmeister preserved a version of the *Chronicon* which stated “In this year [1739] the Brothers built the Sisters’ other house” (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:I:38), and Brother Agabus wrote in a letter that “in two houses live 26 single sisters” (Bach 1997:269). It seems not out of the realm of possibility that this partial structural footprint is all that remains of the mysterious second house. This house probably did not stand long, judging by how little it is mentioned in the documentary record, and if the foundation is indeed associated with the house, the lack of artifacts accords with this hypothesis.

General Layout of the Settlement

There were certain features of Ephrata that especially struck visitors, judging by what they thought worth recording: the large three-story wooden houses, the fact that

each person had a private room, and the triangular shape of the settlement. At its height, when all the buildings were standing, the settlement was indeed triangular, with Saron, Bethania, and Zion as the corners. However, no great significance should necessarily be read into this shape, for it must be remembered that Ephrata was not a community that was planned from the start, and the buildings were not located according to a preconceived idea but were constructed one by one as the need arose, according to priorities at the time: “At that time [when Kedar was built] one lived without plans for the future...without knowing what would be the outcome of the matter” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:127). The Kedar-Bethaus complex did end up in the center of the triangular community that had radiated out from it, but this may be a side effect of other forces that were at work rather than a result of affection for the “seed” of the community or because of any mystical properties of triangles.

German Architectural Features in Ephrata

“We shape our buildings and they shape us,” said Winston Churchill, reflecting the fact that people tend to internalize the features of the spatial environment in which they grow up and reproduce these elements later in life when constructing similar buildings (Hall 1976:160). The Ephrathites are no exception. Their German heritage can be seen in the architecture of their community, a fact that is often pointed out in descriptions of the buildings.

Centrally located fireplaces, which heated two rooms simultaneously (in contrast to English fireplaces, which were often located at the ends of dwellings), are especially noticeable in the smaller houses but exist in the large dormitories as well. These, along with small windows and overlapping shingles (originally wooden) are

reminiscent of the Palatinate, Beissel's area of origin, and other features of Ephrata communal architecture, such as steep roofs, rows of watershed dormers, winding stairs, and the oft remarked-upon narrow hallways "all bespeak the Germany of old" (Wertenbaker 1963:315). In 1966 stove tiles were excavated in the vicinity of former workshops, revealing that tiled stoves, common among other German immigrants, were also present in Ephrata (Biever 1970:47). However, one type of Palatinate architecture is absent from the community: the complex of house and outbuildings set around a courtyard. This arrangement has its origin in Rhenish cloisters (Wertenbaker 1963:295). Despite the religious nature of the community and the later appellation "Ephrata Cloister," Beissel did not set out to run his community like an Old World convent. (The lack of domestic animals no doubt contributed to the lack of numerous outbuildings.) Later, however, Saron, Kedar, and Bethania, along with Beissel's own cabin, formed a loose quadrangle (Figures 5 and 7). After a haphazard beginning, perhaps a form of monastic order had finally settled on Ephrata.



Figure 7: Beissel's cabin, Kedar (marked by outline), and Bethania (location marked by sign among the trees in the background) formed three sides of a loose square.

CHAPTER IV
REFLECTIONS OF IDEOLOGY, POWER, AND CONTROL IN
EPHRATA'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Reflections of Ideology

When Ephrata is examined closely, it becomes clear that the community was, as Alderfer says, “a latter-day haven of essentially gnostic ideas and terminology” (1985:6). Gnosticism is a strain of religious thought, often characterized by extreme asceticism, with a dualistic outlook, for example seeing the cosmos as divided into the spiritual and the material, the former being good and the latter less so. It is easy to see this division in the Ephrata emphasis of the spiritual man at the expense of the earthly body, denying the latter food and sleep as much as possible, and wishing, at least in some cases, to live on prayer alone. Writings from Ephrata often mention Sophia, the personification of Wisdom, another hallmark of gnosticism.

