

# THE QUILL

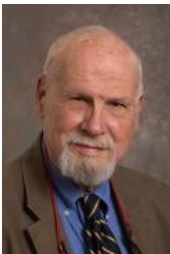


Newsletter of the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

Summer/Fall 2018  
Volume VII, Number 2

## Celebrate 25 years on The Hill

Come celebrate our 25 years of historic preservation, education, and advocacy! An elegant dinner evening — with a noted guest speaker — is set for 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, November 8, at the historic University and Whist Club at 805 North Broom Street in Wilmington.



University of Delaware Professor Emeritus David Ames — known for leading The Center for Historic Architecture and Design — will discuss a nearly lost landmark in his talk, “The 2nd Empire Invades Quaker Hill: The case for 401 Washington Street.”

Brother Ronald Giannone of the Ministry of Caring, which restored the site, will attend with robin brown, author of “40 Years of Hope & Charity: The Story of the Ministry of Caring.” Both will sign copies of the book, on sale for \$30. All proceeds help the homeless and poor.

The evening also will highlight community accomplishments with two awards, one newly created. Our auspicious Thomas Garrett Award will be presented to Wilmington Police Department Lieutenant Dan Selekmán for his outstanding contribution to the quality of life in our community.



And in special memoriam of our organization’s founding executive director, we will present the inaugural Paula Chadis Historic Preservation Commendation, in recognition of some of Quaker Hill’s most beautiful and lovingly restored edifices.

Former Delaware Supreme Court Justice Randy Holland will share a few words about his essay in the new “Delaware Heritage Commission book: “Delaware’s John Dickinson: The Constant Watchman of Liberty”. Copies will be available for purchase.

Tickets, \$75 each, include 6-7 p.m. hors d’oeuvres with cash bar, followed by an exceptional three-course dinner and presentation with a silent auction and performance by Wilmington Concert Opera. We look forward to sharing this special evening with you.

**“I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there can be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.”**

**— William Penn**

## In This Issue

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# Workshops enliven Underground Railroad legacy

This Spring heralded a reinvigorated round of our traditional Underground Railroad Workshops. Thanks to sponsorship by M&T Bank, transportation provided by Mr. Kevin Kelley of Wilmington's Department of Parks and Recreation, and our passionate education team, we were able to bring these dynamic enrichment experiences to children and organizations we felt would benefit.

Teacher Harper Gould welcomed an inquisitive group of a dozen 10- to 12-year-olds from the William "Hicks" Anderson Community Center just a few blocks from Quaker Hill. They and their chaperones, including dedicated activities director Mercedes Fields, enjoyed over two hours of interactive, creative programming starting with the popular Quaker Hill historical scavenger hunt at Wilmington Friends Meeting House. Learning about their surrounding neighborhood while discovering cool historical clues, the children found all the items on their list culminating at the graveside of our illustrious local historical figure: Thomas Garrett.

A brief visit and talk inside the Meeting room led to a presentation and discussion about local Underground Railroad female luminaries such as Rachel Mendenhall Garrett and Freedom Seekers such as Emmeline Hawkins. The youngsters discussed dangers of their perilous journeys and mothers' desperation to take their children safely to freedom. Students then explored the difficult decisions families faced about what to carry as they escaped. Sorting period materials and modern items, they had to reason what would be needed, what would be appropriate for the season and the difficulty of traveling with children. They also learned practical uses of quilts such as carrying belongings.

The quilt theme echoed as guests made "Quaker Friendship" squares as souvenirs. The visit ended with lunch and a gift of books to the community center, "The Underground Railroad for Kids: From Slavery to Freedom with 21 Activities," by Mary Kay Carson, and "Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History," by Vashti Harrison.



## A daring escape

Teacher Darleen Amobi also welcomed the fifth-grade class from Stubbs Elementary School. Their dedicated teacher Mr. Neal and tireless community coordinator Mr. Ken Livingston helped make this field trip a reality. To prepare, the children watched "Whispers of Angels" — a gift from our foundation — to be well-versed in Thomas Garrett's legacy in Quaker Hill, Wilmington, and beyond.

This lively group kept a flow of pointed questions and commentary. We began in the Meeting House with Quaker Hill history, Underground Railroad in Delaware and Quaker legacy in Wilmington. Ms. Amobi focused on the sensational story of Henry "Box" Brown, who shipped himself to freedom in a crate. Excerpts from the award-winning book "Henry's Freedom Box" fueled an excellent lesson and dialogue.



