

John Stamm Pennsylvania Preacher and Tool Maker 1808-1877

by William P. Neyer

The earliest manufacturing enterprises of Mount Joy, Pennsylvania, were of the kind common to most villages. Mount Joy was a great industrial town, having blacksmiths, wagon builders, coopers, weavers, millers, molders, and toolmakers. Among the abundant and well-recognized tradesmen of Mount Joy in this era, which included the Brady Family, John Snyder, P. Shonk, W. Kuhn, and Henry Stager, was the preacher and toolmaker, John Stamm (Figure 1).

Since I have been a resident of Mount Joy for the last forty-five years, and have a variety of Stamm tools in my collection, I decided to do research and see what I could learn about this early planemaker from my hometown.

According to the Stamm family history, the first Stamm of whom they have a record was a John Stamm who emigrated from Germany to America about 1740. He settled near Manheim, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and engaged in the tailoring business. He had seven children, including Joseph, a carpenter, who lived in Manheim.

Joseph married and had a son, John Stamm, who was born 29 November 1808. He is the subject of this article and was the grandson of that first Stamm immigrant from Germany in 1740.

John Stamm married Hannah Spera from Ephrata, Lancaster County on 12 October 1830.¹ In the 1833 tax records of Cocalico Township, he is listed as "inmate" or renter with carpentry as his occupation, and with the additional note, "owned 1 cattle; tax 18½¢." In 1835-36, he was listed as cabinetmaker, but no longer a renter.²

In 1836 John Stamm moved to Earl Township in the vicinity of Hinkletown, known as "Chickentown" in Dutch country, located between Ephrata and New Holland, Pennsylvania. According to the tax records, he

owned one lot valued at \$260, paid county tax of 31¢, and school tax of 26¢. From 1839 to 1846 he is listed as a joiner of cabinetmaker, owning one house and lot.³ By 1840 he and his wife Hannah had five children—two boys and three girls.⁴

During his years at Hinkletown, he was active in making wooden planes and gauges, which were signed, J.STAMM.HINKLETOWN and J.STAMM.HINKLETOWN LAN CO PA. Other known planes, are signed, J. STAMM. This stamp was possibly used early in his career, before he included the location where the tools were made.

In 1837 he took on an added avocation when he received his license to preach the gospel in the Church of God, as an ordained minister. He was quite active in Hinkletown and surrounding areas, having a preaching circuit of 150 miles with fifteen to twenty appointments. Those travels between 1837 and 1852 extended into Dauphin, Lebanon, and Schuylkill Counties, Pennsylvania.⁵

In a letter in *The Church Advocate*, the Church of God newspaper, of March 1851, John states that he is traveling to Mount Joy to assist in the

great work of the new church there.⁶ The church records of 8 March 1853 list him as a member of the Mount Joy Church of God. The 1853 tax record of Mount Joy borough lists him as having two lots, one horse, two cattle, and yearly income from trades or occupation above \$200. No occupation is listed.⁷

According to the record of deeds in the Lancaster County Court House, on 2 April 1853, Stamm purchased one lot with a two-story brick dwelling, situated on the south side of West Donegal Street in the borough of Mount Joy, from William Johnston for \$800. On 12 April that same year, he purchased a portion of land for \$90, adjoining the first property, from W. Brady, the well-



Figure 1. John Stamm