The clothing eventually adopted by the celibate orders resembled monks' robes and covered the brothers and sisters as completely as possible as well as disguising the shape of the body they concealed. This clothing, intended to represent a spiritual human being, was “designed so that but little was visible of that humiliating image revealed by sin” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:88-89). This negative attitude

toward the body is a common gnostic trait and can also be seen in Beissel's disapproval of the "animal habit" of eating meat. While there was some leeway in the dietary practices of the community at large, as has been illustrated by archaeological finds of dietary animal bone (Warfel 1995:17, 1996:17), Beissel forbade his singers to ingest meat, milk, and even fruit, declaring them injurious to the voice (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:161). Whether or not there was any objective truth to this (the author's choir director used to say milk coated the throat and recommended refraining from drinking it before a performance), the bias against animal products is quite noticeable. Beissel's regimen surely did little for the physical health of his singers, but some, at least, seemed to derive some spiritual benefit from a restricted diet. According to the *Chronicon*, it was no secret how an advanced few could live not only without meat but also without the euphemistically called "result" of eating (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:135).

The Ephrathites' constant endeavor to overcome their human nature and become more like spiritual beings is one of the most notable characteristics of their society. This worldview carried over into other aspects of their lives, not least their cultural landscape and the arrangement of their space.

When the built environment of any place is looked at with regard to symbolism, the architectural features can be seen to embody meaning for the group, reflecting its ideals of social, political, and religious life (Lawrence and Low 1990:466). It comes as no surprise that a community like Ephrata illustrates this phenomenon. Almost every writer discussing the community has remarked on the symbolic significance of elements of the architecture or the mystic meaning they believe is manifested in the

relationships between buildings. However, few go into detail on what exactly they refer to. Alderfer, for example, refers more than once to mystical architectural harmonies (1985:4, 95), but never elaborates. Are there really mystic harmonies in Ephrata, beyond their singing?

Some writers have placed too much credence in folklore. The prime example of this is Julius Sachse, who believed that Bethania's saal was 99 feet long because of the significance of the shape of the numeral. Supposedly a circle represented God and a downstroke man: therefore 99 put God over man (Sachse 1971:I:483). Whether or not this was a real belief, archaeology has shown that the Bethania saal was the same size as the other prayer houses. Sachse was often credulous, but seems surprisingly so in this instance, since the building had stood within living memory at the time he wrote.

Others have placed perhaps excessive importance on various architectural orientations. One writer sees the east-west orientation of the prayer houses associated with Saron and Bethania, and possibly with Zion as well, as symbolizing the dawn of a new church, facing the sunrise (Bach 1997:304). This could be true, of course, but before too much is read into it, it should also be remembered that in Christian tradition the altar is placed at the end of the church closest to Jerusalem, which in Europe and America is the east. The possibility of multiple meanings remains open, but the prayer house oriented to the sunrise could simply be a result of convention.

Another author thinks the right angle between Peniel and Hebron/Saron is a mystical angle that allows for a north-south axis running through Peniel to be perpendicular to an east-west axis running the length of Saron. He also remarks on

both buildings being parallelograms (Ernst 1963:222). It is an odd European building that is not a parallelogram! The significance of the right angle may also be overstated, since Peniel and Saron connect through an interior door and a right angle is the most logical one to use when joining two buildings in such a manner.

The much-commented-upon triangular shape of the community, formed by Bethania, Saron, and Zion, is also supposed to be the cabbalistic shape of perfection (Bach 1997:304). Whether this was intentional design rather than happy coincidence, though, is unclear. The Ephrathites, at least at the beginning, seem to have been uninterested in an overall village plan (“At that time one lived without plans for the future...” (see page 35)), and it seems quite possible that Peniel’s location was determined by the location of the nearby almonry, thereby sequestering the buildings used by people outside the celibate orders. Hebron/Saron’s location was of course dictated by the placement of Peniel. The symmetrical placement of Bethania opposite Saron could have been determined by cabbalism, but could equally have been dictated by other concerns, such as a visual exclusion of Zion (see the following section on power). This is not to say that the above points are invalid, simply that it is possible that too much may be read into straightforward features.

There are, however, some legitimately mystical and symbolic aspects of Ephrata architecture. Peniel measures 40 by 37 feet and is 40 feet high: almost a perfect cube. The number 40 is important in the philosophy of Jacob Boehme, a major influence on Beissel. Adam was tested for 40 days in Paradise (according to Boehme), Israel was tested for 40 days at Sinai and for 40 years wandering in the wilderness, and Jesus was tested for 40 days in the desert. Forty therefore signifies testing, and the

proportions of Peniel were an outward symbol of the inner testing faced by all Christians (Bach 1997:283-285). Bethania's prayer house measured roughly 40 by 30 feet. In this case 40 once again symbolizes testing, while 30 is 10 (which Beissel saw as the number of completion) times three (the Trinity) (Bach 1997:301).

