



Coldstream Meetinghouse - 1859

# Newsletter

CANADIAN FRIENDS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

60 LOWTHER AVENUE, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5R 1C7

NO. 9

Tenth Month 1974

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ASSOCIATION'S MEETING OF AUGUST 16, MEMRAMCOOK INSTITUTE, ST. JOSEPH'S, N.B.

PRESENT In spite of the attraction of other "Interest Groups" at Yearly Meeting there was an attendance of about 30.

CHAIRMAN In the temporary absence of the Chairman, Grace Pincos opened the meeting at 2.15 p.m.

INTRODUCTION It was pointed out that at our meeting held at Niagara in 1973 it was agreed to hold our annual meeting in November when there would be no other event taking place. This makes it possible today to go at once into our programme without preliminary business. Since we try to have a programme in keeping with the area where Yearly Meeting is held the topic this year is Early Quakers in the Maritimes. We were most fortunate that Ralph Greene from Brunswick, Maine, was able to come up to Yearly Meeting. Alaine Hawkins, who visited with him on her way down to Yearly Meeting was called upon to introduce him.

Ralph Greene, she pointed out was no stranger to Friends, having worked on service projects with Halifax Friends, and earlier with the Canadian Friends Service Committee in the Toronto area (A survey of the contacts of Quaker Meetings across Canada with Indians, and work camps with Young Friends, one of which was the painting of the Yonge Street Meeting House). He has done extensive work on the subject of Early Quakers in New England and the Maritimes in connection with a thesis for

the University of Maine. The beautiful picture map displayed on the first floor outlining the religious visit of Sybil and Eli Jones to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1840 was done by Ralph Greene, with drawings supplied by Wes Nickerson, now attending the Nova Scotia College of Art.

NOTES ON THE QUAKERS IN THE MARITIMES\*

Ralph Greene

There seems to have been two motives for the movement of Quakers to the Maritimes in the late eighteenth century. One group sought economic success where others came as political refugees. Friends emigrated to Nova Scotia for economic reasons whereas the Quaker settlement in New Brunswick was for political considerations.

Nova Scotia

There was a direct relationship between the settlement of Quakers in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and the experience Captain Stephen Hussey had in 1702 when he was blown out to sea in a small boat off Nantucket Island in Massachusetts. Captain Hussey found himself surrounded by a large school of whales. He refused to panic, killed one of the creatures and towed it back to the island. Nantucketeers discovered that there was great wealth to be found in whaling. A large proportion of the islanders were Quakers who grew very wealthy on the international whale fisheries.

Serious troubles developed as a result of the American Revolution. Economic troubles beset the island. Fortunes were lost resulting in great poverty and out-migration. Nantucket was in the middle of an area where a great deal of naval activity between warring parties took place. Quakers tried to maintain their peace testimony but were misunderstood by both sides. When the war was

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\* Notes from a talk given to the C.F.H.A. at St. Joseph's, N.B. Eighth Mo. 16, 1974.

over, economic depression set in. The British government made trade difficult between the former colonies and British territories. Quaker whaling merchants began to look elsewhere for possibilities of reviving the depressed whaling industry. There was even talk of secession from the United States.

It was natural that they should look to Nova Scotia. Years earlier some Nantucket Quakers had settled in Barrington, Nova Scotia and at Granville near Annapolis Royal. There had been a scheme to establish a Quaker colony at Port Roseway. Samuel Starbuck, Jr. and Timothy Folger approached Governor Parr of Nova Scotia with the proposition of setting up a whaling centre at Dartmouth across the bay from Halifax. Permission was granted and forty families or 294 people moved to the area from Nantucket. They even dismantled and brought their frame houses from the Island, reconstructing them again on Canadian soil.

The Friends then set up their preparative meeting which was under the care of Nantucket Monthly Meeting. The site of the old meeting house is where the Dartmouth Post Office now stands. This colony prospered until government antagonism made it difficult for survival. The government in London did not wish to have competition in their fisheries. There were also strong feelings because these Quakers came for economic reasons rather than because they suffered for their loyalty to the king.

The British government then encouraged the Quaker sailors to emigrate to Milford Haven in Wales. Most of the Dartmouth colony did so in 1791 where they were joined by other Nantucket exiles who were forced from their homes in Dunkirk, France because of the French Revolution. The Quaker settle-

ment in Nova Scotia began to wither away until the Quakers disappeared altogether as a group in the early nineteenth century.