The children were fascinated by a replica of Mr. Brown's box while exploring his life through pictures and stories in vivid displays. These items fueled insightful discussion as the children alternated between active exploration of the displays and enjoying workbooks custom-made for them. The dynamic experience concluded with the foundation providing lunch and a gift of books — "The Underground Railroad for Kids: from Slavery to Freedom with 21 Activities" by Mary Kay Carson and "Henry's Freedom Box" by Ellen Levine.

# Friends—A Vital Delaware Force

## Their Influence On Local Institutions Is Marked

By BERTHOLD GASTER  
Sunday Star Magazine Editor

11/29/52



John Dickinson

It is fitting that in 1952, when Quakerism is celebrating its 300th anniversary, we pay tribute to the contributions the Friends have made to Delaware, and particularly, to Wilmington since the local movement was founded in 1738.

In our public school system today we see the culmination of the battles fought by Friends more than 100 years ago. The industries of Delaware today attest to the strength of Quaker striving which gave Wilmington a half-million dollar milling industry at a time when that kind of money really meant something.

And certainly, the role played by Delaware Friends—at great personal risk to themselves—in the "Underground Railroad" which transported fugitive slaves to non-slave territories, can-

not be taken lightly. For, the Friends were Abolitionists at a time when it was not in style to be so.

Much of the history of the Friends in this area has been compiled by J. Edgar Rhoads, one of the leading lights in present-day Quakerism in Wilmington. His exhaustive research has been most valuable in our search for some of the highlights in local Friends history.

The first Quaker in Delaware is reported to have been Thomas Wollaston who bought land in White Clay Creek and Mill Creek Hundreds in 1667.

Valentine Hollingsworth, supposedly the founder of the Newark Meeting, bought 1,000 acres in what is now Brandywine Hundred about 1682.

The vision seen by a woman in a dream had much to do with the coming of the first permanent Quaker settlers to Willingtoun—now Wilmington. William and Elizabeth Shipley and Edward Tatnall arrived here in 1735, 97 years after the first Swedish colonists. But this story really began in 1730.

It was in that year, while living in Ridley, Pa., that Elizabeth Shipley dreamt she stood on a hill and took

in the view of the Delaware country. The guide who accompanied her told her:

"Elizabeth Shipley, beneath thee lieth a new land and a fruitful land, and it is the design of Divine Providence that thou shouldst enter in thereto, thou and thy people, and ye shall be enriched even unto the seventh generation." After instructing her to leave where she dwelt, and enter into this new land "as the children of Israel took possession of Canaan," he vanished.

When the following year Elizabeth Shipley came upon this scene in real life, she recognized it and decided to settle there.

OLIVER CANBY, an ancestor of many Wilmington Friends, laid the foundation for the powerful Brandywine Flour Mills when he purchased a little mill from Samuel Kirks in 1742.

By the time of the Revolution, Joseph Tatnall had become the leading light in local flour milling. Twelve Quaker flour mills dotted the north and south banks near the present Market Street Bridge. By 1815 there were 14 mills grinding 500,000 bushels per year, half of which was exported for about \$500,000 in cash.

During the Revolution Joseph Tatnall's house became the headquarters for General Washington when he was in this area. Although Tatnall told Washington he could not fight with him, he promised to help feed his troops. This, in defiance of British troops nearby.

JOHN DICKINSON, who may or may not have been a Quaker, was most influential in the movement during the time of the Revolution and the Constitutional Convention. A member of the Colonial Assembly, he did not sign the Declaration of Independence because he felt economic progress in this country had not reached the point ripe for independence.

A leading political figure in Delaware and Pennsylvania—though born in Maryland—Dickinson was a forceful proponent of the small states' bid for equal representation in Congress which ended in the apportionment of two senators to each state. On this basis Delaware became the first state to ratify the Constitution on Dec. 7, 1787.

Dickinson was a great believer in the preservation of the freedom of the individual and he carried this to his



Thomas Garrett

slaves, as well, freeing them because he did not believe in slavery. In 1786 he introduced a bill into the Delaware Legislature to provide for the freeing of all children of slaves at birth. It failed of passage, however.

THE Dickinson family moved to Wilmington in 1785. His wife and daughters were members of the Friends Meeting at Fourth and West Streets. Although it is doubtful that he was a member, John Dickinson is buried in the graveyard there.

One of the early leaders of the Friends' movement for better education, Dickinson contributed to Dickinson College when it was founded in 1783 and in 1794 was one of the large contributors to the Friends Boarding School at Westtown which was started in 1799.

Eli Hilles and his brother Samuel picked up where Dickinson had left off in the field of education. They founded the Girls School on King Street and Samuel became superintendent of Haverford College.