More than one mystical system was in use at Ephrata. Both Kedar and Beissel's 1748 cabin reflect use of the Golden Section, a rectangle in which the length of the sides is in the ratio of one to the square root of two. In Western mystical tradition this is considered a perfect number, representing God. Beissel's cabin's footprint is a Golden Section, while Kedar's footprint is a double Golden Section (White 2000:64). Here, finally, are clear examples of mysticism influencing architecture throughout the major building years of the community.

There is more to Ephrathite space than mysticism, though. In his study of built environments, Amos Rapoport determined that the organization of space in a community reflects not only the activities but also the values and ideal images of the inhabitants (1982:179). He also declared that spatial settings were a way of establishing social identity and indicating the type of behavior expected in that environment (1982:181). These aspects of space can be clearly seen at Ephrata.

Of the concepts mentioned above, Ephrata's values are probably the most clearly reflected in its structures and layout, and of these values, communalism stands out clearly. Although Ephrata began as a collection of small, individual cabins, which never completely disappeared, the community standard quickly became large, multipurpose buildings, which functioned as dormitories, workshops for certain kinds of light work (such as writing), and worship space.

With the construction of the first large buildings, life in Ephrata began to shift from solitary to communal. In this perhaps the Ephrathites endeavored to emulate early Christian communities and attain spiritual unity (Alderfer 1985:8) – at least that was the idea, although a cynic might point out that this unity also made the community easier to control. The *Chronicon* dates this shift to the period right after the brothers' move to Zion, when they began to order life “in every respect in monastic wise” and private property was declared sinful (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:121). Sachse implies that the Zionitic Brotherhood was at least partly behind this change, as they needed a quorum of brethren for their secret rites in Zion (1971:I:295), but, aside from the questionable status of the existence of these rites, Beissel seems to have truly been the prime mover, endorsing communal life and saying, among other things, that “everything existed in it” (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:III:11). It seems a bit odd at first that a man who had once intended to be a solitary hermit should have changed his mind so completely. No doubt Beissel's spiritual ideas were tempered by the practical realities of leading a sizeable community and by a desire to avoid chaos.

There was considerable pressure to convert to a communal way of life. Sangmeister relates the case of a catechumen who was given a small house. Once the man was baptized, Beissel pressed him to move in with the brothers. When the new member refused, Beissel feared this would inspire others to go their separate ways. Eventually Brother Benno beat up the new recruit, causing him to leave the community (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:II:94). Evidently conformity was more important to the fragile new community at this point than increasing the ranks.

The frequent conflicts between Beissel and Sangmeister (for example, see Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:II:80-81) can perhaps in part be attributed to this same pressure to conform. Beissel appears to have favored an extroverted form of worship: communal services, praying aloud, etc., while Sangmeister preferred quiet, individual prayer. The latter conformed so far as to live in a dormitory cell for a time, but eventually the disjuncture between his and Beissel's views drove him from Ephrata, after which he seems to have always lived in a cabin with only a few others.

Left to their own devices, many of the brothers and sisters might not have embraced the new order so eagerly. The *Chronicon* reports that the brothers found it difficult to get along together despite years already spent in the community (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:133) and that the communal life was obviously “artificial rather than inspired by the Spirit” (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:138). And, as noted before (see page 13), several sisters ran away when the communal rule was first instituted.

The fact that living and worship spaces were not strictly separated attests to religion's permeation of the community. At first religious services were held in homes, including Kedar when it was first built. When buildings designated as prayer houses were constructed, they also housed living and working spaces on their upper floors. Unlike churches in many communities, Ephrata's saals were never set apart from everyday life. The line between the sacred and the profane was not sharp – just as might be expected in a community founded for the purpose of intensively practicing religion. The line was not entirely blurred, however. Buildings may have housed multiple functions, but separate rooms were devoted to each category of

activity. Sleeping and worship were not done in the same space, at least not intentionally.

Ephrata's ideals of poverty and asceticism, as well as emphasis on spirituality, are also reflected in the living spaces provided for the brothers and sisters, who lived in deliberately uncomfortable, spartan conditions. At the same time, private rooms gave individuals, at least in theory, a taste of the solitary life and the psychological space to develop their inner prayer lives.

