



Quaker Hill Quill



Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation
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Celebrations, Remembrances, Lectures, and Publications Mark 200th Anniversary of Wilmington Friends Meeting House on Quaker Hill by Lisa Samson and the 200th Anniversary Organizers

This past September 25th, at an evening service, a Meeting for Worship was held in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the first time Wilmington Friends Meeting worshiped in their then-new Meeting House at Fourth and West streets. Meeting members, Quaker Hill neighbors, a descendant of James Bryan (who served on the Meeting's 1815 building committee) and his wife worshiped together in the electric-candlelit Meeting Room. After a Meeting member provided an introduction to those gathered regarding what was being celebrated, the Meeting fell into deep silence.

As is the practice of Friends / Quakers, messages, also called vocal ministry, arose out of the silence, reflecting on the value to the community of our Meeting House, its history, and the on-going importance of Friends' worship on Quaker Hill. [*Below: birthday cake for the Meeting House*]



One Friend commented that the Meeting community was like a quilt, which when viewed from the back was messy, but comes together harmoniously in the front. This message was later amplified by a Friend who spoke about how the Meeting Room floor was made up of boards of uneven sizes, but nevertheless they had been crafted to work together. Another Friend, having read surveys compiled by the Friends' School principal, Isaac Johnson, in 1894 (recorded on early mimeograph paper!), recounted some memories captured in the surveys regarding the building of the Meeting House, which at the time was across West Street from the school. A Wilmington Friends School alumna, who worshiped in the Meeting House regularly when she attended the school about 80 years ago, spoke of how much worship in the building had meant, and continues to mean, to her. A Quaker Hill neighbor commented on how the parts of the building represented Quaker values, the lofty ceilings representing lofty ideals. Another Friend commented that people used to be "read out" of Meeting for small infractions but would be pleasantly surprised by the Meeting's durability.

After the service, attendees socialized around a well-filled table of food. The Meeting's kitchen is in the process of being renovated so having no kitchen in which to prepare the foods nicely replicated what it must have been like to serve food at Meeting 200 years ago when the new Meeting House was built without a kitchen!

This simple celebration of the Meeting House's 200th anniversary was spirit-lead and meaningful to those in attendance, and had it been the only event that marked the anniversary, perhaps that would have been enough. But the Meeting for Worship on September 25th was merely the
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Also in this issue:

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- Quaker Hill Community News, pp. 7-8
- "View from the Hill," Ashely Cloud, p. 9.

final celebration, and the activities leading up to it merit discussion as well. During brainstorming sessions in 2015, a rich mix of ideas for 200th activities were generated and community members worked to develop some of them.

Three ideas that went forward and became projects are described by those who worked to complete them:

Meeting Cookbook, by Evelyn Brownlee

Food and Quakers are connected at a very basic level. Wilmington Meeting has regular potlucks in addition to the social hour following Meeting for Worship. Years ago, when we had an annual Friends Fair, the baked goods table was a highlight, and many Friends sought the same cake or pie every year. Logically it followed that we would want a record of recipes and the idea of a 200th anniversary cookbook was born.

The cookbook has a wide range of dishes, many family favorites, many shared at our monthly potlucks. We were delighted to have Meeting children contribute favorite recipes. Food With Friends (2017) is the most recent in a series of Wilmington Meeting cookbooks, all reflecting popular dishes of the times in which they were written. Copies are now available at the Meeting House for \$10.

Memorial Quilts, by Carol Clapham

One of many ideas that bubbled forth from the 200th anniversary celebration planning meetings was a collaboration of members to create a "Meeting Quilt." Long-term members remember ladies in the past quilting together regularly, evidenced by the antique quilting frame in storage at the Meeting House. These ladies required a "very fine stitch" from anyone who wished to join them.

In today's busy world, we worried that few members/attenders would actually take time to create a square for a Meeting Quilt. The response was gratifying; 30 squares were created illustrating members' vision of Quakerism, the Meeting House itself, peace, the Light, love, or the guiding virtues we try to follow, as well as some of the programs we have developed to do so. The result is a varied and very beautiful grouping of many different visions, materials and forms created by members of both sexes.

Our younger members created a children's quilt, as well. Both quilts are now being machine quilted by a professional, and we hope they will be finished for presentation



in December at our Holiday Pancake breakfast. No, we did not set up our antique quilt frame to do our own quilting; I fear our stitches would not pass muster with the past Quaker lady quilters.

