



Quaker Hill Quill

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation
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Howard Pyle, Media Star (1853 - 1911)

by Carol Clapham

At the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, Howard Pyle was a media persona of the entertainment world, akin to a “Rock Star” today. In times before TV, radio, and movies, children and adults both waited with anticipation for the latest magazine article or book illustrated by Howard Pyle, or even authored by Pyle. According to Henry C. Pitz, author of The

Brandywine School, Pyle “used ground-breaking color, dramatic composition, and emotional impact”; his illustrations are full of movement and visual excitement which stimulate the imagination even today. Pyle loved stories and myths, and introduced America to the Arthurian Legend, Robin Hood, and tales

of pirates. He illustrated histories by Henry Cabot Lodge and Woodrow Wilson, poetry for William Dean Howells, fiction for Mark Twain, Robert Lewis Stevenson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other major authors of the time.

Artists continue to portray pirates as Pyle painted them, in movies (*Pirates of the Caribbean*), books, and cartoons (*Sponge Bob Square Pants*). Norman Rockwell named him his hero. Contemporary artists such as James Gurney (Dinotopia), Peter de Sève (New Yorker magazine covers and characters in the movie *Ice Age*), and the Pixar production designer Ralph Eggleston (*Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo* and *WALL-E*) cite Pyle as influencing their art and methods.

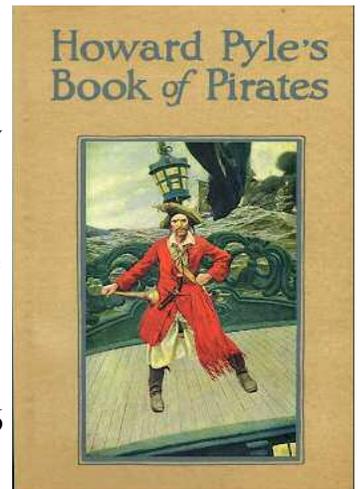
Pyle created such exciting illustrations that other artists of the time came to learn from him; he taught



Howard Pyle & his daughter Phoebe, photo by Frances Benjamin Johnson. (Library of Congress)

at Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, gave periodic classes at the Art Students League in New York City, and ultimately, the Howard Pyle School of Illustration Art in Wilmington, with summer classes in Chadds Ford. Among his students were Maxfield Parrish, Harvey Dunn, Stanley Arthur, Violet Oakley, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Jessie Wilcox Smith, Ellen Bernard Thompson Pyle, NC Wyeth, and Frank Schoonover. At a time when few women were taught “commercial art”, 40 of his students were women. He helped students secure contracts to illustrate books and magazines and create book and magazine covers. After her husband’s death, sister-in-law Ellen Pyle supported her children with income from covers for The Saturday Evening Post.

Howard Pyle’s parents, William and Margaret Pyle, were Quakers, but Margaret was read out of Meeting because of her interest in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and the family became Swedenborgian; Howard attended Wilmington Friends School at Fourth and West streets until his lack of interest in studying led his parents to give up on college, and send him at age 16 to study with Adolph Van der Weilen in Philadelphia for 3 years. He then set up a studio in Wilmington while helping his father in his leather business, badly impacted by the Civil War. He was published in Scribner’s Monthly in 1876 and moved to New York City where his association with the Art Students League during 1876-79



Pirates were among Pyle’s most famous, iconic images.

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Howard Pyle

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helped him to become more commercially viable. Some of his fellow students were Ernest I. Durand, Edwin Austin Abbey, William Merritt Chase, F.S.Church, and J. Alden Weir. His early illustrations, short stories and poems appeared in periodicals such as Harper's Weekly. Vincent van Gogh wrote his brother Theo that "there are things in (Harper's) which strike me dumb with admiration, including sketches of a Quaker town in the olden days by Howard Pyle."