Each member of the solitary orders in Ephrata had his or her own cell in order to facilitate private prayer. These cells were five by ten feet, with a small window (eighteen by twenty inches) (Ernst 1963:6). Not everyone was able to deal with this ascetic living situation in the proper spirit. Sangmeister felt restless in his small room and complained, "I could not spend my time in it for it was too close for me" (1980 [1825]:II:71). Fortunately there were plenty of tasks to occupy the brothers and sisters outside their cells.

Standard furnishings of these cells included sleeping benches with their famous wooden pillows, a wall cabinet for small items such as books, and hooks for hanging clothes. The walls might be decorated with samples of *fraktur*, a style of calligraphy done by the sisters (Ernst 1963:6). Standards of asceticism appear to have been somewhat laxer in the solitary cabins, for Sangmeister reports that a man having a fit began biting the rug (1980 [1825]:IX:63). Such amenities are never mentioned in conjunction with the communal residences.

The benches on which the celibate orders slept were purposely narrow and uncomfortable in order to mortify the flesh (Alderfer 1985:96). Acrelius, who visited

the community at its height, wrote that the residents slept on benches with pillows of wood or stone, but that for visitors they provided a mattress filled with chaff along with blankets and a quilt (Reichmann and Doll 1953:61). Morgan Edwards, who visited in 1770, after the death of Beissel, reported that standards had become more relaxed and that the inhabitants now slept in beds “and have otherwise abated much of the severity of their order” (Reichmann and Doll 1953:93).

Another feature of the houses much remarked upon by visitors and later observers was the small size of the doorways: five feet high and less than two feet wide (Alderfer 1985:95). Acrelius wrote, “All the doors are unusually narrow, the stairs steep and narrow, so that other people find difficulty in getting along them” (Reichmann and Doll 1953:52). (The stairs were steep enough that ropes were provided for climbers to hold onto, which can still be seen in Saron.) Many people have offered interpretations for the dimensions of these doorways, usually from a religious angle. Sachse quoted Matthew 7:14: “Narrow is the way that leads to life” (1971:I:400). He also believed that the doors were made narrow so as to enforce thinness (indicating success in the ascetic practice of eating as little as possible in an effort to be like the angels) among the celibates, and that the lintels were low in order to force heads to bow or knees to bend (Sachse 1971:I:404). Ernst concurred, but added that the doorways were narrow for economy (1963:3) – smaller doorways held in heat more efficiently. Bach agrees with the humility explanation: “each low doorway...taught the residents that they must go about bent over, under cross” (1997:298). All of this may well be true, because religious values were not infrequently encoded in buildings at Ephrata. However, it is also worth noting that a

British officer passing through in 1786, who thought these doorways “extremely ill-contrived for a hot [!] climate,” recorded that he “enquired, but could not discover, the cause of this awkward and inconvenient mode of building” (Reichmann and Doll 1953:130). True, it had been forty years since the last of the large buildings was constructed, and Ephrata was at the beginning of its post-Beissel decline, but it seems that this was not an effective medium for teaching humility if nobody realized or remembered the reason for ducking through doorways. Modern authors have engaged in considerably more speculation about possible religious explanations for these building features than any contemporary visitor ever did.

The hallways between the cells were also very narrow, and Acrelius noted that the paths outside were narrow as well, because the Ephrathites walked single file (Reichmann and Doll 1953:63). Perhaps this was another illustration of the narrow way that led to life – or just a space-saving measure.

If the spiritual explanations that have been offered to explain the low and narrow doors and corridors are correct, the construction of these features supports Rapoport’s theory that spatial characteristics can indicate expected behaviors. However, as in many instances, it is possible that more than one factor came into play during construction and both religious and practical aspects were considered.

Whatever the reasons behind minor architectural features such as door and hallway size, the fact remains that much of Ephrata’s ideology was encoded in its buildings. These structures both encouraged and emphasized a communal way of life and an ascetic religiosity with a streak of mysticism. Ephrata’s buildings are Ephrata in a nutshell.

Power and Status

Besides ideals, the built environment often serves to communicate status and power within a community (Rapoport 1990:11). Although nominally the inhabitants of Ephrata were equals, some were more equal than others. This becomes especially evident in the circumstances surrounding the rise and fall of Zion and the Eckerlins.