Meeting History, by Sally O'Byrne (above right, with meeting members Nancy Wingate and Cruce Stark at the September 25 Meeting for Worship)

The 200th provided a good incentive to explore some of the history of the Meetinghouse and its members. Lisa Samson uncovered documents that revealed the process of deciding to build a new Meetinghouse, the strategies to raise money for it, and the Members who actually helped build it. Her work attached people and personalities to the process of building the Meetinghouse.

Over a number of years, while studying the history of Wilmington's waterfront, I found that there were often references to Quakers who founded many of the businesses along the waterfront. The 200th anniversary was the 'kick-start' for me to research those Quakers in order to learn how their values and faith influenced the industries that helped the city grow. The Brandywine, a Piedmont river with a drop in elevation that was good for water power, and the Christina, a Coastal Plain river that was tidal and good for transport, spawned different industries, each hosting industries founded by Quakers. Those early industrialists, who were members of Wilmington Meeting, provided a good financial grounding to the congregation and the Meetinghouse itself.

Presentations that shared this Meeting history were pre-

sented both at the Meetinghouse and the Wilmington Public Library.

Here are highlights of other ideas that became 200th anniversary projects accomplished between 2015 and now.

Reprinting *Friends In Wilmington, 1738 - 1938*

Kevin Marshall, a Meeting member, initially voiced a concern that copies of this book, with all its informative Meeting history, might be scarce. First published in 1939 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Meeting, the book includes historical essays about various aspects of Quakerism in Delaware, a transcript of an historical pageant presented in 1938 as part of the 200th anniversary celebration, and genealogical lists. Mary Starkweather-White, a Meeting member and past Executive Director of Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation, took the lead in having it republished.

Copies are now available at the Meeting House for \$10.

Renewing the Museum

A storage room that had long housed a collection of Meeting artifacts, gathered together by Meeting members in the 1980s and '90s, was turned back into a Meeting museum. It opened with an exhibit on the Bancroft family, one of whose descendants is a current member of the Meeting. The museum includes a photo display and history of the family and their textile company. Personal items from the 1800's feature a dress worn by Emma Bancroft that is a gift from the descendant. There are also mysterious objects in the museum and visitors are encouraged to play the "What is that Thing?" game, and take their best guess at identifying them. The museum is open in June during the annual Berry Festival and upon request.

Workdays

The Meeting's efforts to blend 200th celebrations with practical work resulted in holding a number of workdays in the Meeting House and on the grounds. One of these workdays was held in August 2016 to mark the 200th anniversary of the raising of the Meeting House's wooden structure. Friends washed windows, readied the kitchen to be renovated, pulled weeds, vines, and tree branches, and planted perennials and bulbs. The following April a Swamp White Oak was planted near the corner of 4th and West streets. Inside, some people prepared mailings about the Friendly Kitchen fundraising, a basement cleanup crew hauled old furniture, trash, and scrap metal out of the basement, swept several areas, and assembled shelving for the New Beginnings Next Steps Clothes Closet storage. At this event several NBNS volunteers helped both inside and outside.



*Meeting Member Debbie Sheppard
and Head of Friends School en Aldridge*

Lectures

Between 2015 and 2017 a host of lectures that related to various aspects of Wilmington Monthly Meeting's history were given at the Meeting's monthly potlucks, at the Wilmington Public Library, and in the Meeting Room.

Those attending potlucks had the opportunity to learn • from Robert (Bob) Seeley about his ancestor Thomas Garrett's work on the Underground Railroad;

- from Carol Clapham about illustrator Howard Pyle's connections to Wilmington and Wilmington Monthly Meeting;
- from Chenda Davison, great-granddaughter of William and Emma Bancroft, about the Bancroft family and their philanthropic work to improve the lives of Wilmington's residents;
- from me, Lisa Samson, about the history of the building of the Meeting House as learned from 200-year-old documents housed at Friends Historical Library;
- from Chenda Davison, who read memories that long-time member Howard Starkweather had dictated, prior to his death in September of last year, to his daughter Mary Starkweather-White about Wilmington Friends School when it was on Quaker Hill;
- from Michael Emmons, who gave an illustrated lecture discussing historical graffiti, including graffiti found in houses of worship (the Meeting House has many carved graffiti, or "little scratches," on its benches and rafters);
- and from Michele Sullivan about African-American abolitionists involved in the Underground Railroad in nearby Chester County, PA.