### New Brunswick

An advertisement appeared in the Royal Gazette in 1783 which read:

Notice is hereby given to those of the people called Quakers who have entered into an agreement to settle together in Nova-Scotia that they are requested to meet at the house of Joshua Knight, No. 36 in Chatham-street, a little above the Tea-Water Pump, on Seventh Day next, the 5th of July, at four o'Clock Afternoon, in order to conclude upon some matters of importance to them, and those who mean to join the above-mentioned body are requested to call at No. 188, Water-street, between the Coffee-House Bridge and the Fly-Market, and have their names entered as soon as possible. \*

Joshua Knight was an Abington, Pennsylvania Quaker Loyalist. He became enthusiastic about a dream to establish a Quaker colony in the Maritimes. His vision included the building of a new Philadelphia in the north.

In the fall of 1784 the ship Camel reached Beaver Harbour, New Brunswick to unload a cargo of Quaker settlers. It was reported that eight hundred settlers eventually came. Over three hundred houses were built and the plans for a city laid out. An additional six hundred families expressed interest in coming but Governor Parr felt uneasy about such a large influx. As it turned out, the first winter was extremely difficult; the settlers were ill prepared.

In 1785, Friends planned and built a meeting house and cemetery. The meeting house was twenty five feet by twenty feet. The expected prosperity never came. Extreme poverty set in. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends took the small colony under its care. In 1785 they sent up a collection of books. In the summer of 1786 John Townsend, Joseph Moore, Abraham Gibbons from New Jersey with Shubad Coffin and Thomas Robinson, Jr. from New England visited. After their visit more relief came in. Irish Friends sent £400, New York sent £90 of flour and food. Another shipment of corn meal, middlings, rye meal and pork to the value of £180 were sent in. English Friends shipped food, agricultural implements and clothing in 1788.

The colony struggled until 1790 when a great forest fire came, burning down the whole village, except for one house. Quakers then dispersed to other areas of the Maritimes mixing in with the general population. Some of the settlers stayed on in Pennfield but the Quaker character was lost.

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\* A.J. Mekeel. The Quaker-Loyalist Migration to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1783 (In Friends Historical Association. Bulletin. v.32, Autumn 1943, p.66.)

A number of attempts were made to bring the Quaker message to the Maritimes in the following years but without lasting effect. Some Maritimers were to be convinced by this missionary activity and were placed under the care of the China, Maine, Monthly Meeting. Individual Friends could be found in the Annapolis Valley and in Pictou County during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

LOCATING THE PENNFIELD, N.B. SETTLEMENT

AND BURIAL GROUND

Grace Pincoe

In the week before Yearly Meeting as a preparation for this meeting I visited first the Archives at Fredericton and St. John and then took a bus to the area around Pennfield Ridge. The confusion of names beginning with Pennfield - Pennfield Ridge, Pennfield Corners, Pennfield Parrish, and Pennfield Township - seemed likely to make finding the actual spot improbable. Through the kindly offices of the SMT bus driver and several sympathetic passengers I was directed to extend my ticket to St. George, lodge at the Murray House, and to engage the town taxi-man, Mr. Parks "who knows all about the history around here" to drive me around to the various coves and harbours.

At Beaver Harbour Mr. Parks introduced me to an old gentleman, Mr. Cross, who hearing of our search pointed at once across several fields to where a memorial erected by the Charlotte County Historical Society was just visible. This memorial is located "right in the Harbour", about 200 yards back of the fish factory. It stands about eight feet high and consists of the plaque itself which hangs from a horizontal bar on two chains, and is protected from the elements by a peaked roof - a most becoming rustic structure. The inscription on the plaque would please the early Quakers resting there with its simplicity and brevity. It reads: BURIAL GROUND / FIRST QUAKER SETTLERS / 1783 / LEADER JOSHUA KNIGHT / CHARLOTTE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. The memorial was unveiled at a simple ceremony on October 27, 1968, when Mrs. Olive Mitchell Magowan, chairman of the society's Historical Sites Committee gave the historical address.

That evening in her almost two hundred year old house in St. George to which Mr. Parks had carefully directed me she told me more about the project and gave me a copy of her address on that occasion and several other pertinent items to reproduce for our library. After the Quakers laid down that Meeting the Baptists bought the Meeting House. When the Baptists no longer used it for a church they rented it to an elderly gentleman. When ploughing-skulls were found! When Mrs. Magowan and her committee began work the field was in a sorry state. Nothing daunted this committee who were not Quakers, solicited funds and aid. The Charlotte County Historical Society gave fifty dollars, the Conner fish factory sent their bulldozer over to clear obstructions; the Baptists gave permission for the erection of the memorial. "But" said Mrs. Magowan, "there is so much more to do and where can we raise the money?" That's a good question which we hope we can help to answer.