Under Beissel the community had been moving toward a higher level of communalism, but common property was voluntary and regulations loosely enforced. When the Zionitic Brotherhood was organized, however, strictures became tighter until individual ownership had vanished (Alderfer 1985:75). Some original Ephrathite values were maintained in Zion, such as fasting, yet others, such as reluctance to use animals to work for humans, were disregarded. Other loosened practices seem to be hinted at in the *Chronicon*: Whenever a brother's quarters "became too narrow," he could go to the newly-bought mill, where market was held every day, and "there he could live according to his natural inclinations" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:140).

The Eckerlin regime seemed designed to reinforce and even intensify the communal philosophy in matters of personal asceticism and conformity to the celibate ideal. It was the Eckerlins who wanted the brothers and sisters to be able to live without depending on the householders' tithes and who tried to make the householders into auxiliaries of the celibate orders. If the Eckerlins had continued unchecked, the effect would likely have been a more pronounced division between Ephrata and the outside world, without the intermediate class of the householders and with a stronger code of behavior among the community members. Yet within this

community selected brothers would have been elevated above the rest. Beissel at least maintained the pretense of being something like *primus inter pares* of the brothers. The Eckerlin elite seemed determined to set themselves up as lords of Ephrata with the rest of the community as servants working under them.

The Zion convent was built on the highest point in the fledgling community, where it visually dominated the settlement like a medieval castle presiding over its vassal village. If its intended addition had been built, it would have been the largest building in the settlement (Warfel 2001:26). In addition, Zion, unlike any other building, had a bell tower, enabling the residents to control the neighborhood's schedule by regulating when the bell rang for various activities (White 2000:68-69).

The curious thing about Zion and its relation to Eckerlin power is that the brothers apparently did not select the location themselves – Beissel did! The brotherhood took full advantage of Beissel's choice, though, and expanded on the possibilities.

Vertical positioning relating to status can also be seen within Zion's saal. During services the worshipers sat in gradations of status-related placement. The symbolism seems straightforward enough in the case of the brothers sitting on a platform at the front of the hall, elevated above the householders. As celibacy was held in high regard, it is easy to see why the married householders would be relegated to a literally lower position. However, the sisters sat in an upper gallery, physically higher than the rest, and it is unlikely that the Zionitic Brotherhood saw the sisters as elevated above them all. In this case the vertical placement of the sisters probably matters less than their separation from the rest of the congregation, out of the way in

an essentially passive position while the brothers held the floor. Probably it was less strictly a matter of height in the seating arrangements than a matter of proximity to the celebrant, the same reason orchestra seats at the theater are considered superior to balcony seats. The fact remains that the brothers retained the premium position, and this status was reinforced by the seating arrangements in the saal. This may have had some bearing on Beissel's decision to build Peniel for the householders the year after the Zion saal first saw use. Doubtless he disliked the way the brothers' vision of the community differed from his own.

The sisters already had their own prayer house, at least for a time. The motivation behind the demolition of Bethaus is popularly ascribed to indiscretions committed within the precincts, but it has also been suggested that Beissel intended the destruction of the community's original saal as a reproach to his followers for allowing another prayer house to become more magnificent (White 2000:70). In this case, Bethaus, being the older of the two, probably seemed the most logical candidate for culling. Yet another possibility is that Beissel, in the face of growing brotherly influence, wanted to reinforce his own control over the community by requiring the congregation to work at some large-scale project under his direction (see the section on social control below).

Ephrata would one day once again have three prayer houses, but by that time Zion was essentially being shunned by the valley dwellers, who could not have countenanced using its saal.

After the fall of Zion, there was a campaign to rid Ephrata of all things associated with that period in its history, reminiscent of Egyptian pharaohs' efforts to

eradicate the memories of unpopular predecessors by effacing their names from monuments. Although the existing Zion complex was allowed to stand, the lumber intended for its expansion was seized and used to construct Bethania. Zion itself was turned into a residence for the poor and widowed (White 2000:72), a far cry from its former exalted position (and possibly a commentary on a former lack of Christian charity?).

