The Architectural Genealogy of the Yonge Street Friends Meeting House

By Seth Hinshaw

In 2012, Friends celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Yonge Street Friends Meeting House. As one of the oldest Friends meeting houses in Canada, the building is a Quaker historic landmark. Its design points to how its builders understood worship, including its setting and various roles of those in attendance.

The Yonge Street Meeting House is a typical example of what is called the Quaker Plan, the mode of construction that dominated Friends meeting house design from 1770 to 1870. It was the culmination of a century of experimentation as Quakers sought to create a worship space that best suited their approach to worship. The Quaker Plan was such an obvious architectural expression of the Quaker approach to worship that it spread from Pennsylvania to every yearly meeting in North America. Throughout the hegemony of this building plan, only a small number of Friends meeting houses were constructed reflecting other meeting house designs. The Quaker Plan remains the seminal Friends contribution to religious architecture.

This article contains four parts. The first part outlines how religious architecture was re-designed in England between medieval times and the seventeenth century to accommodate the changing understanding of worship. The second part documents how the earliest English Quakers began to adapt the new architectural types of the seventeenth century as part of a century of architectural experimentation. The third part outlines Quaker architectural experimentation in the New World from 1670 to 1750, leading to the arrival of the Quaker Plan. The fourth part describes the most

Gloucester Cathedral, painted 1828 by W.H. Bartlett and engraved by J. LeKeux

important features of Quaker Plan meeting houses and how they were used during worship.

I. The 17th Century Context of English Religious Architecture

The roots of North American Friends meeting house architecture are embedded in the religious ferment of seventeenth century England. The English Reformation initiated a three-hundred-year interruption in the construction of Gothic-inspired architecture in England. Religious leaders of the seventeenth century generally agreed that reforms of medieval practice were needed, and they began the process of designing new houses of worship that deviated from Gothic architectural forms they saw as tainted by Catholicism. The Puritans developed two new architectural types, now called the "Chapel Plan" and the "Cottage Plan," which dominated English non-Anglican architecture until the Gothic Revival movement.

The Perpendicular Style

Gothic architecture characterized religious construction in England from roughly 1190 to 1550. The Gothic movement, derived from cathedral construction on the continent, was the dominant mode of Catholic architecture. In England, the Gothic movement has been divided into three periods: the Early English Gothic (1190—1280), the Decorated Gothic (1280—1350), and the Perpendicular (1350—1550). In general, English Gothic construction differed from European Gothic primarily by its unusually long naves, rare uses of apses on the east end, and its preference for construction outside of population settlements rather than in villages. The Perpendicular Style, in vogue at the time of the Reformation in England, was characterized by its use of large panel windows, remarkable towers, and innovative vaulting. Perpendicular Style buildings, mostly financed by the growth of the woolen industry during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, are found throughout England. Important cathedrals with Perpendicular sections include York, Worcester, Gloucester, and Cullompton.[1]

Although some variations and exceptions existed, Gothic buildings followed a set of generally accepted parameters. The entire building was constructed in the form of a "Latin cross," or what we often call a "lower case T shape." The shape of the building thus pointed to the Cross. Cathedrals were constructed with a specific orientation, with the long arm of the cross pointing northwest, which meant that worshippers faced southeast over the altar towards Jerusalem. The interior was organized into a series of spaces that moved worshippers from the "least holy" part of the building to the "most holy." The entrance on the west end was called the "narthex," usually highly decorated as a means of inviting people inside. The next interior space was the called the "nave," a large worship space where congregants stood for worship during medieval times. Lateral halls with small chapels were located in the transepts. The east end of the building, called either the *sanctuary* or the *chancel*, was the location of the altar; it was considered the most holy space and was usually screened to restrict access to the priests and those who performed religious duties there. Cathedrals were richly decorated. Exterior walls and interior spaces contained statues of historic Christians, and much of the interior wall space

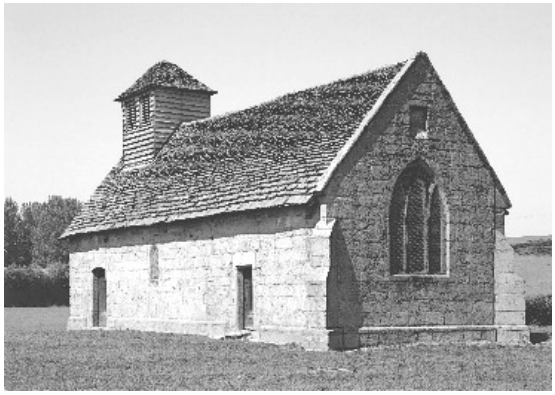
[1] Alec Clifton-Taylor, *The Cathedrals of England* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986), 19, 24, 213-232.

was painted with scenes from the Bible. Many cathedrals had an upper level called the *gallery* set aside for displaying religious paintings and other imagery donated in honor of a particular congregant. Taken together, the various elements of Gothic construction were designed to create a building that brought glory to God.

Reformation and Puritanism

The Protestant Reformation began in Europe with Martin Luther and spread throughout northern Europe. Reformers began to distribute the Bible, and priests began to hold worship in the local vernacular rather than in Latin. Reformers emphasized the importance of the sermon, and as its length increased throughout the century, boxed pews were instituted to provide seating during worship. New, ornate pulpits indicated the increasing emphasis on the minister; they were usually elevated to assist acoustics. Attendance increased dramatically, and many houses of worship on the Continent installed seats on the gallery level, usually against one long wall.[2]

The English Reformation began in 1534 and continued through cycles of reform and reaction until 1688. The Act of Supremacy (1534) declared Henry to be "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England," thereby formalizing the break with Rome. Henry did not seek dramatic reforms, mainly restricting himself to restructuring of the appointment of bishops and the dissolution of the monasteries. More dramatic reforms during the reign of Henry's successor King Edward (1547–1553) included a wave of iconoclasm, introduction of the use of English during worship, and the adoption of a new *Book of Prayer* (outlining how worship was to be conducted); these reforms were repealed during England's first counter-reformation under his sister and successor Queen Mary (1553–1558). Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) established a moderate Protestantism, returning the country to the 1549 Prayer Book, instituting an increasing emphasis on the education of priests, but exiling those who chose to worship separately from the Church of England (including the Brownists, who relocated first to Holland and later to Plymouth, Massachusetts). While the term *puritan* had been used to describe those who sought further reform, the term assumed a new meaning during the reign of King James I (1603–1625), when they coalesced into a political movement. A second counter-reformation under King Charles (1625 –1642) ended when Parliament, controlled by the Puritans, executed the King and instituted the Commonwealth. Thus the context of the original Quaker movement was a century-long mixture of highly charged vitriol and spiritual unrest.[3]



[2] Sources of general information on the architectural manifestation of the Reformation include: Anthony Garvan, "The Protestant Plain Style Before 1630," in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 19, no. 3 (1950): 5-13; and Paul C. Finney, ed., *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999).

[3] For more information on the political events associated with the Reformation in England, consult the following: Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II,* vol. I: 1558—1688 (London: SCM Press, 1996), 3-139; Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560 –1700* (New York City: Martin's Press, 1996), 90-102; and Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603 – 1690* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 32-37.

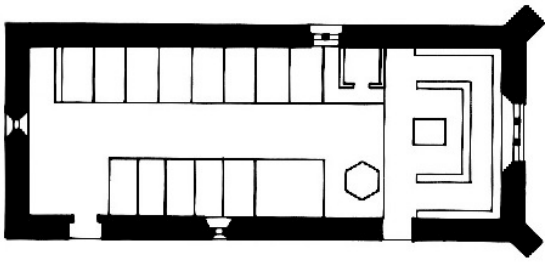


Photo & plan of Langley Chapel. Photo copyright English Heritage. Floorplan based on Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane,* p. 57.

The architectural manifestation of the Reformation in England lagged behind political and religious events, partially because less religious construction was taking place after 1550. One of the few houses of worship dating from this time is Langley Chapel, built in 1601 in Shropshire. It was an example of a minimalist design for a house of worship then dubbed the "Auditory Church." The building has a rectangular shape rather than a Latin cross shape, a major indication of the rejection of architecture that was considered tainted with Catholicism. Its interior is a single room with a slightly elevated area on the east end. The pulpit and reading pew flank the passage into the raised chancel-like area. The spaces in the room actually have no name, as Puritans rejected the terms "nave" and "chancel." Congregants sat in pews arranged in two rows and then sat around a table in the chancel-like area to receive communion. The building is devoid of medieval decoration and has no rood screen. Langley Chapel is an important example of the shift towards a specifically non-Catholic design for houses of worship.[4]

The preferences of mid-seventeenth-century Puritans seem obvious to Quakers, mostly because other denominations that originally embraced them have since rejected them. In their effort to eliminate Catholic influences, Puritans introduced a new set of religious terminology. Puritans rejected the Catholic use the term *church* to describe a building, since the equivalent Greek word *ekklesia* means a group of people called out of the world (not a building). Deprived of a word to denote their houses of worship, Puritans began to call them *meeting houses* or sometimes *chapels.* [Huguenots in France similarly used the word *temple* for the building and *eglise* for the congregation.] They shifted the emphasis from holy buildings, times, and relics to an emphasis upon personal holiness. Because they considered everyone who was part of the Universal Church to be a saint (again based on the use of the Greek word), Puritans had an egalitarian streak that was expressed in the abolition of the House of Lords and a dramatic reduction in the religious hierarchy. Puritans expressed their opposition to ornamentation by destroying statues and whitewashing the walls

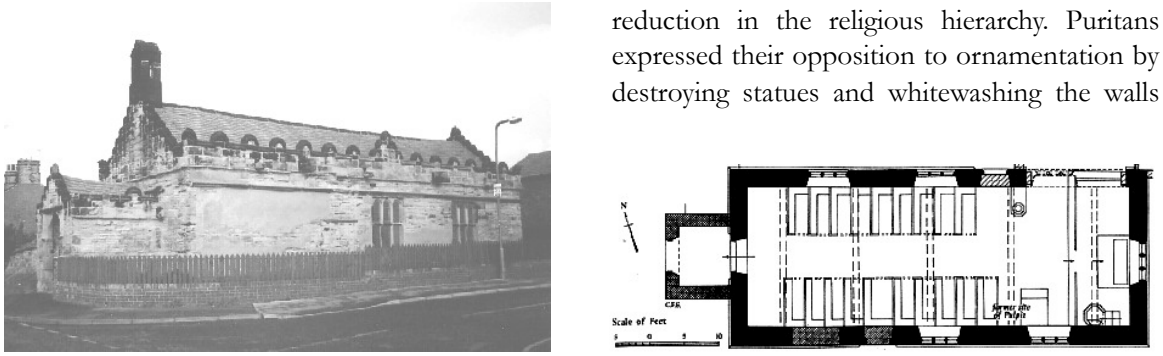


Photo & plan of Great Houghton; adapted from Stell, *North*, p. 255.

[4] Hylson-Smith, *Churches in England,* vol. I, 10-139; Durston and Eales, *Culture of English Puritanism,* 90-102; George W.O. Addleshaw, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship An Inquiry into the arrangements for Public Worship in the Church of England from the Reformation to the present day* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1948), 22, 47, 52-53; Davies, *Worship and Theology in England,* 26-27; Christopher Stell, "Puritan and Nonconformist Meetinghouses in England," in *Seeing Beyond the Word,* ed. Finney, 52-53; John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1550 – 1830* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 107.

of houses of worship.[5]

A scholarly understanding of the architecture of mid-seventeenth-century Puritans and their nonconformist descendants is only now coalescing, partially due to the refitting of the houses of worship by Anglicans since the Reformation and partially due to lack of interest by historians. British architectural historians have generally relegated the Puritans to a transitional paragraph between the end of Gothic architecture and the career of Christopher Wren. The initial investigations by Ronald P. Jones and Martin S. Briggs were greatly enhanced by the work of Christopher F. Stell, who produced a monumental four-volume inventory of nonconformist religious architecture in England that immediately became the starting point for understanding English nonconformist religious architecture. Soon after the publication of Stell's first volume, historians were distinguishing between two Puritan buildings types: the Chapel Plan and the Cottage Plan.[6]

Much of our understanding of mid-seventeenth-century Puritan religious architecture is based upon three intact and several altered buildings; information on two will suffice for this discussion. An important Puritan meeting house is the Great Houghton Chapel (c. 1650). The one-story, front-gabled stone building retains several medieval elements and is an excellent specimen of the reduced ornamentation in the early stages of Puritan architecture. The worship area (not called the nave when originally constructed, although the name is used there now) consists of two ranks of boxed pews facing east to the chancel area. In the east end, a reading desk and pulpit against the south wall have non-ecclesiastical carvings, similar to those on the doors to the pews. The communion table is a moveable object now placed directly underneath the eastern window. Great Houghton is a forerunner of the Chapel Plan, retaining the eastern orientation, strong east/west axis, and understanding of a more "holy" east end of the worship space. The Chapel Plan became the architectural preference of Anglicans and Lutherans in North America.

