

Peaceable Kingdom – Unsound Friends Norwich Monthly Meeting Divided

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Good evening... as I am quite new to the study of the Society of Friends in Canada perhaps I should introduce myself and provide some background to explain my interest in the topic. My name is Mary Beth Start and I have been the curator of the Norwich and District Historical Society's museum for the past four years. I was born in the very north portion of the Township of Norwich, formerly East Oxford, which to the best of my knowledge was largely uninfluenced by the Quaker presence further to the south. I studied history at the University of Guelph eventually focusing on Canada's rural past. This study connected me to the Norwich Archives as I chose to write a paper on the prominence of taverns in rural Upper Canada and their role in a small community. After graduating I was hired at the Museum and oddly enough from taverns I began delving into the community's unique and diverse Quaker heritage.

My original jump into the story of Norwich's Quaker legacy began through a personal interest in the Township's built heritage. My experience with Quaker architecture began with the Lossing saltbox house, currently located on the museum property. My next major endeavour began a

year ago and continues to the present as I strive to compile a near complete history of the purpose-built Friends' Meeting Houses of the Township, both past and present. This project was inspired largely by the building in which I spend my working hours – the 1889 Conservative Friends Meeting House on Stover Street.

This research and compiling of data has taken me further into the Township's Quaker presence than I had anticipated. Originally, I imagined compiling information such as date of construction, building committee members, construction techniques, and general aesthetic tendencies of Quaker architecture. However, as a result of this work I have found myself absorbed in the diverse realities of Quakerism. Through my study of their meeting houses and the relationships I have formed with descendants of the community's Quaker founders, I have found myself striving to learn more about the people, their cooperation, their divisions and, essentially, about the major events and subtleties of their lives, religious and non-religious alike.

It should be noted that the Quaker settlement of which we are celebrating the bicentennial was not the first example of



The original Peter Lossing saltbox house with a later 2-storey addition. The Clayton family is in front of the house. Circa 1910. (All images courtesy Norwich and District Historical Society Archives).

people establishing themselves on the lands of the present Township of Norwich. Samuel and Lucy Canfield settled in the former East Oxford Township as early as 1793 as part of a migration of forty United Empire Loyalist families. In 1807 John Earl and Paul Avery received a land grant on which they erected a grist and saw mill on the Otter Creek near the present site of the Otterville dam. In 1808 Cook and Galloway arrived at Otter Creek Mills and numerous others began settling along the Spitler Creek. Also, in 1808 Josiah Gilbert arrived, settling at Springford.¹

The Quaker presence, unique in its size and momentum, began in June 1810 when Peter Lossing and his brother-in-law, Peter DeLong, purchased 15,000 acres for £1,875.² This significant tract spanned present-day Burgessville, Norwich, Norwich Gore, Milldale, Brown's Corners, and Hawtrey from the 1st to the 12th Concessions in the original Norwich Township.³

Lossing and DeLong were eager to establish an agricultural settlement in Upper Canada. It is possible that Lossing, in particular, was influenced by the overwhelming tide of Quaker

westward migration occurring at this time in the United States. Various motivations existed for westward movement. Some were no doubt inspired by an awakening to the evils of slavery in the United States, some a preference for British Institutions, and others simply a desire to better their existence on good quality affordable land.⁴

In 1809 Lossing and DeLong's ambitions were advanced when Thomas Dorland of Adolphustown arranged an interview for them with William Chewett and Thomas Ridout of the Surveyor General's Office. The Upper Canadian administration was enthusiastic for their plans of large-scale settlement, so much so that Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore met with the men to discuss their intentions.⁵ Undoubtedly all went relatively well for a purchase agreement was reached the following year with absentee landowner William Willcocks. After reaching this agreement, Lossing and DeLong returned to New York State and began persuading others to immigrate to their undisturbed tract in Norwich Township.

The first families to leave their homes in Dutchess County were those of Lossing and Sears Mott. Embarking upon the journey separately they met at Burford where the women and young children remained through the winter months.⁶ The men ventured into the wilderness along blazed trails to locate their land.

According to community legend and described by one of Norwich's early historians, Amelia Poldon, "upon arriving at the site of their new home, Benson [Lossing's young son] began chopping down a tree, and when he had nearly completed his work, his father took the axe from him, claiming the right to fell the first tree."⁷ The winter was spent in rudimentary log huts, cutting trees and clearing a sled road.