Pyle grew up at Goodstay Manor, known as Green Hill when he was born in 1853, and now part of the UD Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. When the leather business hit hard times, they moved to 714 West Street. He married Anne Poole in a Quaker ceremony April 12, 1881; they moved in with her mother at 607 Washington Street (no longer standing), and opened a studio at 1305 Franklin Street, now used and maintained by women artists called Art Students League.



In "Tory Refugees" Pyle depicts loyalists fleeing north, an often ignored facet of the American Revolution, but one that touched Wilmington, Del. (Library of Congress)

Pyle died unexpectedly of Bright's Disease in Florence, Italy, having moved his family there to study frescos by the Renaissance masters so he could improve his murals. Frank Schoonover was instrumental in saving his unsold paintings for Wilmington by helping form *Wilmington Cultural Society* to buy and exhibit the paintings so that Anne did not have support herself by selling them off piecemeal. Later this collection became part of the founding collection of the Delaware Art Museum, along with the Pre-Raphaelite collection left by Samuel Bancroft.

Carol Clapham is Vice President of the QHHPF Board and a Docent at the Delaware Art Museum. (All images are public domain) 

Origins of the Friends Meetinghouse at 4th & West (Part 2)

by Lisa Samson

In the November, 2012 Quill readers were promised a number of articles focused on documents describing the building of the Friends Meetinghouse at 4th and West Streets in Wilmington. This second article examines some of the documentation that helps us to understand the building process that began with an idea for a new meetinghouse in 1815 and ended with its completion in 1817.

Beginning in the fall of 1815, Quakers with well-known names, such as Benjamin Ferris and Samuel Canby, and not-so-well-known names, such as Thomas Spackman and Jesse Betts, were entrusted with overseeing the process of building a new meetinghouse for Wilmington Friends. It's through the variety of documents these men generated as they worked on the project that we know the story of its construction. They created a mix of what might be considered both formally created documents and more informal records, with both types contributing to our understanding of how this meetinghouse came to be built. Today, almost two centuries after the first Meeting for Worship was held in the new meetinghouse, these documents can be accessed at Swarthmore

College's Friends Historical Library.¹

The more formally constructed parts of the building narrative are found in reports presented at monthly Business Meetings, minutes of committee and sub-committee meetings, memos of agreement with tradesmen, a check register, check stubs, an account book, and lists of members' donations.

From one of the reports we learn when Wilmington Friends first discussed the idea for a new meetinghouse:

On the 26th of 10th mo. 1815² a concern was opened in the Preparative meeting relative to the state of our present meetinghouse, and a number of Friends in the course of the discussion of the subject having freely expressed their views, it clearly appeared, that Friends of this meeting were not comfortably accommodated with a meeting place - that our meetings of First day³ morning were unsuitably crowded and that some of our religiously disposed neighbors were restrained from sitting with us when assembled for Divine Worship from a fear of incommoding our own members.

And we learn who was initially charged with

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Mary Starkweather-White, Executive Editor
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Upcoming Quaker Hill Events
**Three Underground Railroad
Workshops for Children**

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation offers three, free Underground Railroad workshops for children at 10:00 a.m. on certain Saturdays in January and February 2014 at the Wilmington Friends Meeting at 401 North West Street, Wilmington, DE.

The first workshop, presented by Patricia Lewis and Mia Muratori on January 25, 2014, the anniversary of his death, features a story about a real-life Underground Railroad Stationmaster Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman, whose three brothers they helped escape at Christmas 160 years ago; artwork concerning the period; a visit to the gravesite of Thomas Garrett; and refreshments.

The second workshop, presented by Darleen Amobi on February 1, 2014, will feature the story of Harriet Tubman, both read aloud and on video; a craft; a re-enactment by Willis Phelps of the life and times of a Civil War veteran; a visit to the grave of Thomas Garrett; and refreshments.

The third workshop, presented by Darlene Bonney on February 22, 2014, will feature a dramatic story about Harriet Tubman; an arts-and-crafts project; and refreshments.

The programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call Mary Starkweather-White at (302) 299-5600.

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3/29/14 Solomon and Thamar Bayley Talk

This talk by Dr. Peter Dalleo at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House at 401 West Street, Wilmington, DE 19801, at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, 3/29/14, follows the excitement, tension, disappointment and joy of Solomon Bayley and his wife Thamar during their journey from enslavement to freedom, from Virginia to Delaware to Africa, with the help of the Underground Railroad and early Quakers and Methodists.

5/10/14 Tour of Quaker Hill

On May 10, 2014 take a tour of Quaker Hill peopled by costumed interpreters offering the history of historic buildings in the neighborhood, followed by refreshments at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House at 401 West Street.

9/20/14 Lafayette Talk

“Marquis de Lafayette and the Battle of the Brandywine” is a talk that will be given by Gene Pisale at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House, 401 West

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On the 26th of 10th mo. 1815 a concern was opened in the Preparative Meeting relative to the State of our present meeting-house, and a number of Friends in the course of the discussion of the subject having freely expressed their views, it clearly appeared, that Friends of this meeting were not comfortably accommodated with a meeting place - that our Meetings on

examining the concern and how they proceeded:

On the 28th of same month this committee met being composed of the following Friends viz

Samuel Canby

Jacob Alrichs

Thomas Spackman

William Gibbons

James Canby

Evan Lewis

Benjamin Ferris

(absent) Ashton Richardson

Cyrus Newlin

Thomas Lea

William Poole

Joseph Shipley

Moses Rea

Jesse Betts

James Brian

After a free interchange of sentiment it was concluded to appoint Thomas Spackman, Moses Rea and Jesse Betts to make estimates of the building 75 feet front by 50 feet deep suitable for a meeting house together with the necessary appurtenances and William Poole, Jacob Alrichs and

After a free interchange of sentiment it was concluded to appoint Thomas Spackman, Moses Rea and Jesse Betts to make Estimates of the Building 75 feet front by 50 feet deep suitable for a Meeting house together with the necessary appurtenances, and

Benj(amin) Ferris were appointed to prepare a ground-plan and elevation of a house of the size aforementioned together with plans for stabling and other outhouses, and report to next meeting.

What we learn from legal documents such as work contracts, and financial documents such as the check register, check stubs, and the

account book, is that those members tasked with developing estimates, Spackman, Rea, and Betts, then provided construction services for the building. Thomas Spackman, given the contract for stone and brickwork, was paid \$1,337.58 for his work, and Jesse Betts, a carpenter, was paid \$3,067.84, more than any other contractor.

As members of the Meeting these men also donated to the building fund, which was recorded in the document titled "A List of the Names of the Contributors to the Fund for building a new meeting house." In fact, of the \$13,605 raised for the meetinghouse, almost 30% of the donations for



from information recorded onto scraps of paper. Some of these scraps recorded expenses, others logged deliveries to the building site, and one seems to have been a contract for making and installing gutters. We'll take a look at some of these in the next article about the construction of Wilmington Friends Meetinghouse.

All images are from the Wilmington Monthly Meeting records, archived at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, PA.

1 Documents are housed in two folders labeled "Building of Meeting House 1815 - 1818" and numbered RG2/Ph/W57 6.5 & RG2/Ph/W57 6.6. For more information on the Wilmington Meeting's records at Friends Historical Library, here's a

the project came from men named to the initial committee.