BOTH brothers conducted a night school in the early 1860's for men who had little education. Prior to this they had been instrumental in passing legislation in 1852 providing for a new public school system in Wilmington. This move had met with great opposition. Samuel Hilles became the first president of the Board of Education. Samuel's son, William, and Eli were on the committee supervising the building of school houses.

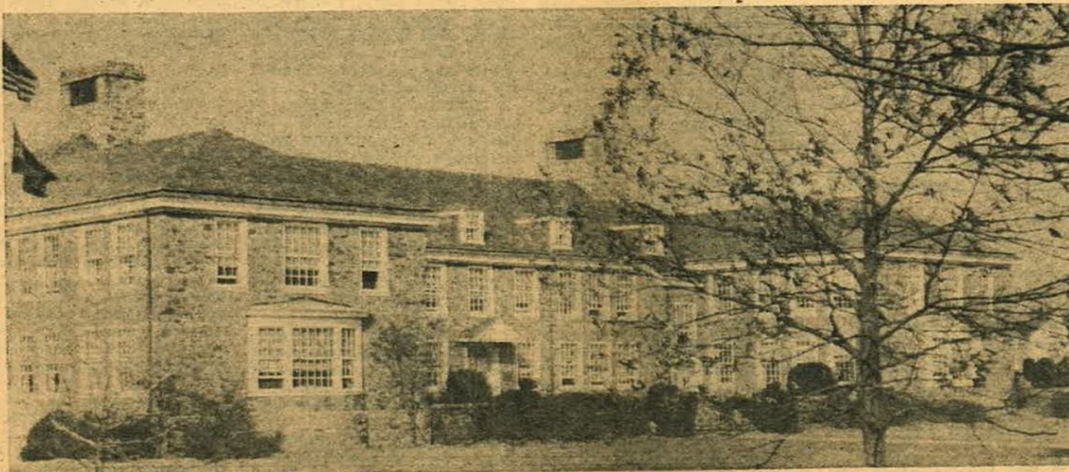
The Hilles brothers also had shown great interest in the welfare of Negroes. They hid runaway slaves and were active in establishing the Howard School. William S. Hilles was president of the Delaware Association for the Education and Moral Improvement of the Colored Race.

Friends education today is not a new story to Wilmingtonians who marvel at the beautiful Friends School building at Alapocas. Previous to the building of the \$345,000 structure, Friends School had been located at Fourth and West Streets where through the years it pioneered modern facilities in education.

DELAWARE always had been split over the slavery question, with Quakers opposing it along with many



Women Partaking in the 1938 Pogeant Commemorating 200 Years of Wilmington Quakerism



Friends School at Alapocas, Opened in 1937



Friends Meeting House of West and Fourth Streets as It Looks Today

citizens of Wilmington and the northern part of the state. As early as 1796, the Friends Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia had agreed that Friends should free their slaves. When the Fugitive Slave Law went into effect in 1848, the Quakers, most of whom were Abolitionists, became engaged more intensely in the practice of helping slaves to get to Canada.

The "Underground Railroad" was dramatized in romantic tones during this period and after the Civil War, with the glamor of rescues and escapes through "underground tunnels" thrilling readers of the day.

Facts, however, point to severe hardships endured by slaves and the Quakers who helped them. The central figure of the "Railroad" in Wilmington was Thomas Garrett who used his home at 227 Shipley Street as one of the three stations in this city. To this point came slaves from the southern part of the state as well as from the deep South.

**G**ARRETT was born a Quaker on a farm in Upper Darby, in 1789 and experiences in early life motivated him to devote his life to fighting slavery and helping its victims. Garret and the other Wilmington Abolitionists did not induce slaves to leave their masters, but once the slaves did, aid was forthcoming.

A successful businessman who dealt in iron, Garrett saw his fortune taken from him at the age of 60 when he was fined \$5,400 following a Fugitive Slave Law conviction. However, this only caused him to redouble his efforts and by the time he died in 1871, he had helped about 2,700 slaves escape to the North.

**T**HE philanthropic contributions by Friends to the welfare of Wilmington are numerous. A leading figure in these endeavors was William P. Bancroft who through leadership and personal gifts did much to build up the city's park system.

Through the Woodlawn Company, later the Woodlawn Trustees, Inc., Bancroft was instrumental in the building of a housing project and parks and playgrounds with funds provided by the company which had been founded "for the benefit of the people of Wilmington and its vicinity."

William Bancroft also was the guiding spirit behind an 1893 act which started to change the Wilmington Institute from a private subscription library to a free public library.

**W**ILLIAM BANCROFT and his brother Samuel were active in various philanthropic causes, many not confined to Quaker institutions. Especially was this true in regard to schools and colleges.

William's interests also lay in promoting better homes and schools for Negroes.