By spring 1811 Lossing had completed a comfortable home of hewn timbers with a shingled roof. In a letter dated the 17th of 2nd



Peter Lossing - sketch by unknown artist, date unknown.

We are all blessed with health and as far as I can discover every one of our family is well contented and satisfied that our moving has been for the best. We have not yet moved on our land, but we have near three acres cleared and our house 20 by 36 feet two storeys in such forwardness that I am in hopes in about 3 weeks to move in. We build on a delightful eminence which overlooks nearly all my 400 acres.⁸

These first families were followed in 1811 and 1812 by the DeLongs, Stovers, McLees, Sackriders, Moores, Lancasters, Cornwells, McAuleys, Palmers, Hillikers, Curtises, and Siples. Descendants of many of these founding families still call the Township of Norwich home. There was a significant slowing of settlement during the War of 1812; however, following the war and especially during the 1820s Lossing and DeLong's settlement took firm root.

The Quaker population in the settlement and beyond, into what would become the boundaries of Norwich Monthly Meeting, expanded and established itself rapidly. Local tradition holds that the earliest gatherings of Friends for worship were held in the home of Peter Lossing. In March 1812, Pelham Monthly Meeting officially granted Friends in Norwich the right to hold "a meeting for worship for six months at the house of Joseph Lancaster."⁹ After several extensions in October 1815 Norwich's request for a Preparative Meeting was directed to the Half Year's Meeting for approval.¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, in January 1817 Norwich appealed for the establishment of a regular Monthly Meeting and the committee appointed to visit the community reported that "they attended thereto and think it right that their request should be granted."¹¹ Later that same year the group constructed a one-storey frame meeting house on land donated by Peter Lossing. The building was 50 by 30 feet costing \$1000 and was located on the current site of

the Pioneer Friends Burying Ground on Quaker Street. Also in 1817, Friends in the southern portion of the township were granted an indulged meeting and in July 1818 requested "the privilege of purchasing five acres of land for a meeting house and burial ground."¹² This is presently the site of the Pine Street Burying Ground and the location of our meeting tonight.

Norwich Monthly Meeting continued its rapid expansion and was 'set off' as a separate monthly meeting from Pelham in 1819.¹³ This independent Monthly Meeting consisted of the original Preparative Meeting at Norwich, indulged meetings at Pine Street and Yarmouth, and another at Ancaster. In 1822 concerns were expressed that a group meeting at Talbot Street or Bayham should be joined with the Norwich Monthly Meeting. In 1820 and 1823 respectively Pine Street and Yarmouth became regular Preparative Meetings while Ancaster and Talbot Street never increased in size.¹⁴

It seems that Norwich's Quaker community progressed in relative harmony and cohesion until 1828 when, along with much of American Quakerdom, it found itself divided along 'so-called' doctrinal lines. Early in 1827 Thomas Shillitoe, a prominent Quaker minister from Britain and leader of the evangelical movement in the Society of Friends, visited Norwich. He recorded the following details of his experience in the community:

Fourth-day morning, the meeting for discipline was preceded by a meeting for worship, which was largely attended, but much interrupted by the late comers-in to meeting, and the great number of dogs that were brought to the meeting-place, barking most of the meeting-time: but, alas! As the business of the monthly meeting proceeded, I found there was much more to try the rightly-exercised mind than these things; it soon became manifest, that the enemy to all right order

in religious society had obtained a place in the minds of not a few of the members of this meeting, and that the meeting was become like a house divided against itself: and unless a remedy be soon applied, there appeared no other prospect, but that this monthly meeting must be dissolved, as had been the case with the select monthly meeting: the meeting sat six hours, not because of the multiplicity of business that came before it, but from a want of unanimity in transacting the concerns of the Society.¹⁵

In 1828 the Norwich Friends found themselves distinctly divided along Hicksite and Orthodox lines with each group claiming to be the 'true' Society of Friends and stigmatizing their opponents as separatists.