ASSOCIATION'S BUS VISIT TO

ROCKWOOD, ONTARIO

Anna Hemmendinger Chamberlin

On June 22nd 1974, a bus load of Friends and friends of the Canadian Friends Historical Association departed from the Toronto Meeting House to visit and explore the pioneer Quaker boarding school, Rockwood Academy and the surrounding area. Kathleen Hertzberg spoke of the history of Rockwood Academy as we travelled in the bus. Our itinerary for the day was:

- I. Arrival at Burton Hill's in the town of Rockwood.
  - A. Exploration of the area surrounding his house now part of a conservation area.
    1. The Harris Woollen Mill.
    2. Caves.
    3. The Hill's House and their grounds.
- II. Lunch at the Hill's.
- III. Visit to Rockwood Academy.
- IV. Adjoining Burial Ground.
- V. Presbyterian Church, formerly a Quaker Meeting House.
- VI. Grist Mill.
- VII. Return to Toronto.

The Hill's house was of special interest because it was owned formerly by the Harris family, who ran the Harris Woolen Mill nearby, and who were early Quaker pioneers in that area.

The Harris Woollen Mill, the interior of which was gutted by fire within the last ten years, still stands in ruins as a monumental stone structure. The old Mill Pond is now part of the conservation area.

A short distance beyond the Mill were several natural caves. Some of these were large enough for a small person to stand up in. Some Friends wished they had brought spelunking equipment.

After our walk we returned to the Hill's where we enjoyed our sack lunches on their lawn. The Kitchener area Friends joined us and provided delicious dessert treats. Arthur Clayton shared his lunchbox of homegrown freshly-picked strawberries.

We proceeded from the Hill's house to the Rockwood Academy. The building as it now stands is an impressive structure constructed of stone with a stucco finish in what is sometimes characterized as a "simplified Georgian style". Though the building is massive, one is impressed with the overall simplicity in the design. The Academy reminded some Friends of Founder's Hall at Haverford College, a Quaker college in Pennsylvania.

Yosef Drenters, a sculptor, is the current owner of Rockwood Academy. He acquired it in 1960, and has worked at restoring it himself since then. Yosef Drenters was born in Belgium and lived there until he was twenty-one when he and his family came to Canada. His father purchased a farm north of Guelph, where Yosef worked. When Yosef came into town to purchase supplies for his father, he would see Rockwood Academy, and hoped then to own it some day.

Our group was met by Yosef Drenters at the steps of the Academy. There he told us of the history of the Academy before we went inside. We learned that the Rockwood Academy was founded by William Wetherald, a Quaker, in 1850 as a boarding school for about sixty boys. The school was first housed in a log cabin nearby, but was replaced in 1854 by the stone structure which now stands.



Yosef Drenters has been keenly interested in William Wetherald as a scholar, pioneer, and independent-minded person. He told us of Wetherald's special interest in the Bible. The following story is often told about Wetherald. When he was a young man he wanted to buy a pen, a writing tablet and a Bible. He laboured to make some ax handles to exchange at the General Store for the above items. The store keeper said the handles were not good enough to sell, but when he learned what Wetherald wanted, he took the handles and gave him the goods anyway. Wetherald then spent seven years cross-referencing his own Bible, not knowing that such cross-referenced Bibles were available commercially.

Several facets of Wetherald's character were related in the course of the afternoon. Perhaps most exciting of all was Margaret Pennington's story of her encounter with him in 1896, when she was only four years old. She remembers standing next to her mother, who, wearing a dress with long tight sleeves, was wondering how to do the dishes without getting her sleeves wet. William Wetherald came up to her mother, and taking out his pocket knife, said: "Let me help thee". Margaret Pennington recalled her feeling of alarm on this occasion.

Friends also gained some sense of the kind of student who attended Rockwood Academy. Yosef Drenters read us a letter written by a student to his father which gives some idea of the work which was done. \*

Rockwood, March 8, 1856

Dear Father,

I arrived here in safety, and am learning Geography, Grammar, Reading, Writing, Algebra, Euclid, Latin and French. If you do not wish me to study Latin, please write soon. We have debating School every Tuesday evening. Geo. Lawson and I are opponents. The subject for debate

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\* This letter can also be seen in "The Story of Rockwood Academy" by Hugh Douglass, Guelph, 1962, p. 8-9, obtainable from Friends House Library, Toronto.

next Tuesday is Which could the country spare best, Law and lawyers or Doctors and medicine. I am in the opinion that it could spare the law and lawyers without the least injury. A Mr. Black has singing school every Monday and Thursday evenings. The boys have a Spelling School the other evenings in the week. The Latin and French will be two dollars month extra. If I give up Latin I will have more time for French and other studies. The box of pens you gave me are no good, at least I cannot write with them as they are too broad across the point. Give my love to Aquila, Mrs. Walsh and all my friends. Thomas and Allan Perley are going to leave at Easter. They send their best respects to you. I find French easier than Latin. Last Monday was Christie's birthday. When will your birthday be and how old will you be? I got the leather rubbed a great deal on my trunk in the stage. Mr. Wetherald will enclose a note to you.