A number of things associated with the Eckerlin period were destroyed. Around a thousand trees were uprooted simply because the Eckerlins had started the orchard. In December of 1747 the gristmill burned down. The fire spread to the fulling and oil mills, destroying both. Arson was suspected, but never proven (Alderfer 1985:120). Whatever the cause, the result was that Ephrata turned back toward Beissel's vision and was left more firmly under his control. If Beissel was behind the fires (and there is no real evidence to suggest so, only the fact that he benefited from the result), he could have used this tactic, rather than ordering the demolition of the mills as he had Bethaus, to avoid a potential confrontation about the way Ephrata should be run. He may not have felt himself in a position of sufficient strength to defeat possible opponents and instead opted for a route with less potential for conflict and a virtual guarantee of producing the desired results.

The new Saron-Kedar-Bethania complex kept Beissel's cabin safe in its center while turning its back on the hill crowned by Zion. White declares that the three residences were equal in status and that there was no emphasis on hierarchy (2000:72). It is interesting, though, that Bethania was built, at Beissel's prompting, at the lowest possible elevation, closest to the creek. The brothers who had formerly

inhabited the highest spot of Ephrata's topography now found themselves in the lowest – the first become last. This may be no more than a side effect of the new arrangement (Bethania could have been built parallel to Kedar, for instance, but this would less effectively shut Zion out), or both could have been achieved at one blow. It is worth considering an intentional lowering, however subtle, especially remembering that the brothers would rather have built elsewhere and Beissel insisted on this location.

Once the notion that Ephrata was a completely harmonious settlement has been discarded, and when the documentary record is consulted, it becomes apparent that its edifices and arrangement of space had more than one function. While still communicating ideology, the buildings and their placement made statements about power in the community – in general, physically higher meant socially more influential. Equality between members may have been the intention of the community, but the use of space reflects a reality that was not quite in tune with the ideal. It is difficult to disentangle whether a group's power determined the size and location of a residence or whether a large and advantageously placed structure enhanced the group's influence, or both, but regarded in any way, power and the built environment of Ephrata are inextricably intertwined.

Ephrata's space as an exercise in social control

The shift to a communal way of life can be seen not only as an expression of Ephrata's beliefs and ideals, but also, perhaps more sinisterly, as a means by which Beissel kept the community under his control. It would have been easier for him to shepherd a flock than to attempt to lead many autonomous, solitary individuals.

As mentioned before, this new living arrangement was not to everyone's liking at first. The sisters appear to have been more tightly constrained by the new order – brothers were able to continue living in cabins, but sisters do not appear to have done so – and reacted in various ways, by running away, or by setting up a separate household. Bach suggests that the sisters' "second house" (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:I:38) may have been built because one group was less willing to submit to Beissel's control (Bach 1997:269). According to the *Chronicon*, some sisters maintained, in time-honored Christian tradition, that they had no head above them but Christ (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:91) – in other words, they did not acknowledge Beissel as their leader. This schism does not seem to have lasted long, judging by the paucity of comments concerning it.

Despite these early disagreements, the sisters seem to have been firmer supporters of Beissel, as well as closer to him, than the rest of the congregation. During the time Bethaus and the Zion saal both stood, the sisters, using the former, were separated from the brothers and householders, under Beissel's sole direction (Ernst 1963:164). Beissel even lived with the sisters in their house for a time. Most tellingly, when the community split and some brothers followed the Eckerlins, the sisters stayed with Beissel (although the prioress probably schemed with Prior Onesimus).

Why do the sisters give the appearance of being such strong supporters? Perhaps Beissel's charisma really did have an unusually strong effect on women, as many husbands feared. More likely, the sisters may have agreed with Beissel, or at least appreciated his doctrines, which freed them from some restrictions they would

have had to face in the outside world, notably childbearing and raising. There may simply have been no female rebel on a par with the Eckerlin brothers to tear apart that section of the community. The effect of cultural conditioning that led the sisters to expect and accept male leadership must also be taken into account. It was probably a combination of these factors that kept the sisters from causing the same kinds of problems in the community as the brothers did. It should also be well noted that all the chroniclers of Ephrata were men, who naturally knew little of any internal politics among the sisters, and things may not have been quite so peaceful as they appear, nor love for Beissel so universal.

Beissel's hold over Ephrata may have slipped a little during the Eckerlin years, but consideration of the built environment shows that he was firmly in charge of one fundamental aspect of life: where people lived. Beissel dictated the placement and ordered the construction (and destruction) of all major buildings. His ordering of the community in this way kept people in the places he determined, doing what he wished...at least for the most part.

