



Old Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemetery

The Buffalo Presbyterian Church, organized in 1773, was the first church established in Buffalo Valley, only five years after the territory was opened to settlement. Scots-Irish Presbyterians first met in the countryside where the Old Buffalo Church would later be built. In c. 1784, Edward and Joseph Shippen gave 5 acres to the Presbyterian congregation on which to build a meetinghouse and burial place-at what is now the intersection of Buffalo Road/Route 192, and Buffalo Cross Road.

The first meetinghouse was a log structure with 3 doors and 9 windows: one window located behind the pulpit plus 2 on each side, front and back. In 1791, thirty-six pews were rented, for 1 pound 9 shillings, up to 3 pounds, 5 shillings, and occupied by 83 members.

In 1816, a stone church replaced the log structure. The building was 52 feet by 40 feet, containing 4 rows of seats and the pulpit. Jacob Hartman did all the carpentry work and painting for \$625, and William McLaughlin did the masonry work for 75 cents per perch (16.5 feet). The cornerstone was laid July 23, 1816 and the building completed by December 29, 1816. This stone church stood at the northwest corner of the cemetery grounds.

In 1846 the present Greek Revival, brick structure was constructed, necessitated by the early deterioration of the stone church when its foundation became unsound.

Stones from the 1816 church were used in the foundation of the brick church and in part of the cemetery wall.

Ministers serving this congregation included Reverend Hugh Morrison, a native of Ireland (serving from 1787 until 1801), Thomas Hood (1805-1835), Isaac Grier (1835-1884), W. K. Foster (1885-1890), E. H. Snook (1891-1899), and M. H. Calkins (1900-1919).

Over the years, worshipers had come from all parts of Union County to Old Buffalo Church, but as the neighboring towns grew, membership declined as families joined churches closer to their homes. The last 19 members transferred to the Lewisburg church in 1919. Old Buffalo has been called the “Mother of Churches” because from its membership the following churches were formed: Mifflinburg Presbyterian in 1819; Bethel-Washington, Allenwood, in 1831; Laurel Run, later Hartleton, in 1832; Lewisburg in 1833; and New Berlin in 1841.

Revolutionary War soldiers John Campbell, Wm. Irwin, George Lashells, Alexander McEwen, and Hugh Wilson; War of 1812 veterans Wm. Cornelius, James Magee, John McGee; and Civil War soldiers George W. Lashells, David M'Creight, Isaac Magee, Joshua Weiser are among those buried at Buffalo Crossroads Cemetery.

The *Old Buffalo Presbyterian Church Cemetery Association* has maintained the cemetery since acquiring it from the Northumberland Presbytery in 1975. At the same time, the *1773 Buffalo Church Association* took ownership of the church and grounds, and is bound by deed to maintain it for religious and historic purposes. The church can be rented for weddings and other approved events.

In 1975 Buffalo Church was included in the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places, and on January 30, 1976, it was enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places. The old oak trees on site are estimated to be over 200 years old.

To learn more about Old Buffalo Church, read *Old Buffalo Church by the 1773 Buffalo Church Association*; Linn's *Annals of Buffalo Valley*; Snyder's *Union County, Pennsylvania: A Celebration of History*; *Union County Heritage V. II*, 1970, and other material at the Union County Historical Society library.