Wilmington Public Library hosted two lectures by Meeting member Sally O'Byrne, one on the building of the Meeting House and the other on Wilmington's early Quaker industrialists. They also hosted a presentation by our friend Robert (Bob) Seeley about the Thomas and Rachel Mendinhall Garrett Family and Faith Connections to Freedom, as told in the persona of George Sellers Garrett.

As part of the Sacred Places Conference in October 2016, architectural scholar Seth Hinshaw presented a PowerPoint lecture in the Meeting Room that provided an overview of the changing aesthetics of the design of Friends meeting houses from the 1670s until the Civil War. The development of the design of the classic interior of Friends meeting houses and its role in the general context of American religious architecture were key themes. Attendees learned that the 1748 meeting house that Wilmington's current one replaced had been built on the "Bristol Plan," which featured a square, two-story building with a hipped roof and a set of windows in a lantern-shaped structure at the top, which let in light.

In 2017 the Meeting also co-sponsored Pacem In Terris's 50th anniversary speaker series in which speakers were asked to answer the following:

What are the accomplishments for peacemaking in the last 50 years as seen through the prism of your work? What should we address in the next 50 years? Speakers included a number of eminent peace and social justice activists including Ashley Biden, George Lakey, David Hartsough, Rainer Braun, Bill Frelick, John Bonifaz, and John Dear. Some of these were presented at the Meeting House.

First Day School's Time Capsule

A time capsule was suggested in one of the brainstorming sessions, and the First Day (Sunday) School students took it on as their project. They generated lists of what they'd like to put into it, which included items such as seeds from their garden and an empty syrup bottle from our annual Pancake Breakfast, and began to gather them. Over the past few years a blue archival box has held students' journals, the script from plays they've performed, and other items. These were inventoried and considered for inclusion as well. Young students spent time gathering leaves, stones, and other items from outside to add to it. All items will soon be transferred to a cedar chest in the museum to await opening in years to come.

Events

On October 30, 2016, our Meeting participated in the Sacred Places Conference, which was organized by the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation. Meeting members who developed 200th anniversary programming gave tours of the Meeting Room, Museum, and the Burying Ground. On what was a beautiful autumn day visitors voiced a special interest in exploring the Burying Ground and viewing the gravesites of Thomas Garrett and John



Meeting House interior from the 1920s



This drawing of the Wilmington Meeting House is the frontispiece of the book that recording Meeting members' pledges for the building. The artist is unknown--but might be Benjamin Ferris, who was much involved with the construction.

Dickinson. The event culminated in Seth Hinshaw's lecture.

In June 2017 the Meeting sponsored day trip to Newlin Grist Mill in nearby Glen Mills, PA, to learn what kind of trades it took to build our Meeting House, and how colonial mills operated. Milling was a large industry along the Brandywine in Wilmington and many Meeting members owned these mills. Cyrus Newlin, a descendant of the Newlin family that built Newlin Grist Mill, was a member of the Meeting's building committee in 1815! The intergenerational event at Newlin Grist Mill was held on a gloriously beautiful day. The hands-on activities included brick-making and sand casting, and memorial bricks and pewter gears were taken home. These activities and mill tours kept many people busy in the morning, and more people joined the event for a picnic at noon.

Looking back on the past two years of celebratory events and projects, it's no wonder that the final celebration was a quiet, moving Meeting for Worship.

Looking forward we are expecting that, through the focused work of members who helped design and fundraise to renovate the Meeting House's 60-year-old kitchen, and the generosity of those who donated to the Friendly Kitchen fundraiser, having a kitchen up to code will allow us to prepare and serve Friendly food for many future celebrations!

Just imagine what 1817 Meeting members would think about how their Meeting House has evolved over the past 200 years.

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation

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Editor: Terence Maguire

The Anti-Slavery Tour of Dr. J. E. Snodgrass in Delaware, 1848--research by Dr. Peter Dalleo

*The research of Dr. Peter Dalleo is well-known throughout Delaware and to the readers of the **Quaker Hill Quill**. Dr. Dalleo has delved into the **Blue Hen's Chicken**, an anti-slavery Whig newspaper of the early-mid 19th C. to discover letters written by Thomas Garrett, exposing the hypocrisy and venality of slave-owners and their minions, both in Delaware and nearby Maryland. His research led him to the story of Dr. Jonathan Edward Snodgrass, a medical doctor who was a frequent and tireless speaker for both the abolition of slavery and for temperance. Snodgrass also edited a publication in Baltimore, the **Baltimore Saturday Visiter**, which he later merged with another anti-slavery publication, **The National Era**.*

In the winter of 1848, Snodgrass traveled to Delaware to give a series of lectures that condemned slavery not only as immoral and unchristian but also as an institution that was economically unsustainable, attempting to appeal to slave-owner's hearts and also bank accounts.