Bramhope Chapel (1649) reflects mid-

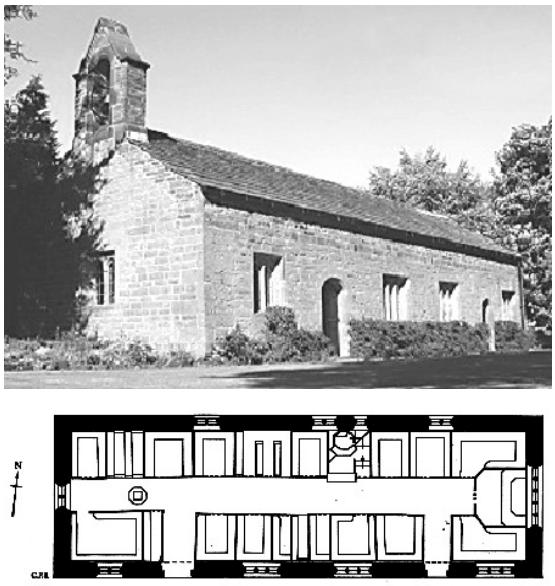


Photo & plan of Bramhope Chapel; adapted from Stell, *North*, p. 239.

[5] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603—1690* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 191, 200-213, 216; Peter W. Williams, *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 5; Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture Without Kings: The Rise of Puritan Classicism Under Cromwell* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1995), 7-8.

[6] Garvan, "The Protestant Plain Style Before 1630"; Ronald P. Jones, *Nonconformist Church Architecture* (London: Lindsey Press, 1914); Martin S. Briggs, *Puritan Architecture and its Future* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1946); Christopher F. Stell, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in Central England* (London: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England), 1986; *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in South-West England* (London: RCHME, 1991); *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in the North of England* (London: RCHME, 1994); and *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in the East of England* (London: RCHME, 2002); David M. Butler, "Quaker Meeting Houses in America and England: Impressions and Comparisons," printed in *Quaker History* 79 (Fall 1990): 94-95.

seventeenth century currents of the Auditory Church. The long rectangular building is six bays wide, with a gabled roof and nearly smooth stone walls. Two entrances on the south elevation (second and fifth bays) open into an aisle which runs east to west through two ranks of boxed pews. The eastern end, modified in later years, originally looked similar to that at Langley, with the chancel-like area providing seating around a table for communion. The interior innovation of Bramhope is the placement of the pulpit and reading desk along the north wall near the center. Placing the pulpit in the center of the congregants points to the understanding of equality among believers, as the minister is the person raised up among those gathered to speak on God's behalf. Bramhope Chapel is the forerunner of the Cottage Plan, the architectural type favored by Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists after the Restoration and particularly in colonial North America.

II Early Friends Meeting Houses in England

An understanding of the chronology of seventeenth-century Friends meeting houses is just now emerging. In 1999, David M. Butler produced a monumental two-volume work documenting all known Friends Meeting Houses in Great Britain, with illustrations of exteriors and interiors. His book provides critical information that overturns many prior assumptions regarding the chronology of Friends meeting houses, but most architectural historians in the United States continue to ignore Butler's documentation.

Historians have generally believed that the earliest Friends met solely in homes, barns, or rented spaces until the Act of Toleration in 1689. The argument that the persecution of nonconformity drove Friends to meet secretly sounds logical, partially because the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists met secretly during this time. Butler's work indicates that, although new construction was not evenly spread through the years 1660-1688, Friends were constructing and purchasing meeting houses throughout this time. Butler's information verifies that early Friends wanted to worship openly, in defiance of laws they considered a violation of conscience. The following table illustrates the increasing momentum of purchasing and constructing meeting houses in the late seventeenth century:

	Purchased	Constructed
1650—1655	2	1
1656—1660	2	1
1661—1665	2	4
1666—1670	14	7
1671—1675	19	24
1676—1680	23	30
1681—1685	8	9
1686—1690	10	30
1691—1695	13	28
1696—1700	21	35

Butler's inventory establishes a construction timeline of Friends meeting houses in the seventeenth century. He identified 169 purpose-built Friends meeting houses constructed prior to 1701, compared to 114 purchased meeting houses. Interestingly, Butler identified only nine instances of Friends meeting in barns. Butler documents that a substantial body of buildings had been constructed in England which would have been familiar to those Friends who emigrated to North America.

Butler's research indicates that the earliest building known to have been constructed to serve as a Friends meeting house was Wigton (c. 1653), constructed by a former Seeker community that had joined Friends. The only other Friends meeting house constructed during the 1650s was Banbury (1657). Two buildings purchased to serve as meeting houses during the decade were Carlisle (1653) and Hullavington (1654). In addition, the Seeker community at Thirsk had purchased a meeting house in 1647 before joining Friends. This meeting house, one of a very few Seeker buildings, was demolished in 1701 for the construction of a larger meeting house. No information survives on the appearance of any Friends meeting house constructed before 1660; both Wigton and Banbury had unsuitable

locations and soon fell from use fairly soon (Wigton in 1674 and Banbury in 1665).[7]

Most Friends meeting houses of the seventeenth century do not survive. In 1670, Christopher Wren demolished the Horsleydown and Ratcliff Friends meeting houses during his rebuilding of London following the great fire. Although in the following two centuries Quakers often repeated the story of their destruction as a reminder of the early persecution, this means of losing meeting houses was actually quite rare. Of the 169 Friends Meeting Houses constructed in England in the seventeenth century, Butler identifies 99 that were demolished (57 being demolished for a replacement building and three demolished by the crown), 45 extant (including 19 which are heavily altered), and 3 that collapsed (one now a ruin). The remaining 22 buildings are presumably also demolished. Although the loss of 124 out of 169 buildings is rather substantial, little of this loss was imposed from without. Since Quakers rejected the idea of sacred architectural space, they were willing to demolish a particular meeting house and construct another one in a more central location.[8]

Friends Meeting Houses between the Restoration and Toleration

Friends constructed a variety of meeting house forms between the Restoration and Toleration. Although ample information only exists to provide an understanding of sixteen of the seventy-seven Friends meeting houses constructed during this time, some initial conclusions appear warranted. The earliest Friends meeting houses (1660-1670) were especially varied in their plans and internal arrangement. With the increasing availability of information, meeting houses constructed after 1670 may be classified into general types and will be described separately.

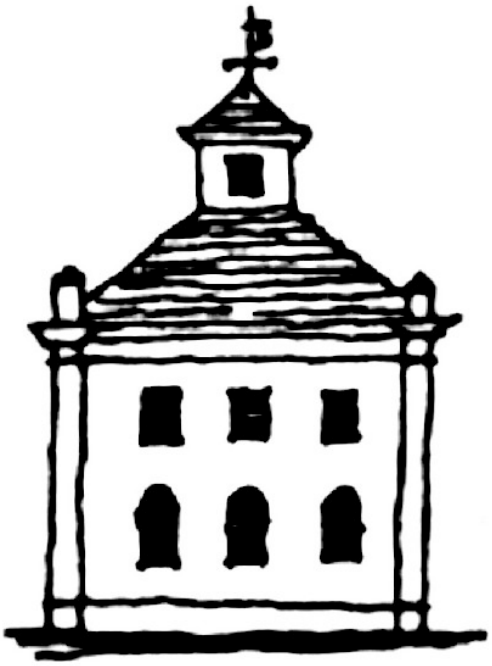
The oldest meeting house for which we have any certain information is Broad Campden, located in Gloucestershire, which was purchased in 1663. The one-story stone building originally had a front-gabled orientation facing south. It was enlarged to the south by twelve feet in 1677 for a new entrance, which necessitated the raising of the roof. The two-story addition provided an upstairs room over an entryway. This important building fell from use by Friends in the 1870s but was re-purchased in 1961 and refitted.[9]

The oldest purpose-built Friends meeting house in use in the world today is Hertford, north of London. As originally constructed in 1670, Hertford was a two-story, five-bay building featuring a U-shaped roof system with paired front gables on the main elevation. The building originally featured doors on the north and south walls near the corners, separated by three cross-framed windows. The original appearance of the interior is unknown, and it was refitted and altered several times. The facing benches and interior woodwork date to a 1717 refitting, and architectural evidence indicates the locations of sealed windows and doors. Today a hall with a kitchen hearth

[7] David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), 83, 118, 493, 257, 682, and 889; Kenneth H. Southall, *Our Quaker Heritage: Early Meeting Houses* (York, England: Quaker Home Service, 1984), 11; Kenneth L. Carroll, *Quakers on the Eastern Shore* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1970), 38.

[8] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* passim.

[9] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* 207-208; pamphlet "Broad Campden Quakers" for sale in the meeting house.



Sketch of Bristol Friars; adapted from Butler 1:517

occupies the space along the eastern wall, under a second floor loft.

Two other Friends meeting houses in England date to 1670. Long Compton is a simple one-story stone building with a front-gabled orientation. The entrance on the west end wall is located in a stone porch built following its residential conversion. The Bristol (Friars) Meeting House, the third building dating to 1670, has since been demolished, but a surviving sketch provides evidence of the significance of its design. This two-and-a-half story, three-bay building featured a pyramidal roof capped with a lantern, a cupola-like element which allowed light to enter the meeting room from above. On the interior, a loft was constructed along the north wall in the original construction; it was extended along the west wall in 1677 and eventually along all four walls. While the Bristol Meeting House had little impact upon the evolution of Friends meeting house design in England, it had a major impact upon the early Friends meeting houses in America. It was located at one of the points of departure for ships to America, and as a result it was the last Friends meeting house many emigrants saw before embarking.[10]

Interior Features of Early Friends Meeting Houses

Quakers began to develop a sense of how worship space should be arranged rather early in the history of the movement. During the 1660s and 1670s, as more and more meeting houses were constructed, interior layout and furnishings were beginning to assume standard patterns. The leading interior issues were the accommodation of public Friends and providing space for bicameral business meetings.

Perhaps the interior innovation most associated with seventeenth-century Friends is the ministers' stand. Most denominations in England at that time had a single priest or minister who addressed congregants from an ornate pulpit. Among Friends, the ministers' stand (or gallery) was introduced as an aid to acoustics. One of the earliest known stands was in the Broadmead Meeting House in Bristol. A small platform was constructed in the meeting room by 1667. Apparently those feeling called upon to speak would walk up to the stand and take a last moment of discernment before stepping onto the stand to speak. Use of the stand spread throughout England during the 1670s. The date of the stand at York is documented by a 1681 minute ordering the construction of "a gallery with a convenient place for Friends in the ministry." Stands of this era usually consisted of an elevated platform with a seat for public Friends behind a railing and a second bench on the floor level for other public Friends.[11]

The introduction of business meetings was the other factor influencing the layout of early

[10] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* 515-517.

[11] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses*, 515-516. Apart from Friends, only the Baptists expected more than one person to address those gathered. By 1700 Baptists had adopted the practice of having a single bench called the *messengers' bench* facing the others.

