

THE QUILL



Newsletter of the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

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New awards honor preservation

In honor of the passion, legacy and passing of QHHPF's first Executive Director Paula Chadis, the inaugural class of Paula Chadis Historic Preservation Commendation winners were recognized at the 25th Anniversary Dinner celebration at the University & Whist Club.



**Wilmington Friends Meeting
(1816)
401 North West Street**

Third meeting house since Quaker Hill was founded in 1738 by notable Quaker families – Shipley, Tatnall, Canby, Ferris, West – and the final resting place of Founding Father John Dickinson and noted abolitionist Thomas Garrett

**Cathedral of St. Peter
(1816)**

500 North West Street

Father Patrick Henry laid the cornerstone for the cathedral designed by Pierre Baudy, with a congregation including French West Indian refugees and Irish immigrants escaping the Great Potato Famine and workers recruited to work at du Pont family powder mills



**310 North West Street
(1750)**

Sean Reilly, owner

Quaker Hill's second-oldest remaining structure, with its original entry along Fourth Street moved to face West Street in the late 1800s, with later renovation that revealed possible link to the Underground Railroad



(More honorees profiled on Page 2)

“Friend, I haven't a dollar in the world, but if thee knows a fugitive who needs a breakfast, send him to me.”

— Thomas Garrett

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Honoring Paula Chadis, A Preservation Leader



Today we honor our Founding Executive Director, Paula Chadis. More than anyone it was Paula, together with Bayard Marin, who really put Quaker Hill on the map.

In her background and experience were all the necessary ingredients. She had a bachelor's degree in historic

preservation from Mary Washington College and a master's degree in history and museum studies from the University of Delaware. She had experience both as a Realtor and a museum curator before coming to Quaker Hill. Her master's thesis was the study of the building at Fourth and Washington Streets which is now the Bakhita House.

But not only did she have the background but also the drive and people skills to put into place all the structure we enjoy today. She lived in a house next door to the Quaker Hill office and made friends with all her neighbors. Those that others dismissed as "antisocial" she described instead as very social, just in a different way. Her vision for Quaker Hill was not one of gentrification but rather of helping her existing neighbors to appreciate and care for their historic treasures that were their homes.

To that end she started several projects, such as the one dearest to her heart, the HArts Project or the Heritage Arts Project, in which she taught neighborhood children about history and architecture. Among other things the children took pictures of nearby buildings with disposable cameras and created sketches of buildings for calendars that were then sold. Another program started during her tenure was the Underground Railroad workshops for children, which still continues to this day.

Paula educated the public through a newsletter and most notably through the creation of a film by Sharon Baker, called "Whispers of Angels", about the Underground Railroad and starring Ed Asner as Thomas Garrett.

Paula reached out to many Wilmington institutions and created many conferences, each attended by hundreds of people. Some of these include the first Sacred Places Conference, a conference on historic preservation featuring a famous professor, and a conference featuring Charleston's Police Chief Reuben Greenberg, who demonstrated how to turn a crime-ridden city into a world-class tourist destination.

Paula put Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation on a sound financial footing by winning several grants that supported the work of Quaker Hill, such as a large Weed'N'Seed grant to reduce crime by interesting children in their community.

Always, Paula thought of ways to help Wilmington through attention to Quaker Hill, and she had the skills and heart to do it.

Mary Starkweather-White, November 8, 2018

Joseph Woodward House (1745)

701 North West Street
David & Janice Almquist,
owners

Built by Joseph Woodward,
a Quaker rope maker,
in Georgian architectural style,
later the home of
Senator James Ashton Bayard



S.G. Simmons House (1868)

308 North West Street
Melvin & Brenda Phillips,
owners

Built by merchant
S.G. Simmons, a prosperous
lumber dealer, for his family

Josephine Bakhita House (1881)

401 Washington Street
Ministry of Caring, owner

An excellent example
of Second Empire
architecture, built by local
architect Edwin Thorne



Benjamin Furry House (1882)

407 West 6th Street
Lafrenus & Michele Billups,
owners

Built by Abraham Peters for
the president of the Furry &
Braunstein carriage works



Recipients of the inaugural Paula Chadis Historic Preservation Commendation received commemorative plaques with this image

View From The Hill: Community as Family

Reflecting on 2018 as QHHPF celebrated its 25th Anniversary alongside many of you who have been an integral part of our mission of historic preservation, one word resonates: Family. Quaker Hill's past, present, and future are grounded in the relationships and community we have built together. Our shared passions for history, education, architecture, and positive impact in our neighborhoods, cities, and state creates a strong bond that allows us to do more good together as a family than separately as individuals.

This network is vital and always has been. We may jokingly refer to the closeness of everyone in Delaware, but these connections have served us well. Thomas Garrett could not have accomplished as much as he did without the ability to tap into existing Quaker and Underground Railroad networks and without creating his own "family" of helping eyes, ears, and hands in Wilmington. The historical records that preserve Garrett's words illustrate how trust and the passion to do what is right can accomplish amazing things. We know the more well-known names of Garrett, Still, Hunn, Burris and Tubman whose efforts furnished transportation, food, clothing, shelter and guidance from one safe haven to the next.