*The following is an account by Dr. Snodgrass, printed in the March 9, 1848 issue of **The National Era** of his time in Delaware and a summary of his arguments.*

WILMINGTON, March 4, 1848

I have just returned to this city from a country tour. I shall proceed to Newcastle this afternoon, with the intention of holding an Anti-slavery meeting there, if arrangements can be made for it.

A few minutes after I finished my last letter...I left Wilmington and took a tour of the country. The result has been highly gratifying and encouraging. As I am necessarily much hurried...I will just copy the following friendly notices of my trip from that industrious and fair-dealing paper, the *Blue Hen's Chicken*, serving as they will, to give a reflex of public sentiment somewhat reliable, as well as



Friends Meeting House in Stanton, De.

sto indicate the direction and extent of my labors, thus far:

"Dr. Snodgrass, well-known as the editor of the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, has been lecturing in this city on slavery and temperance. His lectures were fairly attended."

"We learn that Dr. Snodgrass, after the delivery of his lecture in the city, commenced a tour through the country. He has lectured, we are informed, in Hockessin [sic] and Ebenezer Meeting Houses; also in Centreville and Stanton, chiefly on the subject of slavery in Delaware. His lecture was, we believe, the first one of the kind ever delivered in Stanton, yet good order prevailed for the most part. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? As a Southern man, speaking from actual experience and observation, he would naturally be considered entitled to a fair hearing... We bespeak for him a friendly reception among our country friends, wherever he may go."

...After I delivered my lecture in Stanton, where, it was predicted by many, neither house nor hearers would be obtainable, and where, as stated above, an Anti-slavery lecturer had never ventured before, I returned to Wilmington and took one day's rest. I much needed it, as you will infer, when I assure you that I not only spoke every day, (Sunday not excepted) but sometimes for more than two hours at a stretch, to the particularly hungry and patient country people. I then proceeded to a Presbyterian church, some 7-8 miles distant, known as McKennon's church, where I spoke, by invitation, to a good and attentive audience on Temperance--adding a few words, at the close on the subject of my tour, by special agreement. Thereby no serious offense appeared to have been given. It is true that some of the Brethren said they wished the speaker had not added that "abolitionism"; but, as often is the case, they seemed to be grumbling more on account of their fears as to the verdict of others, than their own feelings. Alas! how lamentable it is that there is not more manliness of thought, and self-reliance of action, instead of this cowardly habit of deferring so submissively to others! I know all about this feeling. No Southern man who, feeling conscious of having a soul, has called it his own, and dared to speak out his sentiments on the monster-wrong and curse of Slavery, could have failed to experience this moral cowardice in a greater or lesser degree. But let those who are still troubled with it take courage and struggle on. They will soon be surprised to find the progress they have made, especially if they should be called upon to bear witness for Truth's sake!

To Delawareans into whose hands this may fall, my exhortation is particularly directed. There is great work for them to do, and one which is easy to be done, if heroically

undertaken. They are on the very borders of the Promised Land! And yet they are kept from entering it by the small obstacle of some twenty-three hundred slaves, the emancipation of which would add, immediate, more to the aggregate value of their lands than the whole of these slaves are worth, computed at two hundred dollars a head--and this when but fifty cents an acre is taken as the average increase of value. But who is there that believes the change would not be greater--far greater? Surely no one who has looked, for a moment, "first on this picture and then on that," and observed how much higher the price of the same quality of land in the adjoining free state of Pennsylvania is than in slaveholding Delaware! Oh! why do not all mankind willingly embrace truths so self-evident as this--truths whose acceptance promises so much good, both immediate and prospective?