Friends meeting house interiors. In the earliest years of Quakerism, Friends wrote letters to George Fox to ask his opinion on various doctrinal or folkway issues. These letters bothered Fox, who never intended to establish himself as the head of a cult or sect. His replies often used such language as "Friends, mind that which is pure in you to guide you to God, out of confusion… mind the Light of God in your consciences." Fox maintained that anyone could come to know the Lord's will through expectant waiting and seeking, and he wanted local Friends to call upon the dormant gifts of those in the meeting. The first monthly meeting was established at Cumberland in 1653, and additional business meetings materialized elsewhere in England in the following decade. By 1671, some women were meeting together to consider matters regarding members of their sex. Separate business meetings for women spread throughout the 1670s, especially after a group of Quakers led by John Wilkinson and John Story left Friends partially as a protest against them. During a sermon at London Yearly Meeting in 1674, Fox said

> There hath been some scruples about Men and Women's Meetings. Men and women who come to the gospel are heirs of the power which was before the Devil was. Heirs of this, they take their possessions, and do the Lord's business… It eased me much when those meetings were set up, for men and women that are heirs of the gospel have a right to gospel order. It belongs to them… Wait for the Spirit of God to arise to order you in the power, and watch that in nothing the power of God may be abused. Learning from the heavenly One, there will be a heavenly harmony and unity and comfort in the joyful order, in him that hath brought immortality to light through the gospel.[12]

The question of how to accommodate a bicameral business meeting challenged early Friends. Throughout the seventeenth century, men and women Friends in England sat on separate sides of the aisle for worship; when the time arrived to hold the business meeting, the women would leave the room and relocate to another room or a nearby house. It appears that women Friends usually sat along the wall the furthest from the door, meaning that sometimes they sat on the east side and sometimes on the west side. Separate business meetings were slow to materialize in England (especially when compared to American Quakers). While some types of business were transacted mostly by the men (such as property issues) and some solely by the women, a comparison of minute books shows an eighty per cent overlap in the business. Most items of business needed approval by both sides, while other items only needed to be noted by the other side.

During the seventeenth century, Friends experimented with three different means of accommodating women's meetings. In 1677, Friends at Broad Campden added a second story loft onto their existing meeting house and provided space for the women to hold their business meetings there. This was a common means of providing space for women's meetings, found elsewhere at Adderbury, Reading, Jordans, and Woodbridge. A second option was to construct a Women's Meeting House (WMH), either as an addition onto the earlier building or as a freestanding building. This option appears to have been limited to the sites of monthly meetings and was not common. One of the earliest documented examples of a WMH addition was that constructed at Banbury (1681). Examples of

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[12] *The Works of George Fox*, vol 7 (State College PA: New Foundation Fellowship, 1990), 18; *Beginnings of Quakerism*, 143; *Second Period of Quakerism*, 273-274, 297, 303; Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* 207, 898-899; Terry Wallace, ed., *That Thy Candles May Always be Burning: Nine Pastoral Sermons of George Fox* (Camp Hill PA: George Fox Fund, Inc., 2001), 85.

freestanding WMHs constructed in the eighteenth century include Leominster and Huntingdon.[13]

The most common means of providing facilities for the women's business meetings was to divide the meeting room into two chambers with a frame partition. From the beginning, partitions included moveable panels called *shutters* which could be opened to unite the two rooms during worship or closed to provide separate facilities for the women. Various forms of shutters were used in early Friends meeting houses. Some were hinged boards which could be fastened with ceiling hooks (Airton). Other shutters sat in grooves in the partition wall and were individually removed when needed (Hertford). Stourbridge has a series of large panels hinged on the sides which may be opened horizontally in an accordion style. The shutters at Colthouse, thought to date to the construction of the meeting house in 1688, are paneled boards which slide vertically in grooves in the partition wall. In most English Friends meeting houses, the interior was not equally divided. The room used for worship, which contained the stand, usually occupied two-thirds or more of the interior space. Since the women sat with the men and departed for their business, they in theory only needed half the space that the men needed. This 2:1 ratio was maintained in the earliest Friends meeting houses in America.[14]

Use of the ministers' stand and the increasing practice of holding separate business meetings for women and men led to some unusual interior features. Once the women were expected to leave the room for business meetings, any women who were considered public Friends (and who therefore sat on the ministers' stand) needed to be able to depart without disturbing men who were seated there. Friends at the Peel Meeting House in London tried an experiment where men would sit on the upper bench and women on the lower bench, but it soon complained about the "inconvenience from the public womens' seats being placed under the men's gallery, their backs being towards the men, so that a man and a woman sometimes stand up together to speak." In 1678, one meeting attempted to require the men and women to sit in separate rooms for worship, thus facilitating the transition from worship to business. [This solution became normative in North America.] Eventually the English Friends compromised by assigning seats to the public women to facilitate their departure for business sessions elsewhere. Some meetings constructed a second stand for use by the women during their separate business meetings.[15]

Types of Early Friends Meeting Houses (1671-1700)

During the years 1671 to 1688, Friends in England constructed seventy-six purpose-built meeting houses. Few of these meeting houses constructed during the heat of persecution survive, which is regrettable because these buildings helped shape developing nonconformist architecture in an era when no other nonconformist group was building houses of worship. The general types of nonconformist architecture derived from the earlier Puritan era were in their nascent stages of development, and the Quakers maintained the link between Puritan construction of mid-century and post-Toleration nonconformist architecture.

The more traditional of the two types of nonconformist architecture is the Chapel Plan, which represented a simplification of the earlier Catholic building type and maintained the sense of a more holy or special gable end of the building. Chapel Plan buildings generally have a front-gabled orientation with the entrance on one gable end, an aisle leading between two ranks of benches, and a chancel-like end where the pulpit or ministers' stand was located. Chapel Plan meeting houses were considered to be the more hierarchical of the two

[13] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses, passim.*
[14] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses, passim.*
[15] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* 892-899.

nonconformist building types, as the minister was physically separated from the congregation. Subtypes are limited to the location of the entrance. The pure Chapel Plan located the entrance on the end wall opposite the ministers' stand. All known Friends meeting houses with this specific description constructed in England in the seventeenth century are found in southwestern England and include Banbury (1665) and Long Compton (1670). In a second subtype, the entrance was located on a side wall near the gable end opposite the stand. The layout thus replicated that found in a famous Puritan house of worship named Guyhirn Chapel. Examples include Settle (1678), Norwich (1679), and Ettington (1684).[16]

The remaining subset of the Chapel Plan represents an amalgamation of the exterior of the Cottage Plan and the interior of the Chapel Plan. This "Mixed" Type features a symmetrical main elevation with a centered door. Inside, a T-shaped aisle runs under the ridge from one end wall, where the stand is located, to the opposite end wall. The earliest identified example is Farington (1672), a one-story, three-bay meeting house with a steeply sloped hipped roof. Another important example is the Ifield Meeting House, a two-story, three-bay stone building with a paired front gable on its main elevation, reminiscent of that at Hertford. The centered door opens near the partition. The meeting room has the standard layout, with the stand against the east wall and a built-in seat along the outer walls. A chimney in the southwestern corner of the meeting house (on the west side of the partition) heated the interior. The benches at Ifield are strikingly similar to those at Guyhirn Chapel. Other examples of the Mixed Type from this era include Stebbing (1664) and Longford (1676).[17]

Photo & plan of Ettington

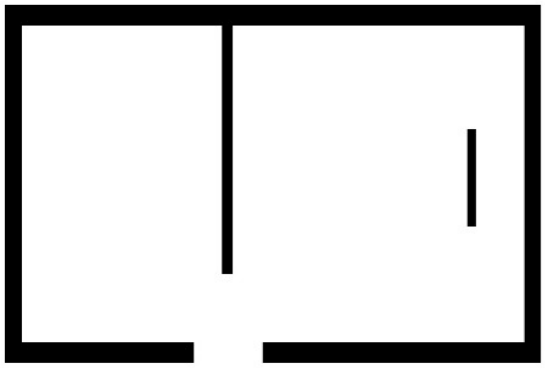

Photo & plan of Ifield

The Cartmel Height Meeting House, constructed in 1677, provided a variant of the Chapel Plan with implications for later English

[16] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses*, *passim*.

[17] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses*, *passim*.

Friends meeting houses. With the advent of separate business meetings, the men and women were expected to sit in the same room during worship (although on different sides of the aisle) but in different rooms for business meetings. The builders of Cartmel Height tried an interesting experiment. The one-story, four-bay building has a two-story entry porch in the third bay, creating a decidedly asymmetrical main (east) elevation. The entrance opens into the main meeting room, partitioned off from a room to the north. The main meeting room reflected the general layout of all Chapel Plan buildings, with the stand on the end wall faced by two ranks of benches. The room north of the partition provided a kitchen on the ground floor and space for the women's business meeting above. The Cartmel Height Meeting House was thus an early attempt of resolving interior issues (accommodation of the ministers and space for the separate women's business meeting). English Friends constructed a series of meeting houses with the interior configuration of Cartmel Height in 1688 when Friends anticipated the possibility of the Act of Toleration. Butler indicates that five of the fourteen Friends meeting houses constructed in England in 1688 had the interior layout of Cartmel Height: Colthouse, Jordans, Oxford, Reigate, and Swarthmoor. Thus the two most famous Friends meeting houses constructed before the Act of Toleration (Swarthmoor and Jordans) are examples of a two-cell building type which appeared at Cartmel Height during the time of heated oppression.[18]

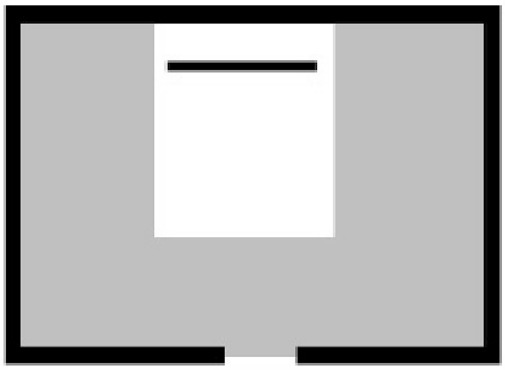

Photo & plan of Adderbury

The second general type of nonconformist architecture is now called the Cottage Plan. This was the less hierarchical building type, as it placed the ministers nearer the center of the seating area. Cottage Plan meeting houses were end-gabled buildings, with a centered entrance on the main elevation opening immediately into an aisle separating the interior into two ranks of benches. An important early example is the Adderbury Meeting House (1675). The one-and-a-half story, three-bay building has a steeply pitched, end-gabled roof. Its decorative chimney on the west end wall is the location of the datestone. The interior features a stand on the north wall opposite the door, two ranks of benches, and a U-shaped loft along the west, south, and east walls. The stand does not extend under the loft. The women at Adderbury held their business meetings in the loft, where a corner chimney provided the building's heat. Two other early examples of the Cottage Plan include Woodbridge (1678) and Wymondham (1687). While the Cottage Plan was a minority choice for English Friends, it was the first choice of other nonconformist groups, and North American Friends generally preferred it as well.

[18] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses,* 298-299.

Post-Toleration English Friends Meeting Houses (1689—1700)

In the last decade of the seventeenth century, English Friends constructed sixty-three new meeting houses. Butler provides the necessary information to classify twenty-seven of these buildings. In general, the ratio of Chapel to Cottage Plan meeting houses did not change, but a dramatic shift towards the interior layout of the Cartmel Height Meeting House indicates that English Friends had arrived at a preferred interior layout. The following table summarizes the types of English Friends Meeting Houses and those of the four other large nonconformist groups:[19]

	Fr.	Pres.	Ind.	Con.	Bap.
Chapel Plan	38	16	3	2	3
Cottage Plan	15	30	10	8	6
Other / Irregular	0	0	0	0	1
Total	53	46	13	10	9

The preferred architectural type of seventeenth century Friends, the Chapel Plan, dominated their meeting house construction throughout the 1690s. It represented roughly seventy per cent of Friends Meeting Houses constructed in England before 1689 and seventy-five per cent of those constructed during 1689 – 1700. A major shift inside the Chapel Plan was the rising dominance of the Cartmel Height Type. This type, introduced in 1677, accounted for fourteen of the twenty-seven classified Friends meeting houses constructed in England in the 1690s, or fifty-two per cent of the whole. Nine of these fourteen were constructed in the north of England. Key examples of the type include Yealand Conyers (1692), Skipton (1693), Rawden (1697), and Airton (1700). The frequency of other subtypes of the Chapel Plan was halved from fifty-one per cent of pre-Toleration Friends meeting houses to just twenty-five per cent of post-Toleration meeting houses. Key post-Toleration examples include Farfield (1689), Ipswich (1700), and Hullavington (1697).