It is difficult to define or classify the Hicksite and Orthodox branches of the Society at the time of the 1828 separation; however, I have found it useful to distinguish the two along the lines of evangelicalism and Quietism. Arthur Dorland's writing on the topic is helpful in understanding this period of Quakerism in Upper Canada. According to Dorland, "leaders of the Orthodox, evangelical school insisted on scriptural authority and on a body of fundamental Christian doctrine" while the opposing leaders of "the extreme Quietistic type...placed the main emphasis on the mystical and experimental side of religion with a tendency...to depreciate the supreme authority of Scripture, or any indispensable plan of salvation outside the experience of the Light of Christ in the soul."¹⁶ Arising from these seemingly opposing views, the Orthodox leaders came to regard the Quietists as doctrinally unsound and associated their views with ideas of deism and infidelity. On the other hand, the Quietist leaders viewed the evangelical emphasis on sound doctrine as the result of humanity's reason rather than Divine illumination and therefore saw it as contrary to

the traditional position of Quakerism. I have found the following quote from Dorland quite interesting. He states that, "the tragedy was that while both sides claimed to represent Primitive Quakerism, and quoted the early writings of Friends at great length to prove their traditional soundness, both sides lacked either the historical perspective...or the insight to see that fundamentally their positions – when stripped of the theological wrappings – were not so opposite after all."¹⁷ Though both sides considered themselves the true Society of Friends and their opponents as dissenters, it was only the Orthodox group that went to the extent of disowning all opposing members of the meeting. In Norwich Preparative Meeting on 3rd of 12th month 1828 complaints came signed by the overseers against William Cromwell, Amos Scott, Benjamin Fluellen and Daniel Cornell.¹⁸ These complaints were forwarded to the Monthly Meeting. At the next Preparative Meeting on 7th of 1st month 1829 evidence of the separation is clear in the query answers. The first answer is as follows: "All our meetings are attended for worship and discipline by most friends (except most of those at Pine Street and Yarmouth who have gone with the separation)."¹⁹ The second answer states, "Love and unity are maintained amongst us as becomes brethren though not so fully with all as is desired, when differences arise care is taken to end them, talebearing and detraction not so fully avoided as and discouraged as would be best."²⁰ Also at this meeting it is recorded that, "Wm. Cromwell has so far deviated from the good order of our Society and discipline as to join with and be active in setting up separate meetings from us which we consider to be contrary to our discipline."²¹ Similar statements are recorded for Amos Scott, Daniel H. Cornell and Benjamin Fluellen as well as others in subsequent meetings.

Due to the early period of the Hicksite-Orthodox separation resources are limited

especially when trying to gain an appreciation of actions and sentiments of the local Quaker community. A later mention of the various groups is recorded by Lewellys Barker, grandson of William P. Barker and Sarah Stover, in his autobiography *Time and the Physician*. Lewellys was not born until 1867 and is thus separated from the schism by time; however, his writing exhibits the persistence of the divide in the Norwich Quaker community. In the opening chapter he writes, “we youngsters heard much concerning the *Journals* of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, the *Apology* of Robert Barclay, and the writings of William Penn. We learned, too, the ideas of these men about the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and of the Quaker philosophy of life. Though we were taught to believe in the Trinity and in the Bible as a guide to conduct, we were warned against too rigid definitions regarding the Trinity and the inspiration of the Scriptures. At home, my father read to us a chapter of the Bible every day; I have heard the whole of the Bible not once but several times. As orthodox Quakers we deplored of certain heterodox groups – the Hicksites (who were more Unitarian in belief) and the Wilburites. I remember reacting almost in horror, as a boy, when I was told that Elias Hicks had said that ‘the blood of Christ availed no more than the blood of bulls or of goats.’”²² Another later reference to this early split is recorded by Adam Spencer in his reminiscent writings during the final year of his life. He writes:

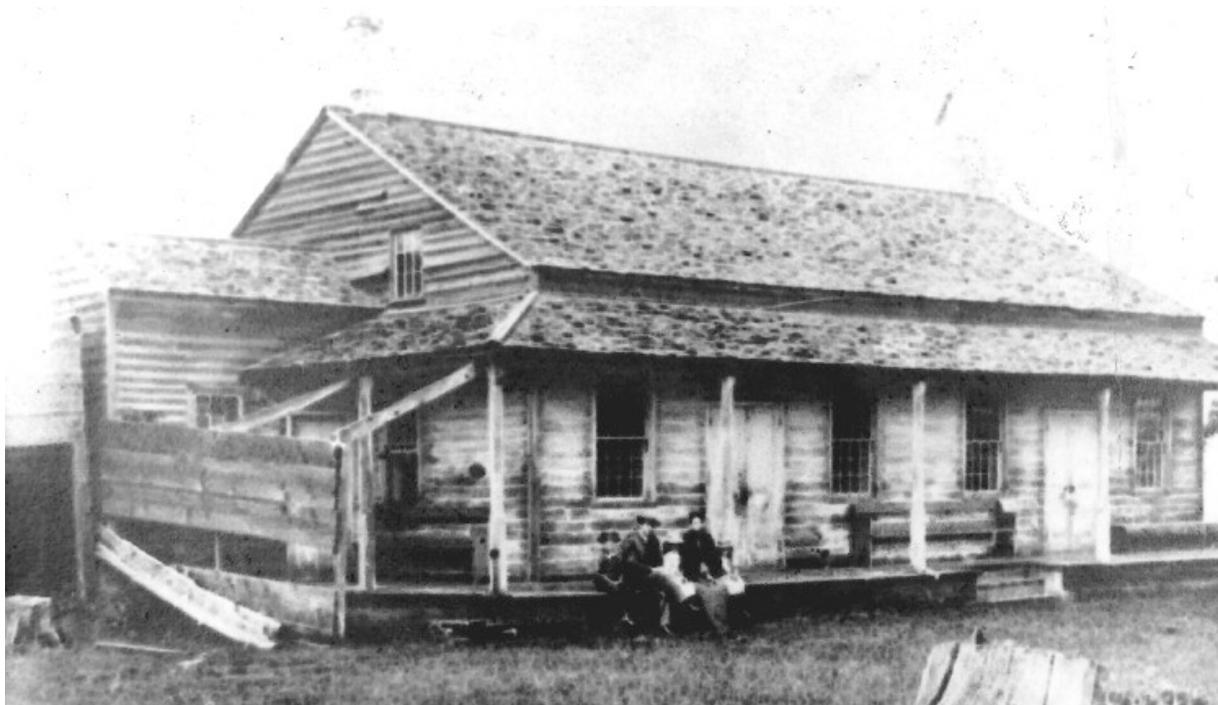
about the seventeenth year of my age, a separation took place in the Society of Friends. The parties were designated by the terms ‘Orthodox’ and ‘Hicksite’. The Hicksites adhered to Unitarian doctrines, but the Orthodox held to the Divinity of Christ and the work of the Spirit of God upon the mind of men...as a consequence of the separation there was much

disputing on the subject of religion... about that time my father hired a man as foreman in brick-making who was a Universalist and held the same doctrine as Hicksites. With that man I had many arguments against the Divinity of Christ I could not answer...one thing that I may mention in connection with the separation among the Friends. The hold took upon my parents’ minds. They seemed borne down by the weight of it and it was imprinted on their countenances, which caused me a secret sympathy with them and was a remote help to myself.²³

Unfortunately the early time of the Orthodox-Hicksite separation has made finding contemporary local documents difficult. The largest setback is the absence of primary Hicksite sources to add that group’s perspective to the historical narrative. The diary of John



John Treffry Junior - husband of Mary Ann Southwick.



Pine Street Meeting House - Otterville (Hicksite Friends).

Treffry Senior kept from 1834-1836 is one important early document that references the various religious groups in the Township of Norwich and emphasizes the commonality of interactions between them. The diary depicts the daily life of Treffry and his family while living in the southern portion of the Township. Treffry infrequently records members of the family travelling to the Upper Settlement for Meeting; however, they were members of the Orthodox Friends. The diary records many business and friendly interactions with Hicksite neighbours specifically the Cornells, Cromwells, Dirkies and Websters. Most interesting is Treffry's record of the family's interest and common participation in the gatherings of various religious groups. On several occasions members of the family attend Methodist Meetings and Camp Meetings. The entry for Monday the 16th of February 1835 is especially interesting as the Treffrys are joined by the Southwicks, another prominent Quaker family, in attending a Methodist Meeting.²⁴

I was not surprised to find in the diary many

daily interactions with Hicksite neighbours; however, the following entry was surprising for its insight into the religious interaction of Orthodox and Hicksite Friends. "Wednesday, July 20, 1836. Emma at John's, quilting with Mary Ann. In the evening John took several out to the Lower Settlement to hear a Hicksite Preacher."²⁵ While it is not surprising that Orthodox and Hicksite Friends would interact on a daily basis in this rural and relatively primitive settlement, it was unexpected to find Orthodox Friends attending a Hicksite gathering. John Treffry's diary depicts his, and other Quaker families', interest in the various religions being practiced in the community at this early period. While he does not refer to the Hicksites as Friends or their worship as meeting, the family clearly demonstrates an interest in their religious views.