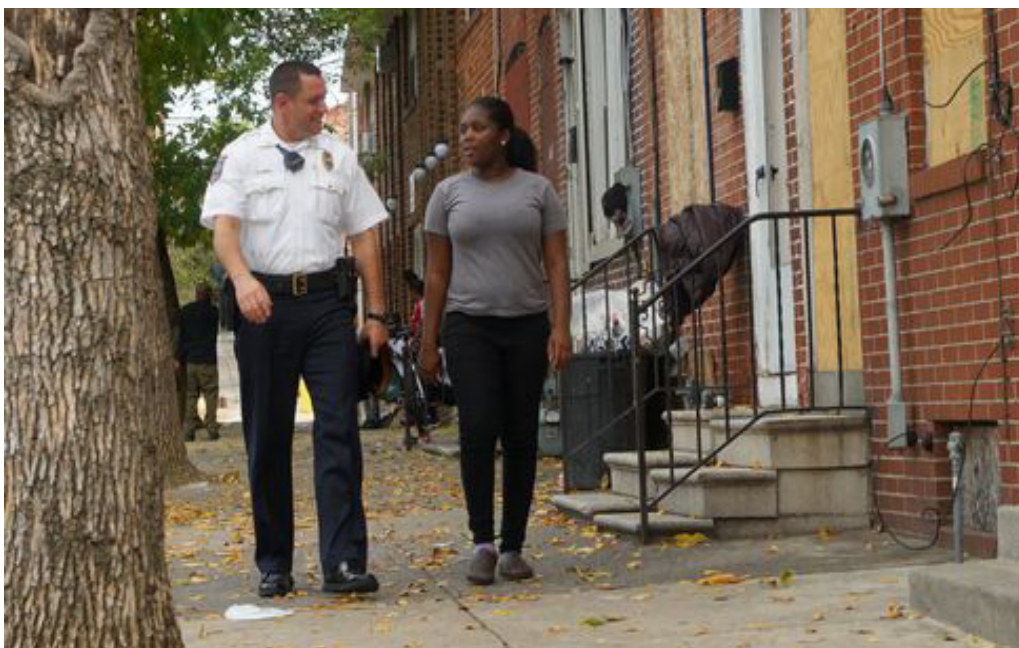
The owner of the soil is not ashamed to labor. He does it habitually and cheerfully, and feels that it is more honorable than idleness, however "genteel," or ease, however "elegant."

I have collected some curious facts illustrative of the workings of Freedom in comparison with those of Slavery. ... Think of a farm of only seventy acres not only supporting a family of six comfortably, but furnishing the owner a profit of five hundred dollars, at an average, annually. "How is this?" the incredulous reader may be ready to ask. I answer, By virtue of that economy which belongs only to communities where labor is not only free, but *fashionable*, as is the case, for example, in the neighboring state of Pennsylvania,-- for it is there the farm I have before my mental view is located. The owner of the soil is not ashamed to labor. He does it habitually and cheerfully, and feels that

it is more honorable than idleness, however "genteel," or ease, however "elegant. indeed, idleness would be anything but "ease" to him. Hence he needs but little help. One man (a free colored man in this instance) for eight months, or a boy throughout the year, is all the help he requires. He uses but one horse and a pair of oxen. He owns no farm wagon. An ox-cart supplies its place. A dearborn answers for market and millwagon both; and, in turn, carries wife and babies to meetings!

Now let the Southern reader contrast the management of the farm above described with that of the farms or plantations around him, and compare the profits accordingly. "Profits," did I say? Why, they would be out of the question in regions where the mark of toil upon white hands is a badge of degradation. It would be a question about losses, rather.... Why, I could name a farm not far from Petersburg, Virginia, composed of about two hundred acres, that sinks, by the confession of its owner, from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars a year! It is not for the want of help, certainly, for he is the owner of fifty slaves. Would anybody be perverse enough to insist that Slavery is a "blessing" to that man? Would he not vastly be the gainer by the change proposed by the friends of Freedom? No one will pretend to doubt it in his sane moments. When, Oh! when will our Southern people come to see slavery in its true light, in spite of the misleading counsels of designing politicians? Surely their slumber cannot resist the morning light of Freedom much longer.

Snodgrass was himself the son of a slaveholder, who was also a tavern owner. He certainly rebelled from his father's ways. Curiously, he was also a friend of Edgar Allan Poe, and was one of the doctors who attended Poe at his death in Baltimore a year later.



Quaker Hill Community News

Lt. Dan Selekman joins Quaker Hill and West Center City as a genuinely concerned and proactive community officer who has already made a difference in lives of many neighborhood residents and inspired others to follow in his footsteps.

Photo credit: News Journal

Quaker Hill Community News

Elwood Garrett Home Furnishes Housing for Disabled Persons

Thomas Garrett would be proud. On Saturday November 4th we completed a landscape project in front of the Elwood Garrett house on Washington Street in Quaker Hill. Elwood Garrett was the oldest son of Thomas Garrett, the great stationmaster of the underground railroad. Elwood himself was a notable figure being an early pioneer in the Daguerreotype photo process and a member of the board of Wilmington Saving Fund Society. The building now houses apartments specially designed for persons with disabilities. Some of the residents helped with the project.

