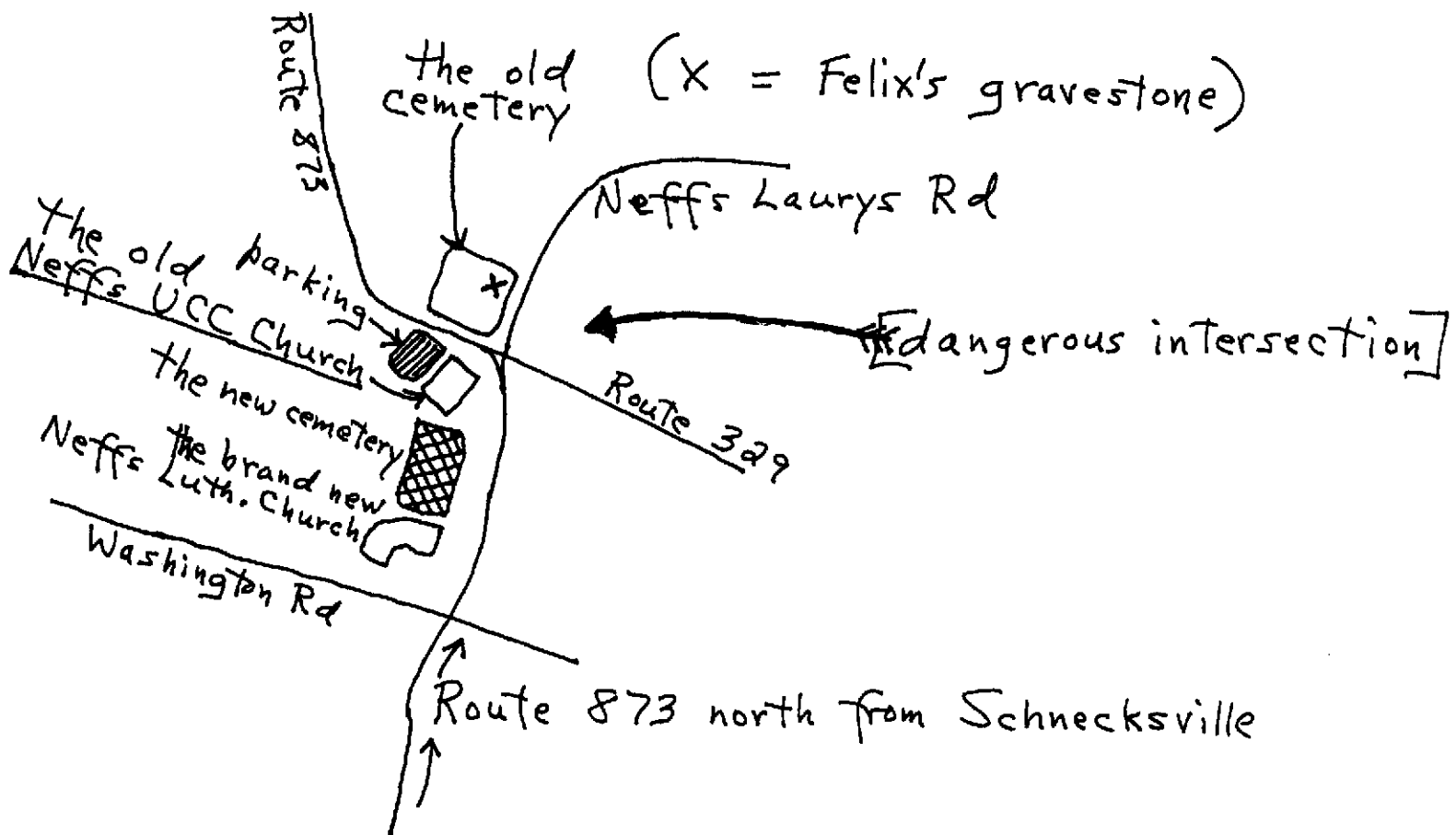


Neffs Church



Schlosser's (Neffs) Church

In 1755, the Schlosser family donated approximately 100 acres of land in this area to be used for church purposes. The first log church was erected by the Reformed congregation that same year, and it was known as "Schlosser's Church" in honor of the family who donated the land.

There were also Lutheran settlers living in the area of Schlosser's Church, and because the church building was not used every Sunday by the Reformed congregation (because the preacher was often at another one of the churches in his charge), the Lutherans were invited to share the use of this church building. There are records indicating that a minister was serving the Lutheran congregation on a regular basis at least as early as 1762.

However, the formal Schlosser's Union Church wasn't created until 1795, when both the Reformed and the Lutheran congregations signed a contract agreeing to share all debts and assets.

In 1797, a new second church building was constructed, this one being built of stone. During this period, the church was sometimes also known as the "Scrub Oak Church", due to the many scrub oak trees in the area. A pipe organ was installed in this church building in 1821.

A third church building, being built of brick, was constructed in 1871. The old pipe organ was moved to the new church building, and was used until a new pipe organ was installed in 1912. The current modern organ was installed in 1941. Stained glass windows were installed in 1930.

Many other repairs and improvements have been made to the church buildings over the years, and many additions have been constructed. Much of the original land donation was sold off over the years, and the proceeds from these sales were used to finance some of the many repairs, improvements, and additions.

In the old cemetery, people were buried in rows, in the order of their date of death. This does make it somewhat difficult to locate family graves, especially since many of the earliest gravestones were made of soft stone or even wood, and most of them no longer exist or are virtually illegible. The new cemetery was created in 1866, and much of it consists of family plots.

Felix² Arner, son of Hans Ulrich and Verena, is buried in the old cemetery here (see map on next page). His gravestone is the oldest known surviving Arner gravestone in America. However, it is now very close to being completely illegible.

Felix and his family were members of Schlosser's Church from a fairly early date. Since he received his first warrant for land of his own in 1752, it's possible that he could have been one of the earliest members (depending on the location of the land in that warrant, which I haven't researched). Whenever he moved to the homestead at what is now 5731 Paradise Road, the Schlosser's Church was the most convenient to that location. But it's fairly certain that he was a member of this church by sometime in the 1760s. (See the Lehigh County Churches Timeline.)