Photo of Yealand Conyers

The Cottage Plan continued to be the minority choice for English Friends. It declined in use from thirty-one per cent before Toleration to twenty-six percent during the years 1689 – 1700. Perhaps the most significant of all Cottage Plan Friends meeting houses constructed post-Toleration was the Gildencroft Meeting House in Norwich, constructed in 1698. Gildencroft was a large two-story, seven-bay building with a hipped roof. The door, located in the fourth bay, opened into a large meeting room with the ministers' stand along the north wall. Stairs on either side of the door led up to the lofts, which extended along the east and west walls. Gildencroft has architectural similarities to an Independent meeting house nearby, now called simply the Old Meeting House in Norwich. Another two-story Friends meeting house

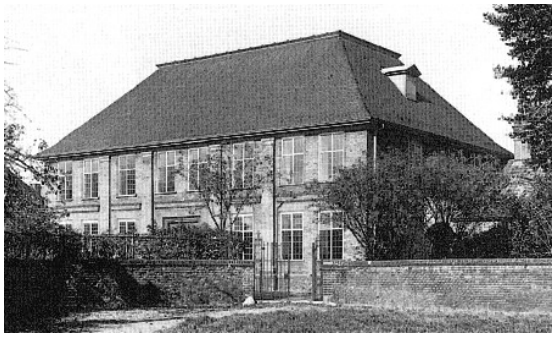

Photo of Gildencroft adapted from Stell, Eastern, p. 260.

[19] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses, passim*; Stell, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in Central England, passim*.

dating to this era is the Shipston-on-Stour Meeting House (1692). Shipston was originally constructed with paired cross-gables, much like Ifield. The interior featured a U-shaped loft system with the stand along the west wall (later re-located to the south wall). Other Cottage Plan meeting houses dating to the 1690s were primarily one-story, three-bay examples such as Warwick (1695) and Trawden (1697).[20]

Although the development of Quaker folkways in England was in its infancy when the first Quakers arrived in North America, many patterns emerged during the 1670s which helped to define the movement for the coming fifty years. Developments with a bearing upon religious architecture, including the need for accommodation of the ministers and provision for separate business meetings, emerged after the first Quakers emigrated to the colonies. The two architectural types introduced by the Puritans defined nonconformist architecture after 1660 (the Cottage Plan and the Chapel Plan). These currents arrived on American shores with new settlers and the continuous stream of traveling Friends ministers across the Atlantic. Quakers and other nonconformists brought their religious understandings with them from England, as evidenced by their earliest religious architecture in North America.

III Early Quaker Architectural Experiments in North America

The earliest English immigrants to the New World arrived during the religious upheaval of the seventeenth century. They brought with them the struggles over the Reformation, and their original houses of worship reflect their emphasis upon maintaining the religious traditions of their European homes. Although these facts are generally accepted, remarkably little has been written about North American colonial religious architecture except in New England and to a lesser degree Virginia.

The variety of Friends meeting houses in colonial North America illustrates the evolution from the two standard Puritan types to the development of a specifically Quaker architectural type. The earliest Friends meeting houses appear to have varied widely in their appearance, although little information on these seventeenth century buildings is available. Evidence of the two general types of English Friends meeting house design appeared in the colonies in the 1680s. The Cottage Plan was the dominant building type for American Friends during the years 1700—1770, at the same time that it was the preferred choice of the Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. American Quakers embraced the idea of separate business meetings for men and women earlier than their English counterparts, and this decision precipitated an architectural drift in America towards a specific Quaker form. Once a solution to the basic issues involved in Friends meeting house construction was offered, it became the preferred, distinctive style of Friends meeting house architecture in North America and dominated Quaker religious architecture for a century.

Earliest Friends Meeting Houses in North America

Little or no documentation exists for the earliest Friends meeting houses constructed in North America. The earliest documented Friends meeting house in North America was a log building constructed at Nassawaddox, Virginia, by Levin Denwood in 1657. The earliest constructed in Maryland was Betty's Cove Meeting House (1669); it was enlarged before George Fox visited in 1672, and even then Fox wrote that it was not large enough to contain all the people who gathered there. Pennsylvania's first Friends meeting house was constructed in 1682; Massachusetts's in 1688, and North Carolina's in 1703 (after a visit by Thomas Chalkley).[21]

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[20] Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses, passim.*

[21] Carroll, *Quakers on the Eastern Shore,* 28-29, and 38; Seth Beeson Hinshaw, "Friends Culture in Colonial North Carolina, 1672—1789," in *The Southern Friend: Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society*, 22 (2000): 16.

Photo of Third Haven MD; adapted from Historic American Building Survey documentation MD-1331

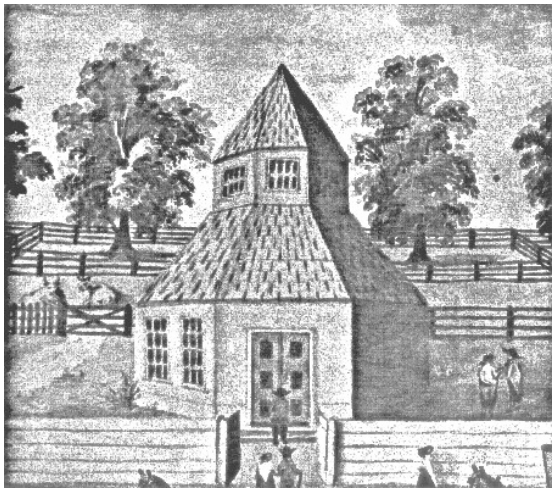

Photo of Burlington NJ

The oldest extant Friends meeting house in America is Third Haven MD, constructed c. 1682. The building was repaired, enlarged, and altered several times from 1700 to 1797. During this period, Third Haven was the seat of Maryland Yearly Meeting (later renamed Baltimore YM). Throughout much of the eighteenth century, the building had a rough Greek cross plan, with a cross-gabled room on the south elevation and a small cross-gabled section on the north elevation. Its 1797 renovations involved the demolition of the cross-gabled sections and the extension of the interior rooms to the south by twelve feet. The new main elevation had a six-bay façade reflecting developments of the mid-eighteenth century. While local tradition states that the existing building includes most of the original 1682 meeting house, the interior configuration reflects Quaker folkways of the mid-eighteenth century and not those of 1682.[22]

Two other Friends meeting houses constructed in the 1680s – Burlington NJ and Salem MA – show Quakers using simple vernacular building types for the construction of their meeting houses. The Burlington NJ Meeting House of 1683 is well-known today for its hexagonal shape. It was situated within an enclosed yard and consisted of a single room with a six-sided roof leading to an oversized lantern. Each wall was twenty-three feet, four inches in length. Inside, the benches apparently were arranged in four parts separated by two aisles. Burlington Friends may have based this unusual building on the octagonal Dutch Reformed Meeting Houses found throughout the Dutch settlements in North America. The Burlington Meeting House soon became too small and had no chimney for heat. In 1696, the building was enlarged by the addition of a rear wing with an end chimney; a set of facing benches was added along the long side of the addition. The building remained unsatisfactory and was replaced in the eighteenth century.[23]

The Salem MA Meeting House was constructed in 1688 by Thomas Maule. An illustration of this building appeared in the *Essex Antiquarian* in 1909; the source of this illustration is not explained, which is important to this discussion since the building is thought to have disappeared almost two centuries before this illustration appeared in print. It is known that the building measured eighteen by twenty-

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[22] Carroll, *Quakers on the Eastern Shore,* 110-112; Kenneth L. Carroll, *Three Hundred Years and More of Third Haven Quakerism* (Easton MD: Queen Anne Press, 1984). Maryland Yearly Meeting was renamed Baltimore Yearly Meeting in 1774.

[23] George M. Hills, *History of the Church in Burlington, New Jersey* (Trenton NJ: W.S. Sharp Printing Co., 1885), 10; Damon Tvaryanas, "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House: A Typology and Inventory" (Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania Historic Preservation program, 1993), 45-48.

Illustration of Salem Meeting House, MA

one feet. The illustration shows a one-story, two-bay building with an end gabled roof, a shed addition on one side, and a saltbox extension on the rear. The shed addition may have been constructed later, as it was clad with clapboards while the remainder of the meeting house was clad with shingles. The primary entrance is located in the left bay (possibly the western bay) with a large casement window in the alternate bay. A casement window in the gable suggests that the building incorporated a loft.[24]

Introduction of English Prototypes

In the 1680s, the two general English meeting house forms discussed earlier (Chapel and Cottage Plans) appeared in North America along with bicameral business meetings and the minister's gallery. An interesting minute of Middletown Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania in 1699 provides an important clue to worship of that time. The minute advised that

> public Friends do sit in the galleries, and the elder Friends with them, or before the galleries; and that our women Friends take one side of the house, and the men the other; and that all sit with their faces toward the galleries.[25]

An immediate change resulting from the mass migration of Friends from England to Pennsylvania was the appearance of frame partitions in meeting houses. Partitions began to appear in North America in the late seventeenth century, with the earliest evidence found in the Salem NJ Meeting House (1685). Burlington Monthly Meeting, Burlington Quarterly Meeting, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting were bicameral after 1681, and other meetings followed suit. Separate business meetings for women appeared later in other Quaker communities. When the decision was made to hold separate business meetings, the English model was retained (the women were usually expected to leave and meet elsewhere).[26] The following discussion of the Chapel and Cottage Plan houses of worship among colonial Quakers covers the initial efforts to accommodate space for the ministers and for separate business meetings.

Colonial Chapel Plan Friends Meeting Houses

The first known Friends meeting house in North America reflecting the Chapel Plan was the Evening Meeting House in Philadelphia, constructed in 1685 and sometimes called the First Bank Meeting House. The long rectangular building measured thirty-eight by fifty feet and featured a gable end wall facing east onto Front Street. The building was constructed without a ministers' gallery, and soon after one was added, it was torn out (1691). The building had ongoing structural problems and was demolished in 1698.[27] As in

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[24] "The First Quaker Meeting House in Salem," in *The Essex Antiquarian,* 13, no. 4(1909), 145-146.

[25] Quoted in Seth B. Hinshaw, *The Carolina Quaker Experience* (Greensboro NC: North Carolina Friends Historical Society, 1984), 296.

[26] Tvaryanas, "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House," 52.

[27] J. T. Scharf and T. Westcott, eds. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884). 1242; Watson's Annals, 1877 version, vol. 1, 390-391, 507; Edwin B. Bronner, "Quaker Landmarks in Early Philadelphia," in *Historic Philadelphia: From the Founding until the Early Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), 210-211.

Illustration of Keith Meeting House

England, the Chapel Plan consisted of a rectangular building with a ministers' stand at one end of the building and the entrance on or near the other end. Although this building type was the dominant mode among English Friends, the available evidence suggests it was a decided second choice among Friends in colonial North America and was almost nonexistent among Friends meeting houses built during the years 1770 – 1820.

Supporters of George Keith constructed a Chapel Plan meeting house on the southwestern corner of Second and Arch Streets in Philadelphia in 1692. The Keithian Meeting House was a one-story building with a prominent gambrel roof and a pent-like overhang on both side walls. An entry vestibule on the front gable end of the building served as the primary entrance, with a secondary entrance located on the side wall. The building, sketched just prior to its demolition in the eighteenth century, illustrates a typical late seventeenth-century English meeting house type. The sketch raises the possibility that the Chapel Plan did not become popular in colonial America due to its association with the Keith schism.[28]

Other examples of the Chapel Plan were constructed in colonial North America. The building that appears to be the most intact is the Chichester Meeting House (1769) near Chester, Pennsylvania. It is a one-story stone building with a double door on one gable end wall and the gallery along the opposite gable end. Its interior is divided by an original partition wall constructed parallel to the gallery (following the English pattern). The main entrance opens into the women's room, and

Photo of reversible bench

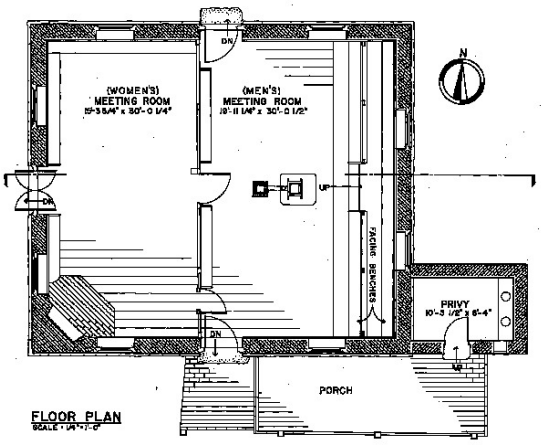


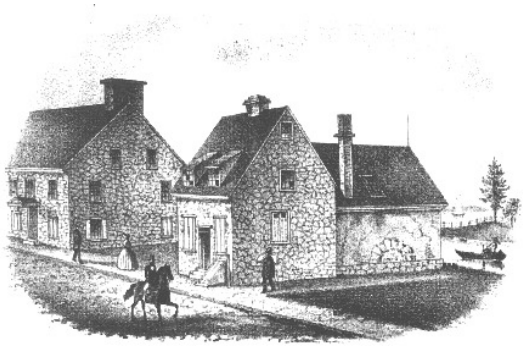
Photo + plan of Chichester. Both adapted from Historic American Building Survey documentation PA6225.

