

Icebergs and Dog Biscuits: The Canadian Quaker Register Built Heritage Directory

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Quaker Meeting House, Wellington, Ontario

Around 1991, I was busy in my professional practice with heritage projects, including many heritage buildings in Uxbridge, Ontario. As the Greater Toronto Area was growing furiously across the farmlands to the south, destroying much of the heritage in its path, the Mayor and Council for this Quaker Township developed an idea to record all of their built heritage. Thus the Uxbridge Heritage Inventory was born to record all their history from the times of the First Nations, through the arrival of the pioneering Quakers in 1791, to a stopping point at the year 1910.

Initially, it was thought that there would be three hundred or so locations across the

combined townships of Scott and Uxbridge. After about a year of research completed in developing the framework, with the following years of actually visiting and recording the sites and structures, the final result realised a total of 3, 230 locations. All of these were walked around, measured and photographed into seventeen volumes, with one double page per location. The project turned out to be quite an iceberg, and I am extremely grateful to Allan McGillivray, the Curator for the Town, for his valuable contributions.

The initial beginning of the Quaker Register began around 1993, with the Canadian Friends Historical Association (CFHA) and my



Uxbridge Meeting House

first small outline. Progressing forward to 2010, the whole project was re-visited, and I then commenced extensive research for this National Canadian Record. Discussions and meetings evolved the project to a point where I can introduce, for the first time at this conference, The Canadian Quaker Project. We have created a logo/word mark to signify the project, complete with a maple leaf from the Mountain Maple tree, which from my research, grew, and still grows along the eastern part of North America, from the United States into Canada, and then west to the prairies covering an extensive area almost identical to the lands pioneered by the Quakers, both sides of our friendly border.

The Register is in to main parts:

1. The Canadian Quaker Register: Built Heritage, includes the meeting houses (both existing and laid down), burying grounds, and principal locales.
2. The Canadian Quaker Project: Built Heritage: Directory. This includes all other divisions not in the main register, namely

Quaker Townships	
Quaker Cities	
Quaker Villages/ Hamlets	
Education	Colleges, Schools, and Academia
Businesses	Quaker Companies and their built heritage
Industries	Different categories and their built heritage
Trades	Many Quaker trades and skills
Historiography	Quaker Trails, Pioneer Routes and the Underground Railroad
Historical Events	
Notable Quakers	Relating to built heritage
Artifacts	Artifacts and documents obtained and catalogued. To include articles from past buildings, components, drawings, and tangible items. This will be for our future National Archives home



Ebenezer Doan House, Sharon Temple National Historic Site

This Register will cover the whole of Canada, coast to coast. From research to date, there are an estimated 19, 800 Quaker sites in Canada, with an estimated 16, 700 in Ontario alone. The earliest sites appear to be in Newfoundland, circa 1650 to 1652. This is yet another iceberg project. I would like to acknowledge and thank the executive members of the CFHA, Jane Zavitz-Bond, Donna Moore, and Many Friends for their input into this remarkable project.

Another legend about buildings is the story of the four corners of a building. Significant to many through the centuries, this leads to an ongoing local project, and is one of the reasons to create the Canadian Quaker Project. Quakers throughout history have been successful in business and industry. As professor James Walvin of Gresham College in England stated in 2003: "It was possible to be drawn along Quaker railway tracks, pulled by Quaker engines, while dressed in Quaker clothing, consuming Quaker food and drink – all paid for by money drawn from Quaker banks."

Quakers were deeply involved in businesses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is my opinion that they were instrumental in the start of the Industrial Revolution, which benefitted the whole world. In a 2003 address by Sir Adrian Cadbury, he listed the relevance of Quaker beliefs to business:

1. Trust and truth.
2. They saw life as a whole, religion was not just for Sunday.
3. Business opportunities arose for domestic iron ware, instead of supplying iron to the wars.
4. Their respect for the work of the individual.
5. To arrive at decisions by agreement.
6. They encouraged the need to look for a better way forward.
7. They respected and promoted education.

The business and industry connections have revealed a plethora of successes across Canada for over three-and-a-half centuries. These will be added to the Canadian Quaker Register.