Beissel decided that his followers should live communally, that the sisters and brothers should live separately, that each order should have its own prayer house and then that the householders should have one. His wishes overrode the desires of others, most notably in the decision of where Bethania should be located, in which instance Beissel's direction to put it near Saron won out over the brothers' request to have plenty of distance between the two. It was Beissel who dictated the physical shape of the community as well as where each order lived and worshiped. The most anyone else ever attempted in that realm was the brothers' plan to add an addition to

Zion. The Eckerlins tried to exercise some of the same kind of control, both in the aforementioned endeavor and in attempting to force Beissel to live in a cell in Zion like an ordinary brother. Their efforts failed, but the attempt illustrates the control of space as a recognized way of exerting power.

Beissel, for his part, may have been making his influence known by living in turn in the midst of each group. He moved around a lot, but his movements can be reconstructed to some degree. He first lived in Elimelech's house, the first house in the settlement, but once Kedar was built he moved into the communal structure (the ever-complaining Sangmeister gripes that after the move the brothers had to renovate the old house "and work with clay [for chinking] in the bitter cold" (1980 [1825]:I:36)). After not quite two and a half years in Kedar, Beissel moved to a third location between Kedar and Berghaus (Ernst 1963:184), reportedly because the sisters so loved him that their constant interruptions disturbed his work (Alderfer 1985:76). Later he gave up this new cabin to Onesimus and moved into Peniel, then continued to change residences numerous times. The contrast between Beissel playing the humble brother and Onesimus as the haughty prior persecuting him was highlighted by these actions. In 1744 Beissel moved into Zion, but the next summer he moved back out, to yet another solitary cabin, alleging that Onesimus had "seized his person" (Alderfer 1985:100-103). Onesimus did not give up easily, but forced Beissel to move five times in six months. The prior intended to make Beissel live in one of the rooms of Zion, like a common brother, but he was overthrown before he could implement this plan (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:179-180). Finally, in 1760 a one and a half story cabin was built south of Peniel expressly for the

Superintendent (Zerfass 1975:12). Beissel spent the last years of his life in this structure, which stands to this day. It was an advantageous location. The house's placement gave it a view of all three convents in the valley (Kedar, Saron, and Bethania) and let Beissel oversee, literally and figuratively, almost everyone in his domain. This modest house can be seen as an Ephrathite version of a panopticon.

The physical activity of building was probably another avenue for communal control. It may have helped integrate new members into Ephrata by means of shared work (Bach 1997:266). The work forged a bond among the workers and reinforced Beissel's position as leader, since everyone must always have been aware that every aspect of the building was under his direction. At the same time it left little time for other, potentially disruptive activities. This latter element seems to have been recognized to some degree, as the *Chronicon* describes the householders as being "kept...in continual straits" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:127) by the constant building – although they held responsible for these "straits" not Beissel, but God.

The entire sequence of building at Ephrata can be seen as a back and forth struggle for influence between two factions: Beissel and the Eckerlins, along with the supporters of each. When Kedar was built, Beissel was consolidating his power of leadership, aided by the ushering in of a new age of communal living. Then, with the rise in influence of the (at least potentially) rival brotherly faction and the building of Zion, Beissel reacted by naming Ephrata with reference to Benoni, son of sorrow. A struggle began over control of the householders in their place of worship: with Beissel in Bethaus, with the brothers in Zion, with Beissel in Peniel. Then, when Beissel seemed to have won that battle, the Eckerlins tried to exert power over the

householders in a way beyond controlling which saal they used, by influencing them to divorce and move into Hebron. Beissel soon took over Hebron and reversed the Eckerlins' policy, then finally eliminated his rivals and forced their supporters to move to a location of his choice. With Bethania, Beissel brought the brothers back under his control and humbled them, making himself the undisputed master of Ephrata, in fact as well as in name.

Not only construction but destruction as well could be used as a means of social control. If Bethaus was torn down for some kind of moral reason, because of trysting or as a reproach to the community, a message about Ephrata's values was sent by the razing. Bethaus was not the only building to bite the dust. Berghaus too was torn down for firewood "under suspicion of similar disorders" (Lamech and Agrippa 1889 [1786]:202-203). More than one house being demolished for this reason makes one wonder if there was actually some truth to the persistent gossip about "whoremongering." It is more likely, though, that this was simply a convenient excuse to remove buildings that Beissel found politically problematic.