[28] Watson's Annals, 1877 version, vol. 3, 431; Ruth E. Bonner, *Quaker Ways: Pictures of Meeting-Houses in Current Middle-Atlantic America* (Kutztown, PA: Kutztown Publishing Co., 1978), 211; John T. Faris, *Old Churches and Meeting Houses In and Around Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1926), 84-85.

ancillary doors on the side walls open just inside the partition into the men's room. Its facing benches are particularly important. The benches on the north side of the building are two inches higher than those on the south side, which indicates that men and women sat separately for worship (consistent with the general assumptions about colonial worship throughout North America). The women would rise and relocate to the room behind the partition for their business meeting. Special reversible benches were located in the women's room. They were originally located in front of the partition; when the partition was closed, women seated on these benches would stand, switch the bench's orientation, and sit on the other side to face their own clerk. The partition wall includes a jib door which only operates when the partition is open.

Colonial Cottage Plan Meeting Houses

The Cottage Plan was the dominant building type for American Friends during the years 1700 to 1770. Examples are found in each of the oldest yearly meetings in North America. As in England, Cottage Plan meeting houses were rectangular buildings in which the entrance, usually centered on the south side, opened into an aisle leading between two rows of benches to the ministers' gallery along the north wall. The presence of the gallery was not



Upland Meeting House in Chester PA

Flushing Meeting House on Long Island

universal early in the eighteenth century. Joseph Hoag reported in his journal that during his youth the Creek, New York Meeting House did not have a gallery. His father (one of the ministers) sat on a chair facing the rest of the meeting. Hoag first saw a gallery when his family traveled to Nine Partners for monthly meeting.[29] As in England, the Cottage Plan provided a less hierarchical approach towards worship.

The earliest identified examples of Friends' use of the Cottage Plan in America is the Upland Meeting House in Chester PA (1687), constructed for a Friends meeting organized in 1675 (before the arrival of William Penn in 1682). The building was remarkably similar to English examples such as Adderbury and Wymondham. The one-and-a-half story, three-bay building had a steeply pitched roof, a centered chimney, and two dormers on the main elevation. The door opens between two windows. A later ell addition may have been constructed to serve as a room for the women's business meeting.[30]

One of the most important seventeenth century examples of the Cottage Plan is the Flushing Meeting House on Long Island, originally constructed in 1694, enlarged in 1717, and still in use. The Flushing Meeting house has been a highly significant building in the history of New York Friends. New York Yearly

[29] *A Journal of the Life and Gospel Labors of that Devoted Servant and Minister of Christ, Joseph Hoag* (Sherwoods NY: David Heston, 1860), 5-8.

[30] An illustration of the Upland Meeting House appears on an unnumbered page in George Smith's *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania.*

Meeting was held at Flushing from 1696 until 1778. The original appearance of the building is rather uncertain, although its original dimensions are evident from the interior framing system. One thing that is known is that Flushing was originally constructed with a gallery. The renowned English minister Samuel Bownas was summoned to court in 1702 while seated in the gallery; the sheriff "stepping up into the gallery, took me by the hand and told me I was his prisoner." Flushing's 1717 addition more than doubled its original size. It is one of few examples of Cottage Plan Friends meeting houses with a hipped roof (another example is Portsmouth, Rhode Island, built 1700 but also highly altered). Separate doors on the south elevation open into aisles in the two interior rooms, leading north between two ranks of benches to the ministers' gallery. The galleries in each room (rebuilt following the American Revolution) were later lengthened towards the partition. Today the galleries have three levels of benches with kneeling rails for Friends who appeared in prayer. Following the construction of the 1717 section, the meeting house had a U-shaped loft system to allow the men and women to hold concurrent business meetings. In later years, the loft was converted to a full second floor and the current frame partition was installed.[31]

One-story Cottage Plan meeting houses were commonly constructed throughout the entire eighteenth century. The Hampton NH Meeting House, constructed in 1701, is a five-bay variant and one of the oldest extant examples (now converted into a residence). Among these early meeting houses is Catawissa PA, one of the few remaining log meeting houses. The Cottage Plan was used for new meeting houses into the early nineteenth century; examples from the early nineteenth century include East Blackstone MA (1812), Jamestown NC (c. 1812), Little Elk PA (1826), and Pennsgrove PA (1833).

Catawissa PA.

Oblong Meeting House, NY

Two-story Cottage Plan meeting houses were generally constructed for larger meetings or for use by preparative or monthly meetings. These meeting houses were commonly constructed in the first two thirds of the eighteenth century. Examples are found in New England, New York, Philadelphia, and Maryland (now Baltimore) Yearly Meetings. In addition to the primary entrance on the south side, two-story Cottage Plan meeting houses often have ancillary doors on the end walls and a gallery door on the north wall. The gallery door, not a common element in England, provided exterior access into the ministers' gallery. Building materials included brick (Concord PA, Uxbridge MA, Greenwich NJ, Nottingham MD), stone (Bristol PA, Evesham NJ, Hopewell VA), and frame (Saylesville RI,

[31]"Flushing Meetinghouse Pictured Above," in *The American Friend*, 29 (Ninth Month 1949), 318; Ann G. Lowry, *The Story of Flushing Meeting House* (Flushing NY: Case, 1939), 19-25. The story of Samuel Bownas's arrest at Flushing which led to his career as a shoemaker is told in the "Life of Samuel Bownas," printed in *The Friends Library*, vol 3. (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1839), 24-35.

Uxbridge MA.

Newburyport MA, Oblong NY). The earliest identified example is Abington PA (1702), and the latest identified example is Arney's Mount NJ (1776).

Two-story Cottage Plan meeting houses have a standard interior. The first floor consists of the usual two ranks of benches. A ministers' gallery is centered against the north wall, facing the remainder of the benches but not extending under the loft, which ran along the east, south, and west walls. During the worship, the men and women would sit separately on the first floor. When the time came to begin a business meeting, the men's messengers would close a special partition over the second floor void, sealing off the second floor from the first. The women would then retire to the second floor to hold their business meeting. Most meetings replaced these horizontal partitions with the perpendicular type in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries so that the women would not need to climb the stairs. Significantly, the horizontal partition survives in the Uxbridge, Massachusetts Meeting House, with a large partition board hinged above the gallery. When closed, it rested on a series of joists running through the void of the loft. These joists remain as vestigial elements at the meeting houses in Saylesville, Rhode Island and East Hoosack, Massachusetts. Some Friends meeting houses of the type do not appear to have had a hinged partition. Instead, planks rested on the exposed joists. Prior to a business meeting, two men would arrange planks to seal the void. In order to accommodate the placement of the planks, a narrow walking space was provided above the gallery. These meeting houses thus had a loft that wrapped around the entire second floor, with an off-center void that mostly faced onto the gallery (such as at East Hoosack and Oblong, both in New York).

A few Cottage Plan meeting houses had a lateral or parallel partition system, similar to the pattern in London YM. This arrangement created an interior room, used by all for worship and by the men for business, and a "pass-through" room where the women retired for their business. One of the best examples was Concord, Pennsylvania. The two-story, three-bay building was originally constructed of Flemish bond brickwork, with the corners of the building pointing in the compass directions (north, south, east, and west). Each elevation has a door centered between two windows. Arriving carriages would drop off the women on the southwestern side, and the men would walk from the horse sheds to either the northeast side for the ministers and elders or on the southeastern side for the general seating. The doors on the northeast and southwestern sides opened into gallery areas facing each other across the general seating. The interior originally featured a lateral partition installed parallel to the two galleries. Women Friends seated on reversible benches immediately in front of the partition would stand, switch the orientation of the benches, and sit down on the other side to face their facing benches. This type of reversible bench is found in both England and America, but only in meeting houses with a parallel partition. Concord burned in 1788, and during the rebuilding it was lengthened by two bays and a perpendicular partition replaced the old parallel partition. A similar lateral partition is found at Downingtown, Pennsylvania (1806). Such lateral partitions appear to have been an uncommon

means of dividing the building into two rooms, and many were later removed.[32]

The orientation of the original Concord Meeting House represented an important subset of early square Cottage Plan buildings. Rather than facing south, the building's corners point north, south, east, and west. Other examples of square or nearly square Cottage Plan meeting houses built in Pennsylvania in the early 18th century with this diamond orientation include Abington (1702), Newtown Square (1711), and Sadsbury (1747); the earlier two were later extended and altered to reflect the Quaker Plan. The facing benches were located on either the northeast or northwest walls. These meeting houses may have been originally part of a subset called the Bristol Type.

The Bristol Type in America

An important subset of the Cottage Plan in America was the Bristol Type, sometimes called the Quaker version of the "Square" Plan commonly used by New England Congregationalists. This type, primarily constructed in cities, was modeled after the Bristol (Friars) Meeting House in England (1670), located in a leading port of departure and thus the last English Friends meeting house seen by many emigrants. Buildings of this type were two-and-a-half story square buildings with a pyramidal roof and lantern. Among the known examples are the Great Meeting House in Philadelphia (1697), the Great Meeting House in Newport, Rhode Island (1699); Charleston, South Carolina (1720s); and Wilmington, Delaware (1738). These four buildings show a remarkable similarity in appearance, given their geographic spread.

Perhaps the earliest example of the Bristol type in North America was the Great Meeting House in Philadelphia. This square building (fifty feet by fifty feet) was constructed in 1697 on the southwest corner of High and Second Streets. The building is not well documented, although it is known that the loft was added in 1699 when the building was only four years old. It was demolished in 1755 for a larger building. Historian John F. Watson described the Great Meeting House as follows:

> The first meeting-house was surmounted in the centre of its four-angled roof by a raised frame of glass work, so constructed as to pass light down into the Meeting below, after the manner of the former Burlington meeting-house.[33]

The oldest extant Bristol Type meeting house is the Great Meeting House constructed

Newport, RI.

[32] Francis G. Brown, *Downingtown Friends Meeting: An Early History of Quakers in the Great Valley* (Glenmoore PA: Glenmoore Corporation, 1999), 4.

[33] Scharf and Westcott, eds., *History of Philadelphia 1609—1884*, 1244; Joseph B. Jackson, *Encyclopedia of Philadelphia*, vol. 4 (Harrisburg PA: National Historical Association, 1933), 1028; John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, in the Olden Time* (Philadelphia: E.S. Stuart Co., 1877), vol. 1, 355-356 and vol. 3, 432.

in 1699 in Newport RI for the use of Rhode Island (now New England) Yearly Meeting. This two-story, five-bay meeting house was originally fifty feet square with a hipped roof leading to a lantern. In 1771, a traveling minister reported that the meeting house had two lofts: one of the U-shaped variety and a higher one which ran around the entire building. Throughout most of its history, the Newport Meeting House was too small for yearly meeting sessions, and it was enlarged several times. A 1705 addition constructed to hold the women's yearly meeting was rebuilt in 1729 as a two-story, three-bay wing with an end-gabled roof and an end chimney. The interior wall of the wing was hinged and could be fastened with hooks anchored in the ceiling to create a fifty by eighty interior room. Later in the eighteenth century, the original section was doubled; at that time, the pyramidal roof was replaced with a gabled roof. Later cross-gabled sections were added in the nineteenth century to accommodate the growing attendance at yearly meeting. In the late twentieth century, the meeting house was restored to its appearance in the early nineteenth century.[34]

Lanterns and Quakers had a bittersweet history. They allowed natural light to flood the room from above, serving as an architectural metaphor for the spiritual Light. In addition, many meeting houses provided a means of opening the lanterns for ventilation during the summer months. However, lanterns had serious problems. William Alexander, an architect who served for a while as Clerk of London Yearly Meeting, wrote that when the lanterns were open, people's voices also escaped: people standing outside could hear what was being said but people inside often could not. This was especially the case if the speaker was standing directly under the lantern.[35] The feature was a particular hardship on women Friends, who held their business meetings on the loft level just under the lantern. As a result of this structural deficiency, Quakers dropped their experiment with lanterns rather quickly.

