



FRANTZ HOUSE

CHRIStIAN Frantz, the first Mennonite in Franklin County, came over from the Lancaster area in the spring of 1825. Christian's great-grandfather Michael, also a Mennonite, had landed in America in 1670. Born in 1786, Christian Frantz in 1808 married Anna, the daughter of Abraham Frick, who was the grandfather of George Frick, the founder of Frick Company. After being made a minister of the Reformed Mennonite church, Christian bought a big farm, east of Waynesboro, from John Stoner. In 1828 he purchased the home of John Philip Reed, where he lived until he occupied this house.

Though a farmer, Christian gave most of his time to preaching and missionary work. He established a church at Ringgold in 1827. Services were later held at stated intervals in the churches he started at Hagerstown, Chambersburg, Loudon, and Shippensburg. For many years he was the only ordained minister of that faith in this whole region. He rode horseback as far west as Illinois. When his followers built a house of worship in Waynesboro, in 1876 (the brick building now occupied by the Vulcan Machine Company) it was called Frantz's church. His people hereabouts were, indeed, known as Frantzites as much as disciples of Menno Simon.

In 1843 Bishop Frantz retired from farming and built a brick house near the old Fairview mill.

Here he lived until his death in 1862. The mill burned down about 1895. The Frantz house by the big watercress pond went to his son John, and then to Jacob Shoemaker, who married John's daughter. Thirty-odd years ago it was bought by Daniel Hess. The house extends out from a hillside, and has two springs and a fruit cave in its 5-room cellar, where the kitchen originally was. There are eleven rooms above. The farm, now of 70 acres, has a tremendous barn, plus numerous other buildings.

Most of Christian's boys went into farming. Part of John Frantz's land became Wayne Heights. The youngest of Christian's seven sons, Benjamin, studied medicine, and opened a practice in Waynesboro in 1846. His early work included all kinds of surgery, even dentistry. Later he specialized in ear, nose, throat and lung disorders. He lived to be the dean of the medical profession in this county. Samuel, another of Christian's sons, operated Fairview mill: he was the grandfather of Samuel F. Newman. John Frantz's only son Amos, now 93, resides in York. He and Mrs. Linnie C. Fahnestock, Samuel's daughter, are the only living members of the "third generation."

Watercress used to be sold from the pond every winter. After Daniel Hess acquired the place the Church of the Brethren baptized new members in the pool: the concrete platform, with its iron rail, is still there.

No indication of
name of publication.