The cases of destruction regarding Eckerlin-tainted things have been mentioned before. Beissel also expressed the intention to demolish the house Sangmeister and others lived in as soon as they left (Sangmeister 1980 [1825]:IX:23). It seems evident from this that whenever Beissel had a difference of opinion with a person or group, his reaction was to tear down their house, physically eradicating any reminder of their presence. The warning to others when this happened must have been clear.

Beissel directed all the building up and tearing down, dictated the living situations of the members of his flock, and rearranged the landscape to serve his

political needs. It appears obvious that he was using these elements of space to keep Ephrathite society under his control. And he did it so effectively, yet subtly, that he triumphed over all opposition in the end without appearing to be a tyrant.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

For over a century Ephrata has fascinated historians and writers and drawn much speculation in attempts to explain obscure architectural features or the relationship of one building to another. This speculation has focused heavily on possible religious and/or mystical explanations. Until recently, most commentators have been content to treat Ephrata from a historical perspective, analyzing only the events reported to have happened by the primary sources. The earlier writers were hampered by the limited archaeology done at the time and therefore by an incomplete knowledge of the built environment in which the brothers and sisters lived. The combination of archaeology with use of the historic documents and theories of architecture and power enables new kinds of insights into the nature of the construction and placement of architectural features in relation to issues of power in the community, ideas that are somewhat at variance with the harmonious portrait painted by Ephrata apologists.

Ephrata's built environment certainly did reflect the community's religious beliefs, emphasizing worship, community, and asceticism in its structures, spatial arrangement, and furnishings. However, this was only one of several messages being

communicated through the medium of buildings. Some aspects of the architecture did indeed illustrate mystical principles, but other ideas were being conveyed as well: not just religious ideals, but also more worldly concerns of power and control.

The people of Ephrata may not have always lived up to their ideals, but their surroundings reminded them of the principles they aspired to. The centrality of worship, the importance of communal life, the effort to overcome humanity and become angelic – all were reflected in facets of the environment, where prayer houses and large dormitories with austere accommodations dominated the landscape.

The struggle for power between Beissel and the Zionitic Brotherhood is also illustrated by various buildings' size, placement, and relation to each other, an illustration that was probably much more obvious to the contemporary Ephrathites than to subsequent generations. Zion, standing above everything else, becoming grander and grander, contrasted sharply with the rest of the community below and represented a way of life at odds with the values expressed by Beissel and his supporters. For a time power in the community was focused largely on the hill, but once the center of power shifted back to Beissel, the landscape changed dramatically, with both new construction and destruction illustrating the political change.

Consideration of the events surrounding changes made in living arrangements and construction and destruction of buildings, and of who made the decisions about these changes, suggests that the built environment was a key element in social control at Ephrata. Power struggles and conflicts that are glossed over as much as possible in the official chronicles are starkly illuminated by the architectural remains of the community.

Without recent archaeological work, in particular the discovery of the location of Kedar, the pattern of buildings in relation to social issues would not be so clear. The assumption by many in the past that Kedar was located on the same hill as Zion, for example, lends itself to an entirely different interpretation, one in which the combination of placement and power is not as apparent. Indeed, Ephrata is one site where the historical and archaeological components of historical archaeology truly illuminate each other. Without the historical documents, we could not know as much about the reasons behind the placement of the buildings, nor about the inhabitants of each one. Without the archaeology, we would be unable to apply the history as effectively, since so much is left unstated in the written record. If either of these factors were left out, a whole aspect of Ephrata would remain hidden from us.

There are many possible reasons for a number of aspects of Ephrata's built environment, and so it is next to impossible to say for certain, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that any one reason lies behind any particular aspect. It *can* be said that Ephrata was more complicated, passionate, and full of inner turmoil, and less selfless, harmonious, and excessively mystical, than common knowledge would have it. Examination of the built environment is one step toward fleshing out the picture of this unique and complex community faced with the same concerns as any other, whose buildings expressed more harmony than the society itself.



Figure 8: God's Acre. Although the original Ephrata has passed away, much can be learned from its remains.

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