The Bank Meeting House in Philadelphia was an important variant of the Bristol Type. It was constructed in 1703 on the site of the Evening Meeting House (demolished in 1698) using materials from a just-demolished meeting house in central Philadelphia. The two-story, three-bay building was fifty feet square and located inside a walled city lot facing east onto Front Street. It had a special roof created by a gambrel on each of its four sides and did not feature a lantern. Men entered the meeting house by a door on the east wall under a pedimented portico and sat in the eastern room inside. Double doors on the south wall opened into an aisle to the ministers' gallery and to the women's room on the west side. The interior of the Bank Meeting House is mostly unknown. It is said to have been divided for business by a curtain, but in 1755 a vertical partition was installed.[36]

Accommodation of Bicameral Business Meetings

North American Friends experimented for nearly a century to find a way to accommodate bicameral business meetings. Many colonial Friends meeting houses were constructed with a single interior room, and the easiest resolution

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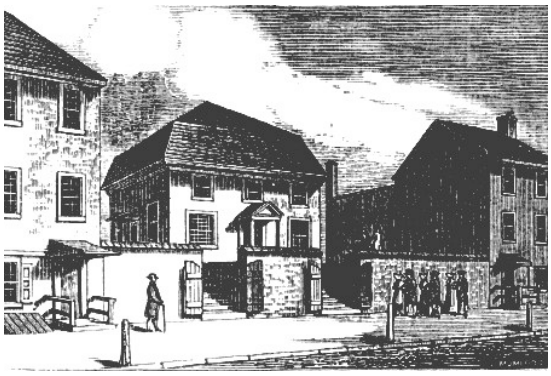
[34] "Friends Meetinghouse: Newport, Rhode Island, 1699," in Peter T. Mallary, *New England Churches & Meetinghouses, 1680—1830* (NYC: Vendome Press, 1985), 46-50; "Life of Joseph Oxley," in *The Friends Library*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1841), 464.

[35] William Alexander, *Observations on the Construction and Fitting Up of Meeting Houses &c. for Public Worship* (York, England: William Alexander, 1820), 9.

[36] *Inventory of Church Archives*, 86. The two Bank Meeting Houses have been confused by many historians. Edwin Bronner reports that the name *Bank Meeting House* developed after the American Revolution when the hill in front of the meeting house was excavated in order to level Front Street. According to his account, the earlier meeting house was actually called the *Evening Meeting House* rather than the "First Bank" Meeting House, its common appellation by historians. Watson's Annals, 1877 version, vol. 1, 390-391 and vol. 3, 431; Bronner, "Quaker Landmarks in Early Philadelphia," 210.

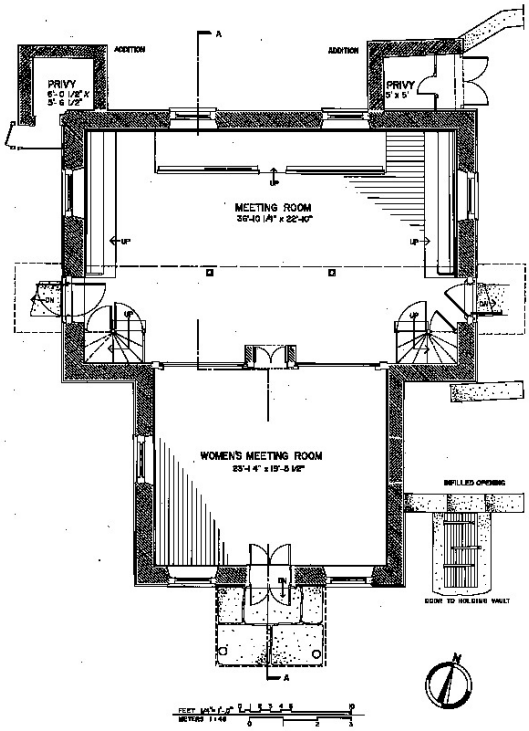


Bank Meeting House

was to construct a women's meeting room. Such an addition usually occurred concurrently with an increase in attendance and had some justification; at that time, no small meetings hosted either a preparative meeting (first organized in America in the 1690s) or a monthly meeting. The choice of adding a women's meeting room led to some unusual architecture, as illustrated by two Welsh meeting houses west of Philadelphia.

The first Welsh meeting house to consider is Merion, Pennsylvania, one of the most unusual Friends meeting houses in North America. While its shape has been traditionally described as *cruciform*, it does not have a Latin cross shape (t) or a Greek cross shape (+) but rather a T-shape. A further point of significance is its cruck construction, a medieval vernacular building technique found in only a few of the very earliest English buildings in North America. The interior of the larger section (the crossbar of the T) is a typical Cottage Plan meeting house, quite similar to its English contemporaries. The smaller section, or the shaft of the T, has been highly altered since the women ceased to hold separate business meetings, removing much of the architectural evidence.

Merion's T-shape remains a point of dispute. Prominent local historians George Smith and John Faris both believed that the design was an historical accident. Faris wrote, "The unusual form of the building, which is cruciform, [indicates] not that this form was chosen at the beginning, but was the result of additions."[37] John Milner, a prominent historic architect of the Delaware Valley, has examined the building closely and informed this author that he believes the smaller section was constructed first, followed by the larger section. Historians with the National Park Service disagree. They believe that the building reflects



Merion Meeting House

[37] Theodore W. Bean, ed., *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884), 928; *Bi-Centennial Anniversary of the Friends' Meeting House at Merion, Pennsylvania 1695—1895* (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1895), 12; Faris, *Old Churches and Meeting Houses,* 165.

Radnor Meeting House

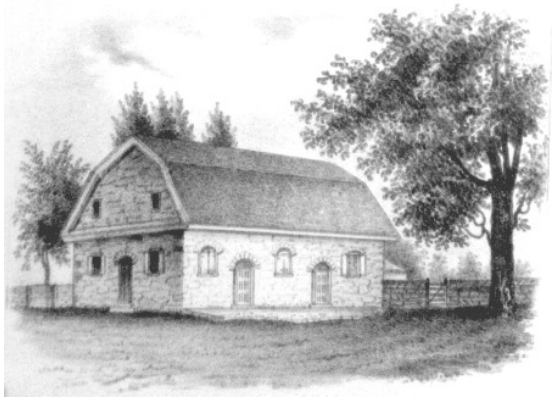
vernacular Anglican architecture of Wales. They have not identified any specific houses of worship in Wales with this plan, and an examination of a dozen books on Welsh religious architecture has not produced any such examples of T-shaped Anglican houses of worship.[38] David Butler has shown the preferred type in Wales prior to 1720 was the Cottage Plan, with no evidence of T-shaped Friends meeting houses. Welsh settlers in the New World almost consistently constructed Cottage Plan houses of worship; examples include both Welsh Quakers (Radnor) and Welsh Baptists (Great Valley and the London Tract). Until additional evidence is brought forth, the Faris/Milner conclusion must be considered the better hypothesis.

Radnor (Pennsylvania) is a second Welsh meeting house illustrating the development of Friends' efforts to provide for women's meetings. Radnor was originally a one-story, three-bay meeting house with a steeply pitched roof. In 1722, Radnor Friends added a one-story, two-bay addition onto the eastern end of the meeting house to accommodate the women's business meeting (the opposite of what happened at Merion, where the men built an addition for themselves and left the women with the original section). Radnor's addition has a lower ridge than the original section, partially in order to preserve a view of the 1718 datestone. As at Merion, the women's room was smaller because it only needed to accommodate the women while the main meeting room needed to accommodate both the men and the women. The construction of a wing for the women's business meeting was a common practice; other examples include Plymouth, Pennsylvania, Newport, Rhode Island, and Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey.[39]

Adding a wing resolved some issues regarding accommodation of separate business meetings but not others. A major advantage was that the women did not need to climb the stairs for business. A disadvantage was the inefficient use of space during business meetings, when the men remained clustered on their side of the main meeting room while the benches formerly occupied by the women remained vacant.

The Springfield Type

In 1738, Friends in Springfield PA constructed a new meeting house which paved the way for a solution to the interior configuration issue. It was constructed with two front doors, opening into two interior rooms separated by a partition wall. The partition broke with earlier Friends tradition in that it



Springfield Meeting House

[38] Examples of books consulted on Welsh architecture include T.J. Hughes, *Wales' Best One Hundred Churches* (Seren, 2007); John Kinross, *Discovering the Smallest Churches in Wales* (History Press, 2007); Anthony Jones, *Welsh Chapels* (Sutton Publishing LTD, 1996); John B. Hilling, *The Historic Architecture of Wales* (University of Wales Press, 1976); *Our National Cathedrals* (London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1889).

[39] Radnor Friends Meeting House, HABS PA-6226; Merion Friends Meeting House, HABS PA-145; Bonner, *Quaker Ways*, 19.

was constructed perpendicular to the gallery, with the result that each room had a portion of the gallery along its north wall. The men and women sat separately both for worship and business. During the worship, moveable panels in the partition wall were opened to create the sense of a single interior room. When the business meeting began, the shutters were closed so that each sex could hold a separate business meeting. Springfield represents a major step in the resolution of interior space. Like earlier meeting houses, the room for the women Friends was smaller than that for the men Friends. This inequality in room size was not necessary, since the earlier reason for providing a smaller room for women no longer applied. The Springfield Meeting House was demolished in 1851 and rebuilt to reflect later architectural developments.[40]

Later examples of the Springfield Type were primarily constructed during the years 1759—1769, although known examples date into the early nineteenth century. Among those constructed during the key decade were Maiden Creek (PA) in 1759 (the only intact example), and Hardwick (NJ) in 1763. A late example was constructed in Lynchburg, Virginia, in the 1790s. Some Cottage Plan meeting houses were elongated by two bays, thereby forming a Springfield Type, such as Mansfield and Greenwich in New Jersey and Frankfort and Concord in Pennsylvania.[41]

Maiden Creek Meeting House

The early eighteenth century was a time of experimentation with religious architectural forms in colonial North America. The four largest denominations – the Anglicans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Quakers – rejected the English architectural heritage preceding the Reformation and constructed houses of worship based on building types developed during the Commonwealth in England. While some local expression existed in all four denominations, the most pronounced was among the Quakers due to two particular interior needs: accommodation of multiple people at the head of the meeting and accommodation of separate women's business meetings. Individual Friends meeting houses handled these two needs in varying ways until a suitable resolution was discovered at Springfield, Pennsylvania. The Springfield Meeting House represented such an obvious solution to the intrinsically Quaker issues that (with one change) it set the stage for the development of a building type that would dominate Quaker meeting house construction for a century.

IV. The Quaker Plan

The overwhelming majority of newly constructed Friends meeting houses in North America from 1770 to 1870 reflected the Quaker Plan. The building type emerged in rural Pennsylvania in the 1740s and spread across the continent, with hundreds constructed in Quaker communities along the east coast from Maine to North Carolina, west through the Free States to the Pacific Ocean, and north into Canada. It provided separate but equal space for the women during worship and business and provided an architectural space for

[40] Illustration of Springfield Friends Meeting, George Smith, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1862), on an unnumbered plate.

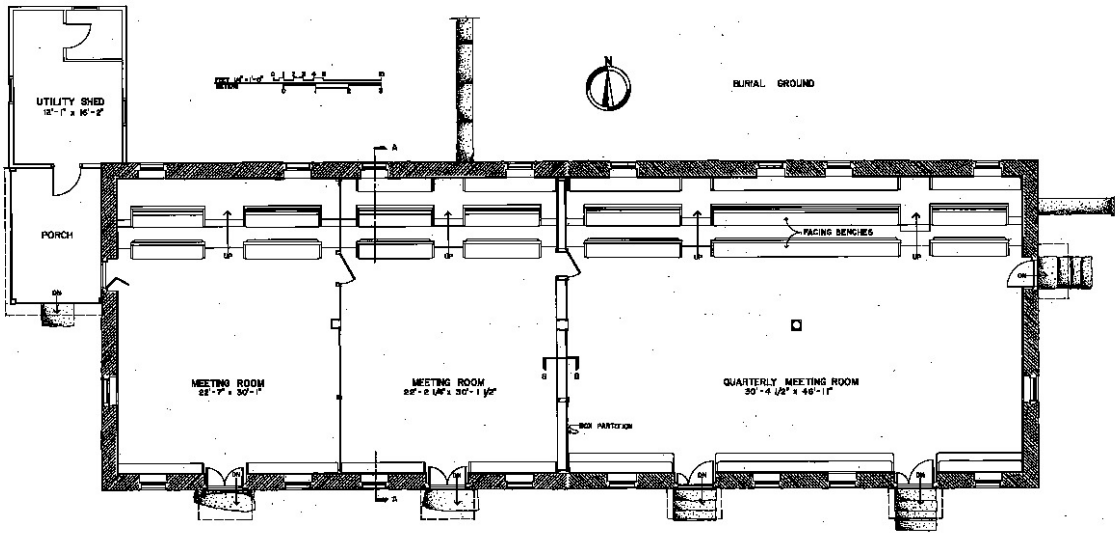
[41] Tvaryanas, "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House," 67, 175-176; Bonner, *Quaker Ways*, 15.

those who had come forth in their gifts. By the time of the Civil War, however, the Quaker Plan came to be associated with the perceived deficiencies among Quakers, and soon thereafter it fell out of favor (though examples were constructed as late as the 1920s).