Though the Hicksite separation was deep-seated and lasting it appears that for the most part Friends in the township co-existed peacefully. The realities of life in a small settlement-era community took precedence



Old Brick Meeting House - constructed circa 1850 formerly located on Quaker Street in the Township of Norwich.

over doctrinal disputes and we find interaction and cooperation between Hicksite and Orthodox neighbours almost daily. It is also worth noting that the Hicksite-Orthodox split appears to have been relatively quick with the Hicksites assuming care of the Pine Street property and the Orthodox of the Quaker Street property resulting in no drawn out disputes. Again, perhaps this relates to more pressing issues of life in a relatively primitive and remote settlement.

By 1849 and 1850 both the Hicksite and Orthodox Friends realized a need for significant repair or replacement of their original meeting houses. By 1849 the Pine Street Friends had constructed a new frame building²⁶ and by 1850 the Orthodox Friends were meeting in what would eventually be called the Old Brick.²⁷ These meeting houses were constructed at a high point of the Quaker population in Norwich and may have reflected an expectation of continued growth. Motivations aside, both groups constructed buildings exemplifying fundamental Quaker design principles. Both exhibited symmetry, understated elegance and were constructed of

locally available materials. Pine Street and the Old Brick were quality buildings capable of perpetuating the Quaker faith into the future.

Three additional meeting houses were later constructed as a means of making Quaker worship more accessible to those living beyond the township's centre. In 1876 Beaconsfield was constructed on land donated by Thomas Walker to serve families in the north of the township who had been meeting in private homes for several years.²⁸ In 1877 William P. Barker constructed the Milldale Meeting House to accommodate a group of Friends who had



Beaconsfield Meeting House.



Milldale Meeting House - constructed and donated by William P. Barker.

been meeting in the former Milldale store, but had outgrown the space.²⁹ Also, during this period Adam Spencer constructed a meeting house at Rock's Mills or Spencerville to serve non-Hicksite Friends in the southwest portion of the township.³⁰

Despite the appearance of growth and solidity displayed by the construction of new meeting houses, the 1870s were a time of great distress among the mindful and quiet Friends.

Between 1877 and 1881 the Society of Friends in Canada experienced a philosophical divide sometimes referred to as the Gurney/Wilbur Separation. Again I will turn to Dorland for help distinguishing the two factions by explaining the beliefs of their namesakes.

Joseph John Gurney placed emphasis on the direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit in ways familiar to evangelists rather than in the manner long peculiar to Friends. Gurney moved the Society away from an essentially mystical religion grounded in inward experience. The scriptures to him were first and the direct word of God in the human soul a remote second.³¹ On the other hand, John Wilbur's proclamations arose in reaction to Gurney. Wilbur felt that placing scripture above the inward teaching of the Spirit was to shift the central ground of Quaker truth and to endanger the spiritual basis of Quaker worship and ministry.³²

During this period Norwich was visited by many traveling ministers who conveyed enthusiasm and a new approach to religion



Rock's Mills (formerly Spencerville) - location where Adam Spencer resided in Norwich Township and where he donated property for a meeting house.

bringing the Revival Movement into Canada and, at the same time, offending the more conservative element of the Society of Friends. Lydia Peckham Hakes Stover, a resident of Norwich, in letters to her Aunt, Mary Peckham, records the atmosphere in Norwich leading up to and following the Gurney/Wilbur Separation. In a letter dated 21st of 3rd month 1876 Lydia writes,

[William] has had cause for deep travail of soul of late as well as all concerned Friends who have ever known the truth. For Norwich meeting has been visited by a flood of ministers of the later day times. There had been two brothers from Indiana here most of the winter by the name of Scott... then about New Years they joined the Presbyterians and Methodists in the Village to hold Union Meetings. They kept telling they were expecting a coloured man from Indiana (William Allen) but he did not come till the later part of last month.³³

