

GEOPHYSICAL INVESTIGATION OF AN 18TH CENTURY SCHOOLHOUSE IN TRAPPE, PA

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The history of Pennsylvania is rich with stories of national heritage. Historical associations in this region strive to document and preserve these tales with special attention to the truth of the details. In Upper Providence Township, the true location of a historic schoolhouse was lost following its deconstruction in the early 1900s. This location, in Trappe, PA, was home to three iterations of schoolhouses in the 1700s. The first schoolhouse was constructed by the Augustus Congregation in 1742 as a log building with a stone fireplace and chimney. This was replaced in 1750 with a larger log schoolhouse with living quarters. In 1793, the congregation rebuilt the schoolhouse one last time using stone. This building was significant as it was the first public school in the township. The stone schoolhouse was also used as a private school, a Sunday school, and a printing press over the last century of its existence, with a rector and sexton using the schoolhouse in one of the earliest attempts to render the New Testament in modern English. This piece of local history is preserved and recognized by a model stone schoolhouse on the grounds, but historians now question the exact location and dimensions of the old schoolhouse. GPR and magnetometer surveys were performed using 0.73m line spacing to pinpoint the exact location of the foundation stones which are now buried beneath soil and to identify evidence of the number of fireplaces the schoolhouse contained, a point of contention among historians researching the area. Analysis of the data clearly shows the foundation of the schoolhouse despite the disturbance of the ground by several other more recent anthropogenic geophysical anomalies. The survey results have led to plans for archaeological excavation.