This leads me now to local built heritage issues. The Wing Rogers house and farm in Pickering, Ontario was built in 1846, and is in the path of the extension of a contentious toll highway. The Wing Rogers to whom this home belonged was the grandson of Timothy Rogers (1756 – 1827) who was the great Quaker pioneer who first visited Ontario around 1791. The genealogy of the Rogers family is



Chapel at Schomberg Cemetery



Site of the Wing Rogers House, Pickering Township indicated by arrow. Detail from Map of Pickering Township in the Historical Atlas of Ontario County, Ontario (1877).

extensive and shows the very successful descendants in their business endeavours. We can see this in Canada's first radio broadcast and the Rogers Media Group, as well as in the roots of Imperial Oil or Esso Canada.

The Rogers stone house was identified in 2003 for removal for the highway, but sat empty and decaying until this year, with the current owner – The Province of Ontario – calling for expressions of interest for its removal along with eight other heritage buildings and farms. Over two hundred parties, including the CFHA, showed intent, but the house's condition was too far gone to be make successful removal possible without encountering prohibitive costs. The CFHA proposal expressed interest in removing a small number of building pieces, including four corner stones, to act as the corners for our future National Archives Centre. Our proposal was firmly rejected as just salvage! We were stunned to receive news through a provincial newspaper that, although there were numerous interested parties, the heritage homes would be dismantled (read demolished) by the Province, with the materials being used as roadside monuments and markers.

These quotes from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation demonstrates a cynical piece of tokenism: "Big chunks of stone and reclaimed timber from the heritage buildings will stand as 'memories of what they used to be'." "Monuments that serve no purpose but visually are interesting could be created from stones used to build the 19th Century homes, while



The Wing Rogers House circa 1846



Quaker burying ground, Adolphustown Township.

other parts could be repurposed as functional decorative pieces in landscaping, or welcome signs to towns along the route.” The spokesperson went on to add: “It’s very

important that we preserve a lot of the heritage aspects, noting also that the project is a first for the Province of Ontario.” Personally, I hope it is the last time that we hear of this type of Heritage preservation, as it is bad enough that Heritage sites seem to be surrounded by rings of tall satanic condominium towers, or worse still that ninety-eight per cent of them are demolished, but the front elevation is incorporated into the new building as “facadism.” I envy the substantial heritage laws and procedures in existence in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The next project involves “disposal” of the Wellington, Ontario Meeting House which was originally constructed in 1885 and is now an important museum. The Prince Edward County Council proposed closure and disposal of the building for budgetary reasons. Together with the *very* polite groups of local ‘placards



and pitchfork' objectionists and the CFHA, the Council retracted their intent based on public opposition and the contents of legal documents that were signed when the meeting transferred the building to the County.

One of the basic rules of pioneer life in Canada was to never build your house or structure facing north, mainly because of the weather. However, legend exists that you do not sleep with your head pointing north, or you will not sleep well. Nudge yourself, or your bed a few degrees north west just past magnetic north to achieve a good rest. My Irish maternal grandmother taught me this, and it has worked in many countries around the world where I have worked.

The current celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee showed the informal lunch with over seven hundred members and guests of the 108 London Livery Companies. Almost all are known as "the Worshipful Company" of the relevant trade, craft or profession, dating back to the sixteenth century. Many Quakers were members of the liveries, and their skills were exported as they came to Canada, the United States and other countries. Indeed, Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia is well connected, while the Canadian connections will become part of the Canadian Quaker Register. I have seen or know of the extraordinary skills used by Quakers in constructing their buildings.

The Canadian Quaker Register will require much more research as it is built up, using all types of records from historical documents to electronic media, and the use of satellite imagery. In their perseverance to settle their meetings and communities, the pioneer Quakers and those of later days left us many gifts of guilt heritage, outstanding achievements, and business legacies. It is our challenge to search, find, and record these for all of us to enjoy.

Finally, the dog biscuits. During my countless days finding and recording the sites

and buildings of Uxbridge Township, I was nearly always greeted at the farm lane roadways by large and *very* protective farm dogs, running loose and doing their protective duties. By proffering a 'peace token' of a dog biscuit or two, made by that large non-Quaker Oats Company, I achieved my goal and made progress with new four-legged friends and their masters. I wonder whether this approach might work with bureaucrats or developers?

I will close with one last quotation from the famed author, Agatha Christie: "I married an archeologist because the older I grow, the more he appreciates me."

Notes:

1. I am a member of a world-wide profession, the Royal Institution of chartered Surveyors, whose roots can be traced back to the sixteenth century. Granted a Royal Charter in 1888 by Queen Victoria, it is a very diverse profession. For more information, please visit www.rics.org.