Lydia goes on to explain that members of the select meeting had signed a letter to William Wetherald advising him to discontinue the meetings he was holding as they were not being held according to the order of Friends.³⁴

In another letter to her aunt dated 13th of 10th month 1876, Lydia describes conflict within the meeting, “we have had some of the most painful monthly meetings that I could ever thought of and last fourth day we adjourned to meet again next week we could not go through with the business in one day. There has been several who requested who had instruments of music in their houses, some of us object to receiving of them and some members plead for receiving them. I do not know how we should come out.”³⁵

These letters depict a Conservative interpretation of the unease present as conflicting views of Quakerism played out in

Norwich Monthly Meeting. It is worth noting that in 1877 and the years immediately following there was an unusually high number of visitors to Canada Yearly Meeting, reflective of increasing friction.³⁶

Adam Spencer of Norwich, first clerk of Canada Yearly Meeting, returned from the Yearly Meeting in 1877 convinced that a crisis of decision loomed in Canada. Spencer was a staunch defender of traditional Quakerism who protested innovations in faith and practice. In July of 1877 Norwich Monthly Meeting, no longer able to carry out its business, divided. Following this separation a Testimony by Adam Spencer was published to demonstrate that the opposing group within the monthly meeting had seceded from the true Quaker body.³⁷

Increasing the tension between the two groups was each faction’s understanding of themselves as the true monthly meeting and consequently their attempt to meet at the same time in the same building. Lydia Peckham writes the following dated 30th of 12th month 1879, “those members who have set up another monthly meeting in Norwich are burdensome to Friends as they try to carry on their meeting at the same time having so far intruded that sometimes Friends have adjourned to the next week or two weeks.”³⁸

Following the Canada Yearly Meeting of 1880 the Conservative element of the Society decided as a group to withdraw from the existing organization of Canada Yearly Meeting and began corresponding with sympathizers in Norwich. The Conservatives ultimately decided to form their own Yearly Meeting which would meet at Pickering in 1881. This decision was in distinct defiance of the previous Yearly Meeting’s decision to convene at Norwich. This final decision to separate hardened resistance on both sides and though the actual break had occurred without displays of ill will, the differences which before had been primarily regarding principles now tended to become personal as well and decidedly more bitter.³⁹



Conservative Women Friends - standing along outside of 1889 Stover Street Conservative Friends Meeting House in Village of Norwich.

Eventually in Norwich Monthly Meeting the Gurneyites, or ‘Young Friends’, began to meet in the morning and the Wilburites, or ‘Old Friends’, in the afternoon. Yet this bitterness can be seen in a story that is told locally of the Young Friends stuffing the stovepipes with cloth filling the meeting house with smoke for the arrival of the Old Friends in the afternoon.⁴⁰

When comparing this second separation to the earlier Hicksite split it appears to be much more drawn out and painful. One major issue was the complexity of dividing meeting property between the opposing groups. Also, one may wonder how the realities of life in the Norwich community had changed from their earlier focus on subsistence to a point at which individuals now had time to focus their energy on religious matters.

Eventually the Conservative Friends in Norwich determined it was necessary to find an alternate meeting place. A minute dated 12th of 7th month 1888 states the following, “we having lost control of the property [Old Brick] belonging to the Norwich Monthly Meeting of Friends through those who separated... assuming possession and refusing to admit our having any claim thereto.”⁴¹ On Sunday, 3 November 1889 the Conservatives’ new meeting house in the Village of Norwich was opened. Upon completion of the Stover Street Meeting House the building committee submitted a report which concluded with the

following statement: “Friends during recent years have passed through many trials and discouragements but if the labors of the committee contribute in any measure to the building up of the broken walls of our Zion in this part of the land we shall feel amply repaid.”⁴²

Once the two groups had physically separated, they continued to distinguish themselves by reaching to the extremes of their opposing beliefs. The Gurneyites tended to lean toward innovations that were out of harmony with traditional Quakerism, introducing singing, a more programmatic type of worship and considerably relaxing the enforcement of disciplines, while the Conservative Wilburites tended to guard the ancient Quaker traditions, essentially drawing themselves into a shell of Quietism, emphasizing plainness of dress, language and demeanour and meeting mainly under a veil of silence.