I remain your affect. son

L. F. Walsh

to F. S. Walsh  
Simcoe  
C.W.

After exploring the premises of Rockwood Academy, some Friends wandered through the adjoining burial grounds, where stood the first Meeting House, built in 1834. We went down the road to a later Meeting House which was built in 1898, and is now a Presbyterian Church. Arthur Clayton and other Friends recounted some of their memories about the building, its congregation, and Samuel Harris. An exploration of the grist mill adjacent to the Church completed our tour.

There was a very special feeling that came upon me after wandering through the rooms of the Academy and standing in Dreuter's vegetable garden. I sensed the determination, joy, and unity with God that both Wetherald and Drenters must have experienced through their physical and mental labours at the Academy. I felt a great serenity but also great energy and strength. As I stood in the peace of the garden, with the sunshine and the puffy clouds overhead, this quote from Fox came to me:

Stand still in that which is pure, after ye see  
yourselves; and then mercy comes in. After thou seest thy

thoughts, and the temptations, do not think, but submit; and then power comes. Stand still in that which shows and discovers; and then doth strength immediately come. And stand still in the Light, and submit to it, and the other will be hush'd and gone; and then content comes.\*

\* George Fox 1652 as quoted in Christian Faith and Practice 1972 of London Yearly Meeting #406.

NEWS AND NOTES

QUAKER  
CLOTHING  
FOR  
ROYAL  
ONTARIO  
MUSEUM

Last year the association made a call for the contribution of Quaker clothing for the Royal Ontario Museum's textile collection. At present there are no examples of Canadian Quaker dress in the Museum.

As a result of the gift of Mrs. John O'Henly of London, Ontario, the Association was able to provide a variety of items used by her family in England - the Hughes, the Bishops and the Wrights. The items included a seventeenth and several eighteenth century English Samplers, one cross-stitched with the name of Ackworth School and the year 1795, and another sampler marked "Elizabeth Bingham". Also included were a child's sunbonnet, two embroidered collars, a housecap and a three-piece violet silk wedding dress worn by Mrs. O'Henly's grandmother in her Quaker wedding in 1877.

Further word from Canadian Friends who would be willing to make available Canadian Quaker dress for the Museum would be most welcomed by the Association.

MICROFILM PROJECT  
CONTINUES

The Ontario Archives is continuing their project of microfilming all the Quaker records now held at the Library of the University of Western Ontario.

The Archives have completed the filming of all the minute books of the Orthodox and Conservative branches of the Society of Friends and have yet to do the Hicksite books as well as miscellaneous materials.

The work of cataloguing, labelling, etc. and other preparation necessary before they can be used in the reading room has yet to be done.

The materials are in the Private Manuscripts Section of the Archives and may be used for research purposes upon application to the Records Committee of the Canadian Yearly Meeting, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1C7.

NEWS AND NOTES continued

YONGE STREET  
MEETING HOUSE  
RESTORATION

Work on the restoration and renovation of the Yonge Street Friends Meeting House is scheduled to begin this fall. The engineering drawings and detailed plans for the project have been completed by the architect, B. Napier Simpson, Jr.

The first phase is scheduled to be completed by First Month 1976. This will include moving the building, building a poured-concrete basement and replacing the building on top of the basement. The second phase is to be done during 1976.

Campbell Snider of King City, Ontario will be the general contractor for both phases of the work.

The project will cost over \$65,000 to complete and readers who are willing to contribute to the project can do so by sending their contributions to Yonge Street Friends Meeting House Improvement Fund, 375 Second St., Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 4X2. The Fund is a registered Canadian charity and can issue receipts for contributions, which can be used in calculating tax deductions.

ARTICLE TO APPEAR  
IN ROTUNDA

A feature article on the history of the Yonge Street Friends Meeting House will appear in the fall issue of Rotunda, the quarterly publication of the Royal Ontario Museum. The article, entitled "A Meeting Place of Friends" outlines the development of interest by the pioneer Quakers in a meeting house, a discussion of the features of the present building, built in 1810-12, and a description of the proposed alterations and restoration of the building. Members of the Royal Ontario Museum receive the publication without cost, others who are interested may purchase a copy of the issue at the Museum for \$1.25.

ANNUAL MEETING

Keep Saturday November 23rd open for our annual meeting which will be held in London, Ontario. Further details will be available soon in a flyer. This should be a good opportunity for you to see the Quaker Archives at the Library of the University of Western Ontario.

NEXT ISSUE OF  
THE NEWSLETTER

The bibliography on early Quakers in the Maritimes which goes with the feature article of this issue had to be deleted from this issue for lack of space. It will appear in Number 10, which should be out by the end of the year.