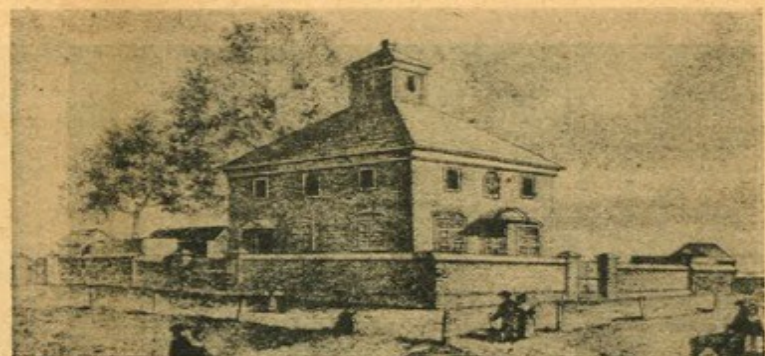
Emma C. Bancroft carried on her husband's interests in education and her donation helped get the new Friends School building started. Her daughters made a special gift in 1935 when final plans were drawn.

**W**HAT is believed to be the oldest organized charity in Wilmington still in existence is the Female Benevolent Society managed by Women Friends who are members of the Fourth and West Streets Meeting. They were incorporated in 1813 and succeeded the Female Society started in 1800 by a group of 16 Young Women Friends to aid the aged without distinction of nation or color and furnish employment to those able to work.

These are just tidbits from a rich and full history of service to a community. Space limitations forbid fuller treatment of Quaker history in Wilmington and the surrounding area. The full story is becoming better known through the work of such men as Rhoads and the library and parks and schools around us are a living tribute to past and present works of the Friends.



Interior of Friends Meeting House. Completed in 1817



The Building as It Looked From 1746 to 1817



The First Wilmington Meeting House, 1738-1748

## Pages from the past

The previous two pages, from the November 23, 1952, edition of the Sunday Star Magazine, published in Wilmington, are the first of a periodic new feature in The Quill.

The foundation thanks Gloria Henry, site manager of the Dickinson Plantation near Dover for sharing this historic material.

## Diversity highlights Friends of the Arts Festival

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation's 4th Annual Friends of the Arts Festival was another dynamic year of bringing diverse artists to the downtown community in coordination with the Wilmington Friends Berry Festival. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors — PNC Bank and the Delaware Division of the Arts — we were able to offer our most diverse range of artistic media and fun treats for everyone.



St. Peter's Cathedral lent the perfect setting to feature local artists Eunice LaFate, Madeline Porter, Demetrius Bullock, Kaitlyn Altieri, Thos. N. Tully, Christine Warheit, Ellen Schubert, Rose Webster and Phyllis Stawicki. Our artists represented everything from folk art to watercolors, photography to handcrafted Santas and woodworking.

We even expanded our musical repertoire this year to include performances by a gifted harpist from Salesianum School, members of Wilmington Concert Opera and the organ skills of St. Peter's musical director.

The festival created a truly multi-sensory experience providing a feast for the eyes, ears, heart and soul.

Most gratifying for foundation volunteers was seeing youngsters stroll over from the Berry Festival to enjoy the free fun of our event, including delicious Cajun Sno from proprietor Meg Hurst and professional face painting by Ilana Wright of Ilana's Glitterbugz.

As the youngsters and their adults found their way into St. Peter's sanctuary, they were exposed to the many arts all our festival had to offer and became part of our mission: to raise awareness of the beauty, accessibility, and enjoyment of the arts by all.

With the success of this year's event, we look forward to continuing to grow and make an impact in 2019 and beyond!

## Reaching out

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation welcomed this year's first-time opportunity for community outreach at Winterthur Museum's signature annual event, Point-to-Point. The 40th annual event gave the foundation a chance to make new friends as part of the Byway Bucks promotion of the Harriet Tubman Byway.

Our promotion — including material on our workshops about the Underground Railroad that brought Tubman to our city — was in good company at Point-to-Point. Ours adjoined displays by the Greater Wilmington and the Brandywine Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau.



# View from the Hill: 25 years of perseverance

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation Executive Director Ashley B. Cloud

The view from the hill is one simultaneously of appreciating the past and excitedly planning for the future as the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation celebrates a laudable milestone: 25 years of perseverance. In reality, our road is longer and our story much older considering the oft-quoted adage about “doing a little good in the world.” Stop to consider Elizabeth Shipley’s insistence during her visit to Willingtown in 1735 that the future site of Quaker Hill was where a Meeting House should be built and it’s easy to see the ripple effect of what is to come. T

Thomas Garrett’s daring rescue of his family’s beloved free, African-American servant when she is kidnapped by slave-trading bounty hunters, sows the seeds of his eventual move to Wilmington and his role in the Underground Railroad.