Many thanks to Mark McGinnis of DiSabatino Landscaping for designing, providing materials, and supervising the "crew." Also, many thanks to Bill McCool, Executive Director of United Cerebral Palsy, who conceived the Garrett House project and got his hands dirty as part of the crew. Photo & caption: Bayard Marin



Cathedral of St. Peter's Rev. Leonard Klein, Wilmington Concert Opera's Executive Director Marisa Robinson, Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki, Artistic Director Kirsten C. Kunkle, and Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation's Executive Director Ashley B. Cloud at the November 5th performance of the German Romantic opera *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber.

The View from the Hill

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on 2017, it has been quite the year for Quaker Hill and for this Executive Director: so many things to celebrate and to be thankful for in the midst of this holiday season. Our Underground Railroad Workshops grew in number, in impact, and in attendance. Our sponsorship from M&T made all the difference and will continue to enable us to grow and improve in 2018. Our Annual Dickinson Memorial alongside our Friends of the Dickinson Mansion colleagues welcomed many new attendees and an excellent speaker. Again, more growth, more impact, more improvement. Our 3rd Annual Friends of the Arts Festival rallied our Board of Directors to assist with planning and execution, highlighted even more local emerging and established artists, and further strengthened our collaboration and friendship with the Meeting House's cherished Berry Festival. And in a sweet note, the QHHPF family grew by one snuggly addition: Miss Charlotte Talley Cloud joined us on May 11th. The blessing of her presence comes with challenges, but also an even firmer resolve to continue and to expand our preservation and education mission so that Quaker Hill's history and physical presence remains one of the most vibrant threads in the tapestry of the City of Wilmington for generations to come.

As we look towards our role in the City's agenda for 2018, there are opportunities to ensure that Quaker Hill stays at the forefront of programs, initiatives and collaborations. Mayor Purzycki's plans for West Center City will encompass Quaker Hill. We vow to remain at the top of the Mayor's agenda. During this year we welcomed his presence at a neighborhood clean-up and at St. Peter's Cathedral, enjoying the performance by our cultural partner, Wilmington Concert Opera, of the German Romantic opera *Der Freischutz*. These types of collaborations with our like-minded colleagues are imperative to the success of our mission.

QHHPF will join forces again with the Delaware Historical Society to celebrate Harriet Tubman Day on Saturday March 10th. It is the collective hope of both of our organizations to make this an annual event to underscore Wilmington's rich Underground Railroad history and to truly celebrate our ties to this historical heroine and her local fellow heroes Thomas Garrett, William Still, and others.



QHHPF Executive Director and "assistant" introducing Wilmington Concert Opera's performance of *Der Freischutz* at St. Peter's Cathedral in Quaker Hill.

Additional plans are in the works to impact the physical façade of the historic district by leveraging potential grant funds to update lighting for a safer and more aesthetically historical look. New banners to mark our boundaries and cheerfully welcome visitors will also make a visual impact. All these are worthy and achievable objectives as long as we work hard, stay focused and rally our supporters.

That means you! We know you value our publication, the *Quill*, and we look forward to continuing to provide you with ever-rich articles and community news in an engaging and accessible format. We know our workshops, field trips, and tours are invaluable educational resources that deserve to be enjoyed by all, most especially elementary-aged students with whom we need to nurture the knowledge and love of local history and the importance of preserving it. We know that physical preservation efforts will be well received and lauded...but none of this is possible without our friends. As the year comes to a close and our various holidays call us to reflect and give back, please think of us. The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation family thanks you.

Warmest Wishes,
Ashley B. Cloud, Executive Director, QHHPF



Support Quaker Hill by Supporting QHHPF



Become a member—As a member of QHHPF, you will receive many benefits, including invitations to lectures, workshops, and social events; and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping QHHPF be a strong voice for preservation as a means of enhancing the economic and cultural health of the city. For more information, go to www.quakerhillhistoric.org and click “become a member.”

Make a donation—send a check made out to QHHPF to
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Children of Friends School admiring the latest in bicycle fashion, 1888



Learn about Quaker Hill from *Images of America: Quaker Hill*

127 pages brimming with pictures and illustrations of the Quaker Hill area, (such as the one above) from its earliest days to the present. Assembled and written by QHHPF; published by Arcadia Publishing. Available from Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

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