These differing tendencies as they exhibited themselves in the Norwich community are recorded by Gertrude Nicholson in her diary *Six Months in Canada, 1896*. Gertrude was born and spent her youth in Norwich after which her family moved to England and in 1896 she and her sister Maud returned to the village for an extended visit with family and friends. The following excerpt for May 19th records details of a social encounter with a family of Conservative Friends:

When we were driving up to Charles’ house we saw a democrat and 2 horses drive up after us and a woman with a Friends bonnet on got out. Mary, Charles’ wife, had just taken us into the bedroom to take off our hats and in walked a plain woman friend with a Friends bonnet on and two little children very plainly dressed. The man was John Pollard oldest son of George Pollard and his wife is aunt of Charles’ wife. She was a Henderson. We felt rather disappointed at

first at them turning up but we found the wife very jolly...after tea Emma would have some music as she knew Charles would enjoy it. We felt afraid of shocking the Pollards. The mother said the children had never heard an organ before and she thought they might be frightened with it. They seemed to enjoy it thoroughly and so did the mother, but I don't know if the father did or not. He did not say much... Emma enjoyed it immensely shocking them she looked real wicked. I am afraid we gave those two children a taste of evil they had never had before.⁴³

Gertrude also describes a visit to Mary Ann Treffry, giving her impressions of Jane Stringham and Alice Treffry. "Called on Mary Ann Treffry...Her house looked just the same as in olden times. Her daughter Alice came in when we were there... Jane Stringham lives

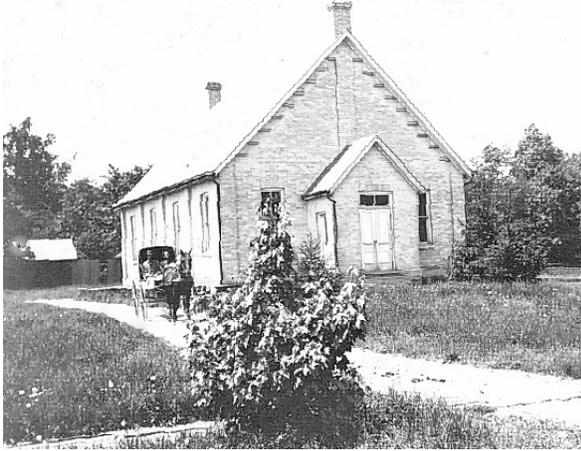
with them. She wears a Friends bonnet and has a cold stiff look. Alice Treffry was also very proper but the old lady was quite charming."⁴⁴

During her time in Norwich, Gertrude attended many Friends meetings including the Yearly Meeting at Pickering. The following describes her first visit to the Old Brick upon returning to Norwich:

It was so interesting going to the Old Brick once more. It has certainly not changed much except that the seats face the east end now instead of the north side and there is a platform at the end and all the old gallery gone... then we went into school...there were about 50 in the school altogether. After school we went straight into meeting. There was hardly any silence. William Dellar spoke too much of a dose. Maud sang a solo amid a dead silence. They seem to thoroughly appreciate



Jane Stringham and Alice Treffry in a garden.



Earliest known picture of 1889 Stover Street Conservative Friends Meeting House in Village of Norwich.

anyone singing like that and enjoyed it immensely.⁴⁵

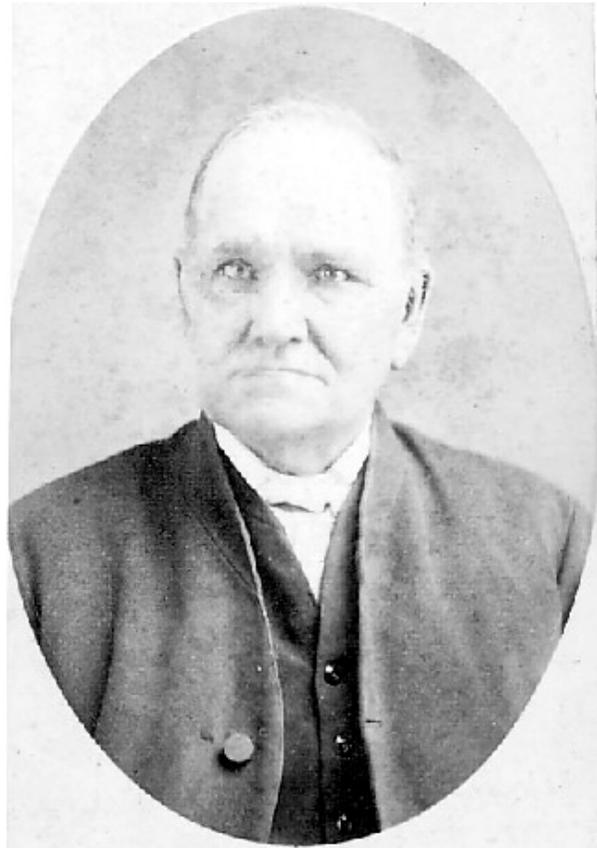
Gertrude's description reveals both changes to the building's physical plant as well as changes to the program of the worship followed at the Old Brick.