Now picture a modern young couple driving down West Street who encounter a dilapidated yet hauntingly beautiful building with strong bones, historic architecture, and a romantic veranda. They feel called to lovingly restore it and open a law office thus igniting QHHPF Founder and President Bayard Marin’s passion for preserving Quaker Hill.

Also of profound importance is the foundation’s first executive director, the recently passed Paula Chadis. Inspired by a QHHPF-sponsored talk, she tirelessly devoted herself to the cause and laid the groundwork for much of what the foundation still does today.

And what have we achieved? A LOT! The exhaustive efforts of a small cadre of history and architectural preservationists and academics succeed in having Quaker Hill designated as a National Historic District. Navigating local government, pursuing limited grant monies, and forming strong collaborations has funded an array of physical and educational projects. We see the evidence in brick pavers on the sidewalks and the insistence that new construction and exterior renovations reflect the historical aesthetic of the neighborhood.

We appreciate residences that have been rescued and restored over the years: 521 N. West Street, owned in the 1800s by Elizabeth Grubb and now home to the Law Office of Bayard Marin; the Elwood Garrett House at 609 Washington Street, retrofitted by United Cerebral Palsy of Delaware for use by persons with disabilities; 401 Washington Street, known as the Josephine Bakhita House, restored magnificently by the nonprofit Ministry of Caring. All of these endeavors and more are imbued with the blood, sweat and tears of those who have recognized the beauty, history and importance of Quaker Hill to the narrative not only of downtown Wilmington, but also the State of Delaware.

Education represents another form of preservation. A tradition of Underground Railroad Workshops for adults and children has grown, expanded and flourished thanks to the selflessness of the Wilmington Friends Meeting, dedication of our team of educators and support from M&T Bank. Talks, tours and field trips continue to reach and teach the public. The annual Friends of the Arts Festival, sponsored by PNC, allows us to celebrate the arts and history of Quaker Hill with the surrounding community.

The joint efforts of QHHPF, Delaware Historical Society and the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware created Wilmington’s annual Harriet Tubman Day to highlight and celebrate the city’s place in her story as the Last Stop to Freedom on the Underground Railroad and her relationship with Thomas Garrett as she sought out his home at 227 Shipley Street. These efforts were successful due to the like-minded spirits of many groups including non-profits, community-vested financial institutions and dedicated public servants at all levels.

It is this spirit of “doing a little good” that is really the foundation’s driving force. We have been fortunate, as we look back over the past 25 years, to have found that spirit in many individuals and organizations throughout the city and state. We are small, but mighty and have much more good to do. The view from the hill is one of celebration and determination.

# Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

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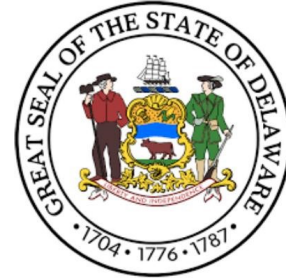
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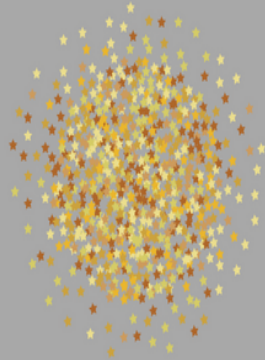


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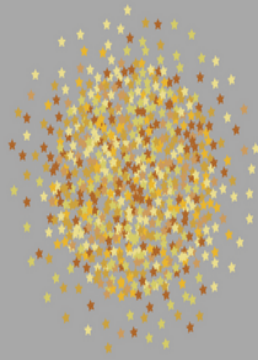


*Quaker Hill Historic Preservation*

*Foundation's*



25th



Anniversary  
Celebration!



**RSVP**

**Join us**

**November 8**

Join the foundation for an elegant dinner and celebration at the University and Whist Club in Wilmington, with special guest speaker Dr. David Ames.

Contact

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RSVP by OCTOBER 26

**Reserve YOUR  
place in history!**

## **About the foundation**

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation is a nonprofit grassroots community organization dedicated to preserving, restoring and promoting the history, social life and architecture of Quaker Hill in Wilmington, Delaware. Foundation outreach includes historical research, educational presentations drawing on academic, civic and community resources, guided tours and social events showcasing the area's cultural assets. Our outreach aims to increase awareness of the area's multicultural history, as well as support viable housing and economic development.

To learn more, including how to get involved, visit [quakerhillhistoric.org](http://quakerhillhistoric.org).  
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