In addition to the building story being told through reading these reports and legal and financial documents, part of the story can be gleaned

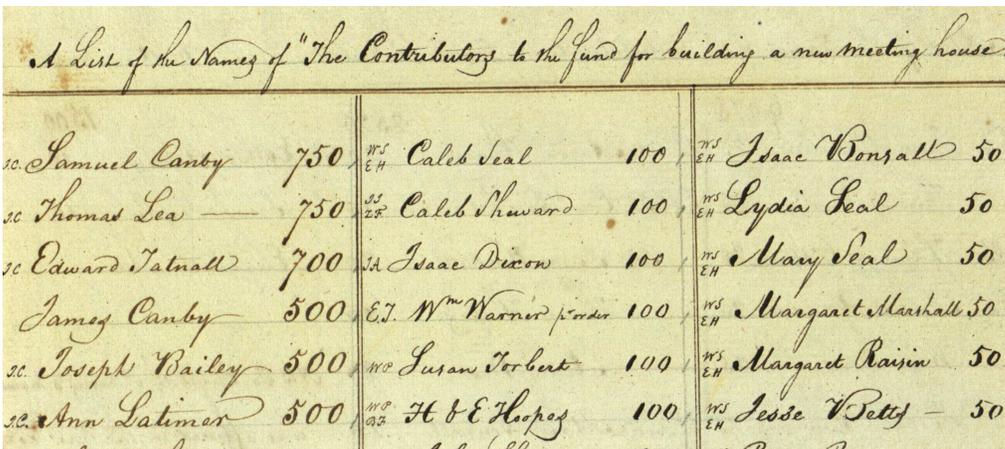
link to the finding aid which catalogs the holdings: <http://trilogy.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/mm/wilimim.m.xml>.

2 Quakers chose to refer to the months numerically, with 1st month referring to January. Hence, the date of this discussion was October 26th 1815.

3 Quakers also chose to refer to days of the week numerically, with First Day referring to Sunday.

Archivist Lisa Samson is Historian of the Wilmington Friends Meeting and a QHHPF Board Member

(All images are from Wilmington Monthly Meeting records, archived at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pa.



A View From the Hill by the Editor

We lead off this time with an article about Howard Pyle by QHHPF Board member Carol Clapham. In it she recounts how, in the latter part of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th, Pyle was as famous and popular as any rock star of today.

Next, Lisa Samson contributes the second part of her series on the origins the present-day Wilmington Friends Meeting House. We also have a very full calendar of upcoming events that I urge you to look at.

Oh, and by the way, next issue we will continue the theme of 'superstars in their day' with a similar treatment of John Dickinson and his contemporary popularity written by Dr. Jane Calvert of the University of

Kentucky, Director of the John Dickinson Writings Project. Dr. Calvert says, "Most Delwareans appreciate John Dickinson because he is one of their own. But most don't know that Dickinson was America's first political hero with a reputation surpassed by none." Dr. Calvert will describe Dickinson's extraordinary fame and influence in the years before the American Revolution.

But that's next time. Mary and I are very, very pleased to bring you another issue of *The Quill*, & hope it helps take away a bit of the winter chill. So curl up with a hot chocolate (or a hot toddy) and enjoy.

J.B.



Upcoming Events

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Street, Wilmington, DE 19801, on Saturday, 9/20/14, at 2:00 p.m., highlights the little-known role of that the Marquis de Lafayette played in America's war for independence, including his participation in the Battle of the Brandywine on September 11, 1777, which earned him the title of "Founding Son".

DICKINSON WREATH-LAYING

On Saturday, February 15, 2014, at 10:00 a.m., the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation and the Friends of John Dickinson Plantation will hold a wreath-laying at the grave of Founding Father John Dickinson at the Wilmington Friends Meeting, 401 N. West Street, Wilmington, DE 19801. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, call Mary Starkweather-White at (302) 299-5600.

QHHPF & URCD Reception for Mayor Jim Baker-3/7/14

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation and the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware are proud to honor Mayor Jim Baker at a reception at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House on March 7, 2014. For more information, please call Mary Starkweather-White at (302) 299-5600. 

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Consider Becoming A Member—As a Member you will receive many benefits, including invitations to lectures, workshops, and social events, and the satisfaction of knowing you are helping QHHPF be a strong voice for preservation as a means to enhance the economic and cultural health of the city. For more information, go to www.quakerhillhistoric.org & click on "become a member."

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