Despite painful differences families who had taken opposing sides remained intrinsically linked despite their conflicting opinions. In a letter to her aunt dated 26th of 4th month 1880, Lydia Peckham Stover records the sentiments of Conservative Friends when attending her niece's funeral. "We just got home from attending the funeral of Sarah Anna Taylor, William Barker's youngest daughter, held at his meeting house (Milldale)... the funeral was conducted after the manner of the new order, much of the service appeared like unto prearranged work, then wound up with congregational singing loud and lengthy, Jesse [Stover] said he could not see a particle of Friend in the whole transaction."⁴⁶ Though it is clear that this Conservative branch of the Stover family objected to the new methods of worship being used at Milldale, they remained closely enough linked to attend a family event as significant as a relative's funeral.

Eventually as time passed the wounds of these painful divisions were healed and a sense

of shared history and purpose brought the three branches of Quakerism into closer unity. With the exception of those meeting at Beaconsfield where Evangelical-Revivalist traditions remained strong, in 1955 the remaining Friends of the Township of Norwich joined the three separate yearly meetings in Canada as they merged into one organization, The Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.⁴⁷

At the turn of the twentieth century, long before the merging of the three yearly meetings, the Friends in Norwich were slowly disappearing from the landscape their ancestors had etched out of the wilderness. Though the community's founding Quakers no longer gather weekly or monthly for meeting, many of their intrinsic values have been carried forth and assimilated into other religious bodies practicing within the township. Many residents



Jesse Stover - son of Frederick Stover.

of the community strive to uphold their Quaker heritage and the morality instilled in them by their Quaker ancestors. Still every other year as well as on other special occasions, Friends can be found meeting for worship on the sites of their former meeting houses in our township, once such a prominent and entrenched Quaker community.

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3 Map, *The State of the Settlement of Norwich Upper Canada in the year 1821*, Peter Lossing, Drawn by Benson Lossing. Norwich and District Historical Society Archival Collection, Norwich and District Archives, Norwich, Ontario, hereafter NDA.

4 Arthur G. Dorland, *The Quakers in Canada: A History* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968), 58.

5 Stagg, *Dictionary of Canadian*

6 Letter, July 1885, Moses Mott. Mott Family File, Special Family Files, NDA.

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8 Letter 17th of 2nd Month 1811, Peter Lossing. Peter Lossing Papers, Baldwin Room, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Public Library, Toronto, Ontario.

9 4th of 3rd Month 1812, Pelham Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1806-1834, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Online Transcription <http://archives-library.quaker.ca/transcripts/Pelham%20Monthly%20Meeting%201806-1834.pdf>

10 4th of 10th Month 1815, Pelham Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1806-1834.

11 1st of 1st Month 1817, Pelham Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1806-1834.

12 1st of 7th Month 1818, Pelham Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1806-1834.

13 7th of 4th Month 1819, Pelham Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1806-1834.

14 8th of 5th Month 1822, Norwich Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1816-1829, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, in Gwendolyn V. Manning, "The Quaker Settlement in Norwich Township, Oxford County" (Master's Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1977), 56-57.

15 Thomas Shillitoe, *Journal of the life, labours, and travels of Thomas Shillitoe in the service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Vol. 2* (London: Harvey and Darton, 1839), 198.

16 Dorland, *The Quakers in Canada*, 118.

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19 7th of 1st Month 1829, Norwich Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1816-1829.

20 7th of 1st Month 1829, Norwich Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1816-1829.

21 7th of 1st Month 1829, Norwich Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1816-1829.

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