The first identified example of the Quaker Plan[42] is the Caln Meeting House in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Its design adjusted the plan found at Springfield to create equal spaces for the men and women, thus resolving the architectural challenges Friends had faced for half a century. The one-story core faces south onto the King's Highway with the burial ground to the north. When built, the meeting house had a six-bay main elevation featuring doors opening under cantilevered hoods in the second and fifth bays and windows in the other bays. The exterior configuration set the standard for later Quaker Plan meeting houses. The two doors on the main elevation opened into two identical interior rooms: one for the women (to the west) and one for the men (to the east). The interior was divided by a frame partition with moveable double hung panels called *shutters*. The primary aisles in the two rooms run from the entrances to the gallery, which consists of three tiered benches running across the entire north wall. A lateral aisle extending from the ancillary doors on the end walls to a door in the partition separates the gallery from the general seating.[43]

Caln Meeting House and plan. Plan adapted from the Historic American Building Survey documentation HABS PA-6227.

In 1801, the Caln Meeting House was



[42] The term "Quaker Plan" was coined by the author. An exhibit by the Municipal Art Society of New York labeled this type of building "Plain Quaker Architecture." See Willard Tomlinson, "Plain Quaker Architecture," in *Friends Intelligencer* (4/23/1955), 239.

[43] The date of the Caln Meeting House is disputed. The minutes state that a meeting house was constructed in 1726; local historians date the existing building to 1726. About a century ago, Chalkley Matlack conducted a survey of old meeting houses, and he dated the existing building to 1743, based primarily on the deed purchasing the property and the deed selling the former meeting house property. The 1743 date is preferred by Bonner, *Quaker Ways*, 67, as well as this author. A recent study by the Historic American Buildings Survey concluded that the building was constructed in 1784, a date that clearly conflicts with the architectural evidence.

doubled to accommodate Caln Quarterly Meeting. The addition has the same exterior appearance as the original building, resulting in a twelve-bay main elevation. Caln now features two partitions: one between the original two rooms and one between the center room and the Quarterly Meeting room. The Quarterly Meeting room on the east end of the building was used by the men during the Quarterly Meeting sessions, at which time the women used the two older rooms. On other days, the women used the west room and the men used the center room.

Other early Quaker Plan meeting houses constructed after Caln repeated its architectural elements. The Exeter Meeting House, constructed circa 1758 northwest of Caln, gives an indication of Caln's appearance prior to its extension. The Fourth Street Meeting House in Philadelphia (1763) appears to have been the first two-story Quaker Plan meeting house; its location near the Greater Meeting House gave yearly meeting attenders an opportunity to investigate the benefits of the new architectural plan. In 1764, the Makefield Meeting House north of Philadelphia was doubled from a two-story Cottage Plan building to a Quaker Plan building.

Another significant early example of the Quaker Plan is Buckingham, Pennsylvania (1768). Its harmonious exterior has made it one of the most famous Friends meeting houses, and the building is used as an example of the mid-eighteenth century Quaker aesthetic of plainness. The exterior has two rows of windows flanked by paneled shutters; first floor windows are located under stone arches, and the doors open under pedimented hoods. The north wall features gallery doors, a common eighteenth-century architectural feature. On the interior, Buckingham reflects the Quaker Plan layout with identical rooms for the two sexes. The partition bisecting the first floor includes floor-to-ceiling panels that may be fully opened to create one large space (but it is possible that originally the women held their business meetings upstairs, as the building has vestigial elements pointing to a horizontal partition system). The gallery was originally centered along the north wall but later extended under the U-shaped loft. The built in benches in the gallery and the freestanding benches in the general seating have pronounced handgrasps, a feature found in several early meeting houses. The wrought iron hardware on the doors represents some of the finest of the mid-eighteenth century. In order to produce large freespan rooms, the ceiling is supported from above by heavy king's post trusses in the attic, a common feature of later Quaker Plan meeting houses.

Buckingham Meeting House

By the time of the Revolution, the Quaker Plan was spreading across Quaker settlements along the eastern seaboard. Friends from New Jersey visited Buckingham prior to the construction of their new meeting houses at Salem and Chesterfield (both built 1772).[44] As the eighteenth century progressed, new meeting house construction moved from a preponderance of Cottage Plan buildings to a preponderance of Quaker Plan buildings. The building type flowed north to New York and New England and south into Virginia and North Carolina, then west to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, dominating new construction for a century and becoming the clearly identifiable Quaker building type. Ironically, the Stillwater Meeting House near Barnesville, Ohio, is arguably the most important Quaker Plan meeting house, although it was

[44] Tvaryanas, "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House," 73-74, 259-261, 284-291; Bonner, *Quaker Ways*, 76.

constructed in 1878 during a time when the Quaker Plan was being rejected by most North American Friends.

Meeting House Settings

Due to the use of silence as the context of worship, Quakers attempted to locate their meeting houses to minimize audible disturbances. Rural meeting houses were located amongst farms, usually facing the road with the burial ground in the back. Philadelphia Friends would occasionally spread straw on the cobblestone streets outside to help dampen the noise created by carriages. Urban Quakers worshipping in the Bank Meeting House in Philadelphia constructed a wall around the property to buffer the outside noise, and the use of city walls around urban meeting houses was repeated in other cities (Baltimore, New York, and Charleston). Walls surrounding meeting houses enclosed the various historic resources found on Friends meeting house properties: the meeting house; the school house; the burial ground; horse sheds, where horses would stand during worship; and mounting blocks, which women used to dismount from carriages.

Exteriors of Quaker Plan Meeting Houses

The Quaker Plan meeting house consisted of a one- or two-story, six-bay building with doors in the second and fifth bays. Exterior differences resulting from regional variations or local needs fall into four general categories: orientation, building materials, and porches.

The overwhelming majority of Quaker Plan meeting houses faced south, which allowed the building to take advantage of the sun for heating during the winter. Few Quaker Plan meeting houses constructed before 1850 departed from this orientation, even if the south-facing orientation was awkward. In cases where a meeting house was constructed south of a road running east to west, the rear of the meeting house faced the road (e.g., Flushing NY, Radnor PA, Apponegansett MA, and Frankfort PA). Among east-facing meeting houses (meaning that the Friends seated in the ministers' gallery faced east) are New Garden PA, Stillwater OH, and Jericho NY. The meeting house at Little Compton RI faces west. A rare example of a north-facing meeting house was constructed at Downingtown PA, where the meeting house (1806) is oriented north to the Lancaster Turnpike. After the introduction of higher quality heating stoves in the early nineteenth century, Friends placed less emphasis upon orientation.

Quakers used a diversity of building materials in their meeting houses. In most eighteenth-century communities, the earliest meeting houses were log. A few log meeting houses survive, including Catawissa and Roaring Creek in north central Pennsylvania. Frame meeting houses are most common in rural areas. Many frame meeting houses in the northeastern states were clad with wood shingles (Oblong and Jericho in New York, Shrewsbury NJ, and Pembroke, Massachusetts). Stone meeting houses are common in the Delaware Valley, but rare elsewhere except western New York, where several were constructed of cobblestone (e.g., Hartland and Wheatland). From the early eighteenth century, the favorite building material was brick. Brick ornamentation was rare; two common examples include lozenge patterns in the brick (using glazed headers with Flemish bond brick, such as that found at Rancocas NJ and Fair Hill and Frankford Pa.) and the use of brick arches over the windows. Both brick features fell from favor after the American Revolution, although arched headed windows returned to common use

Stillwater Meeting House, a typical Quaker Plan Meeting House

following the U.S. Civil War.[45] In Ohio Yearly Meeting, it was the common practice to build a brick meeting house to accommodate larger business meetings (quarterly and yearly meeting), while the other meeting houses were usually frame.

The third source of exterior variation was the construction of porches. Protection from the elements was considered important because Quakers developed a notion that one should not enter the meeting room while someone was speaking in ministry or praying. Therefore, a latecomer would need to stand in the elements outside until the ministering Friend concluded. Variations of protection from rain included the hood, portico, vestibule, and porch. Both the hood (a pediment cantilevered out from the wall over a door) and the portico (a hood supported by columns) were common in the eighteenth century. Vestibules and porches were introduced in the nineteenth century. The vestibule was a room on the outside of the meeting house opening through the door into the worship space. New England vestibules often extend across the main elevation of the meeting house, creating the appearance of an enclosed porch. Since vestibules softened outside noise, several meetings relocated the loft stairs into the vestibule. Philadelphia meeting houses such as Twelfth Street, Spruce Street and Orange Street featured small vestibules outside the doors for the men and women. In New Jersey, several meeting houses constructed a brick vestibule on the end walls; they serve the secondary purpose of stabilizing the brick end walls (thus reducing the need for tie rods).[46]

Poplar Ridge Meeting House, NY

Winona Meeting House, NY

Porches, such as that found on the Yonge Street Meeting House, appear to have a consistent history. The earliest porches were constructed on the women's end of the building, and often a portion of the porch was enclosed to form a room that was pretty uniformly called the *clothes room* during the nineteenth century. Photographic evidence indicates that the movement to construct front porches on Friends meeting houses dates to the second half of the nineteenth century, when many of the earlier hoods or porticoes were replaced. One of the earliest documented instances of the construction of a full-length front porch at the time of the construction of the meeting house was at Valley PA in 1871. In some cases, porches were later partially enclosed to provide additional interior space (e.g., Poplar Ridge NY and Orchard Park NY). In the last fifteen years of the nineteenth

[45] Bonner, *Quaker Ways*, 14; T. Chalkley Matlack, "An Album of Friends' Meeting Houses and Schools West of the Delaware River," vol. 1, Swarthmore College, 28; Barbour, Hugh, et.al., *Quaker Crosscurrents: Three Hundred Years of Friends in the New York Yearly Meetings* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 47; Hubert Lidbetter, *The Friends Meeting House* (York, England: Wm. Sessions Ltd., 1961), 51; H. Mather Lippincott, *Quaker Meeting Houses and a Little Humor* (Jenkintown, Pa.: Old York Road Publishing Co., 1952), 104.

[46] Francis J. Puig, "The Porches of Quaker Meeting Houses in Chester and Delaware Counties," in *Pennsylvania Folklife* 24, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 21-30; Matlack, "An Album of Friends' Meeting Houses," 14-15; Mallary, *New England Churches & Meetinghouses,* 46.

century, a wrap-around porch on three sides of the meeting house began to appear (e.g., the 1888 Winona OH Meeting House and Green Street in Philadelphia).[47]

Interiors of Quaker Plan Meeting Houses

The interior of a Quaker Plan meeting house consisted of two rooms that were generally identical and often seeming bare: one for the women and one for the men. Each room was divided into four unequal quadrants by two aisles. A lateral aisle extended from a door on the end wall to a door in the partition and divided the gallery from the area historically called the "general seating." The second aisle divided the seating in each room longitudinally into two equal ranks of benches.

In general, the women sat in the western room, and the men sat in the eastern room. Information on the room assignment can be difficult to obtain. Among the architectural features used to determine which sex sat in which room are different widths of handrails in the minister's gallery, different widths or heights of bench seats, the presence of wall pegs for the men's clerks to place their hats during the business meeting, and the location of the access into the attic (almost always on the men's side). The side used by each sex was not as uniform as is usually reported. While it is often said in Pennsylvania and New York that the women used the eastern side, in fact that appears to have been the case in only about sixty per cent of the meeting houses. Meeting Houses in New England are about evenly divided. By contrast, there is not a single identified instance west of the Appalachian mountains of the women using the east room.

The two rooms are separated by a frame partition. Moveable panels in the partition called *shutters* were opened for worship and closed for business. Shutters often were moveable double hung panels; pulling a rope would raise the upper panel into the attic. Sometimes the lower shutter would recede into

Partition mechanism at Sandwich Meeting House

[47] Puig, "The Porches of Quaker Meeting Houses."

Typical gallery

the basement. Some meeting houses used a mechanism in the attic, either incorporating ropes and pulleys (e.g., Stillwater, Ohio and Sandwich, Massachusetts) or using a large roller around which the panels wrapped (Mount Pleasant, Ohio and Fairfax and Centre, Virginia). In New England, Casco, Maine and the Great Meeting House in Newport RI featured hinged partition panels; when opened, the shutter would be supported by hooks anchored in the ceiling. In some meeting houses, the partition door could be raised with the partition (examples are Downingtown, Pennsylvania and Holly Spring, North Carolina). A New England variant of the partition door involved a jib door usually about four feet high. When the partition was lowered, it fit into a groove on the top of the jib door which prevented its use. Examples are found at West Epping, New Hampshire, and Uxbridge and Amesbury, Massachusetts. Little Compton (Rhode Island) and Woodbury (New Jersey) both feature a two-leaf jib door; when the partition is open, the lower leaf operated as other jib doors. When closing the partition, the two leafs need to be carefully aligned; the upper leaf settles into a groove on the top of the lower leaf, making it possible to operate the door as a unit.

One feature with a minor impact upon the appearance of the interior was the location of ancillary doors. Doors on the end walls were usually not centered but were offset to align with the lateral aisle separating the gallery from the general seating. The exceptions to this rule were normally found in urban areas, where doors centered on gable end walls hinted at a symmetrical, front-gabled orientation (such as the Orange and Twelfth Street Meeting Houses in Philadelphia). Both the Mount Pleasant, Ohio Meeting House (1814), constructed as the Ohio Yearly Meeting House, and its later

replacement at Stillwater (1878), have two doors on each end wall, one of which is aligned with the lateral aisle. Doors on the rear wall of meeting houses were generally located in one of two places. Doors centered on the longitudinal aisles were elevated to the level of the highest facing bench. These *gallery doors* provided access for public Friends to the gallery.[48] Gallery doors receded in use after the Revolution and were rather rare in new construction after 1800, though a very late example is found at Centre VA (1872). In New York, these rear doors are found near the outer corners of the rear wall. These corner doors open into a space in the corners flanking the gallery, often in front of the loft stairs. Corner doors provide clues on the exterior to the layout of the interior, because they indicate that the gallery does not extend across the entire rear of the meeting house.

The area where the elevated benches along the north wall of the meeting house are found is variously called the gallery, the ministers' gallery, the facing benches, or (in England) the ministers' stand.[49] This area, much larger than that found in English meeting houses, served as the seating for clerks, ministers, elders, and overseers. The gallery normally consisted of three rows of benches. The back bench spanned the entire length of the room. Hand rails attached backs of the front and middle rows of benches gave speakers something to hold onto during ministry and served as an aid for Friends who knelt for vocal prayer.

Some meetings used two aids for Friends who felt stirrings to pray. Some meetings added a kneeling rail to the back of benches in the gallery, onto which the praying Friend would kneel; these rails served a secondary purpose of providing a different location for placing one's feet during worship. The second aid to prayer was a wooden stool variously called a bassock, hassock, or kneeling block. These small wooden units often have a cushion on top. Thomas S. Kenderdine wrote in 1908: "A bassock or low stool should be on hand for prayer. If these are not at hand a substitute would be a sack packed pretty firmly with straw, hay, or saw dust."[50]

An additional piece of furniture in the ministers' gallery was the Clerk's table. While it was common to have a freestanding table that could be relocated as needed, many meetings had a flap-type clerk's desk. In some meeting houses, a wooden board is hinged to the railing on the back of a facing bench. These flap-type tables were sometimes propped by a wooden dowel. Some of these flap-type tables have provisions for inkwells or slots to hold pencils.

Historically, seating in the gallery was restricted. For yearly and quarterly meetings, a committee would assign the gallery seats. It was considered an honor for a given Friend to give up her/his seat for a visiting Friends minister. The seat on the rear bench nearest the partition was considered the *head of the meeting* where the most valued Friend was appointed to sit. The seat near the partition on the first facing bench was often reserved for the messenger who delivered the messages to the other side during business meetings.[51]

One additional interior architectural element was the loft, a banked second floor seating area sometimes called the *youth's gallery*. Lofts were commonly found in early residences and houses of worship of various denominations in North America. In colonial

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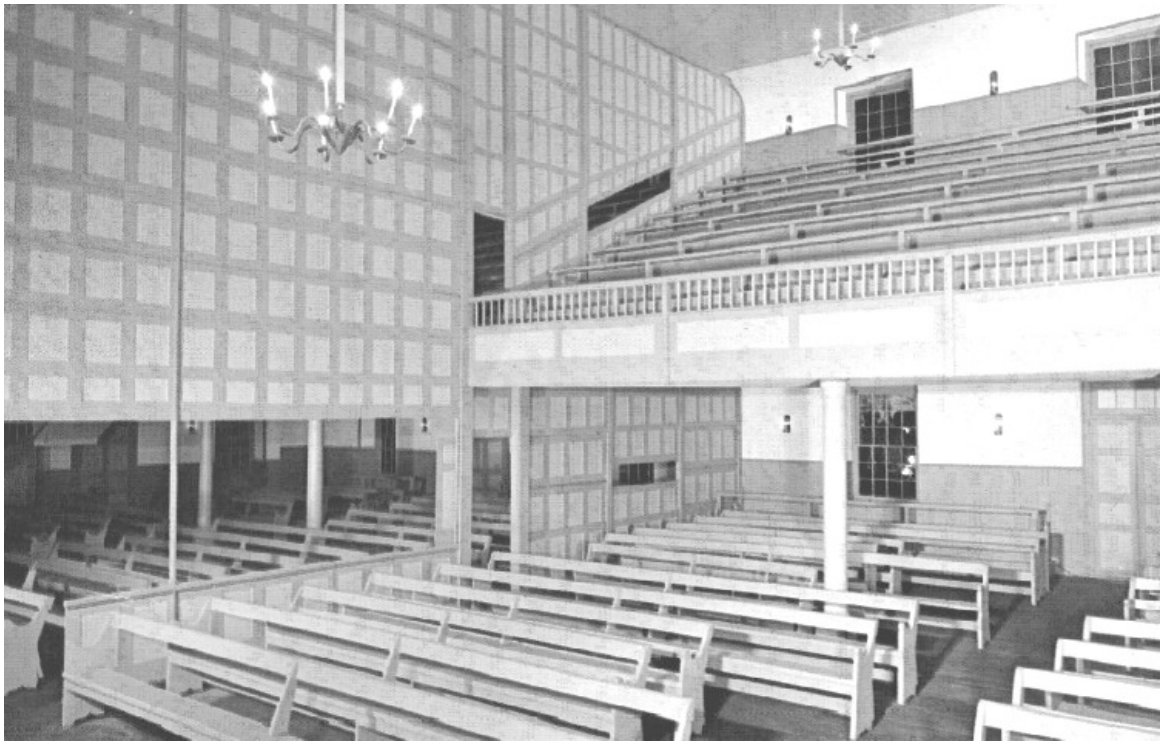
[48] An alternate name for this door is the *saddle door*, ostensibly because public Friends would step directly from the back of a horse into the meeting house. However, many meeting houses have steps extending out from these doors to the ground, suggesting that they could not have been used easily in conjunction with carriages.

[49] In the latter decades of the twentieth century, liberal Friends introduced the term *elders stand* to describe the facing bench area. This term confuses the historic purpose of this architectural element and is not used in this description.

[50] *Friends Intelligencer* (9/5/1908).

[51] Although the ministers' gallery was historically reserved for appointed Friends, only the Conservative Friends maintain this tradition today. Visitors occasionally annoy Conservative Friends unintentionally by sitting on the facing benches.



meeting houses, the loft often wrapped around the east, south, and west walls, producing the classic U-shaped loft (called the *horseshoe gallery* by Puritans). Meeting houses at Buckingham, Pennsylvania, Bristol, Pennsylvania, East Hoosack, Massachusetts, Burlington, New Jersey, Mount Pleasant, Ohio, and Jericho and Nine Partners in New York have a loft extending around the entire building, with a narrow loft seating area over the gallery. As mentioned in connection with the Cottage Plan meeting houses, this narrow area was used in the early eighteenth century as a place to install the horizontal partition across the void for business meetings. When the minister's gallery began to extend along the entire north wall in the mid-eighteenth century, the loft came to be limited to the south wall in new construction. The loft was almost always enclosed with a railing, was supported by columns below, and was divided by the partition. By the nineteenth century, Friends occasionally used the word *gallery* to describe the loft, thus using the word *gallery* to describe two different elements.[52] Friends do not appear to have used the word *balcony* until the twentieth century.

Historic Quaker Worship

During a meeting for worship, Friends would gather and sit in expectant silence until someone felt an inward call or motion to speak; thus silence was used to frame the messages and provide a time for the hearers to consider what had been said. Anyone feeling a calling to speak during meeting would stand if physically able. After about 1800 it seems that most Friends kept their eyes closed while speaking or listening. Men Friends who stood to minister were expected to remove their hats; some women Friends would remove their bonnet but not their head covering. By 1800 Quaker

[52] Often the use of the word *gallery* is evident from the context. When Browin wrote that the women's messengers would escort the men's messengers to the gallery during business meeting, she did not mean that the men's messengers went into the balcony-like area, but to the facing bench area. Frances W. Browin, *A Century of Race Street Meeting House 1856—1956* (Philadelphia: Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, 1956), 11.

ministers had adopted a particular rhythm during their ministry known as the "sing-song," which consisted of intonations and pauses of varying lengths; while universal among Friends in the mid-nineteenth century, it gradually fell from use and was last used in Ohio Yearly Meeting. Historically, Friends speaking in ministry often began by quoting a portion of Scripture (sometimes a single verse, but a recitation of a whole chapter was not uncommon). The Friend often would elaborate upon the sense of the passage or its application. Until the twentieth century, ministers shied away from autobiography unless the thrust of the message dealt with an interaction with God (a testimony). Singing during the worship appears to have been common in the seventeenth century but increasingly uncommon thereafter. Quakers historically did not use or desire hymnals, so the singer needed to know the words.

Public prayer, usually called *appearing in supplication*, was a variation of ministry. Quakers understood ministry to be speaking on God's behalf, while prayer was the opposite – addressing God on the meeting's behalf. Friends have traditionally assumed that a special unction was necessary for public prayer and have rejected appointed prayers. A Friend feeling a calling to pray would kneel; if the Friend were male, he would remove his hat. After saying, "Heavenly Father," the Friend would pause because everyone present was expected to stand while someone prayed publicly (known as *rising for prayer*). All men Friends were expected to remove their hats, and everyone would remain standing until the praying Friend said "Amen" and sat down. Rising for prayer and the removal of hats both originated in the seventeenth century. Rising for prayer was discontinued at different times in different localities, beginning in the 1870s among midwestern Hicksites and ending in Ohio in 1967. In areas where plain dressing survives, men Friends are still expected to remove their hats when they or anyone else appears in supplication.

Conclusion

When the Yonge Street Meeting House was constructed in 1812, its design was familiar to the Friends of the community. Friends from New York Yearly Meeting would have worshipped in places like Nine Partners, a two-story Quaker Plan meeting house. Friends from New England Yearly Meeting would have experienced it in places like the East Hoosick. Friends from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting would have experienced it in places like Marlborough. Dozens of new Quaker Plan meeting houses were under construction in the far western reaches of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, which had just been set off as Ohio Yearly Meeting (which held its initial session in 1813).

The Quaker Plan was the architectural manifestation of how eighteenth-century Quakers saw their faith. As faithful Friends responded to their callings as ministers or elders, they took their seats in the gallery. Slowly but surely, one generation of Friends in the gallery passed the torch to the next generation. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, many Friends believed that it was time for Friends to open a new chapter in their history. Among the dramatic changes of the 1860s and the 1870s was a rejection of the Quaker Plan, which they saw as the manifestation of the perceived ills of the Society. Easily half of all Friends meeting houses standing in 1850 were demolished and replaced with smaller and more stylish buildings. The Yonge Street Meeting House has survived as a witness to an earlier time and place in Quaker history.