But we should also learn of the lesser known contributors, some of whom we still are discovering. Garrett had eyes and ears among the Irish and Black laborers on the riverfront who could provide information about activity entering the city on the South Market Street Bridge. Risking their lives and their freedom, men such as George Wilmer, Harry Craige and Severn Johnson were vital to Garrett's network and he spoke glowingly of them and their contributions in his letters to Still. "New" names are revealed through dedicated research: Patrick Holland was one of the wagon drivers that distracted bounty hunters in order to convey Harriet Tubman and her group safely across the Market Street Bridge and Captain Alfred Fountain of Richmond, Virginia, brought Freedom Seekers to The Rocks at Fort Christina giving us a maritime UGRR connection in Wilmington. Organizations such as the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Anti-Slavery Society mirror our modern organizations and non-profits dedicated to doing what is right.

How did Garrett successfully help 2,700 Freedom Seekers? Certainly not alone! His Delaware family of trusted friends working together towards the common goal of equality for all men and women vibrantly underscore how important our connections are and how much we can achieve when we work together.



Clockwise from Thomas Garrett (center), William Still,
John Hunn, Samuel Burris and Harriet Tubman

New Book Aims to Bring Dickinson ‘Out of the Shadows’

A new book about John Dickinson, published for the 250th anniversary of his letters that proved pivotal to the American Revolution, is a must-read for Delaware and Quaker Hill history buffs.

Edited by former News Journal Editorial Page Editor John Sweeney, the collection of essays about the author of “Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies,” was created through a collaboration of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, the Delaware Department of State and the Delaware Heritage Commission.

Dickinson — aptly described by Sweeney as “the most famous Founding Father you never heard of” — is buried at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House, where his modest grave marker bears only his name and “1808,” the year he died on February 14.

Sweeney will offer his insight into the largely forgotten American patriot this February 16, as keynote speaker at an annual commemoration of Dickinson’s life, hosted by the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation and the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion. The event, free and open to the public, is 10 a.m.-noon at the Friends Meeting House, 401 North West Street, with a wreath-laying at Dickinson’s grave and refreshments. Sweeney also will be available at the event to sign his book, which will be available for purchase.

Dickinson’s connection to the Quaker community is well-explored in Sweeney’s new book, “Delaware’s John Dickinson: The Constant Watchman of Liberty,” as is the impact of the writings that earned him the nickname of “Penman of the Revolution.” Dickinson “wrote more for the American cause than any other figure,” Jane E. Calvert of the Dickinson Writing Project notes in one of the book’s essays, gathered from speeches and writings from prominent sources.

They include the late Governors Russell W. Peterson, Charles L. Terry and J. Caleb Boggs, Delaware Supreme Court Associate Justice Richard S. Rodney, and beloved Delaware historian John A. Munroe. Among essays’ still-living writers are former Delaware Supreme Court Justice Randy J. Holland, former Delaware Family Court Judge and former Friends of John Dickinson Mansion President Battle R. Robinson, Dickinson Plantation Site Supervisor Gloria Henry and Vertie Lee, an historic interpreter at the site.

That notable historic site, where the house was built by Dickinson’s father Samuel in 1740, was saved in the 1950s from demolition by neglect, thanks to Delaware’s chapter members of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, who bought the property and gave it to the state.

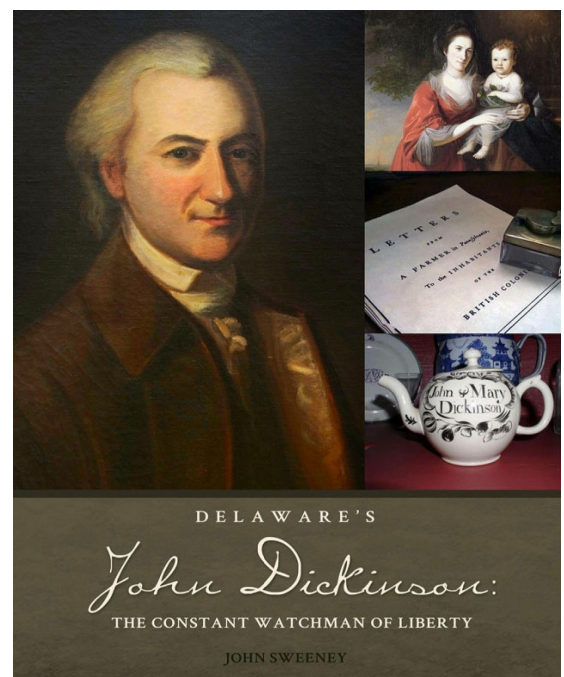
The site interprets the history of slavery, including Dickinson’s 1777 manumission of his 37 inherited slaves — making him the only Founding Father to do so while alive — and the book explores the topic well.

Sweeney’s own essays lend insight into the philosophy of the Maryland-born leader/lawyer who went on to be the president or governor of both Delaware and Pennsylvania. Dickinson’s letters became “America’s first bestseller,” he noted, and most significantly, they “convinced Americans that they were a people.”

And while Dickinson drafted the 1776 Articles of Confederation and at one point was as famous in the Colonies as Benjamin Franklin, it was his decision not to sign the Declaration of Independence because he favored reconciliation that led to his relative obscurity. Unlike others who had opposed independence, he did not accept the chance to sign the declaration after the fact, still valuing principle over public perception.

He was, as Sweeney says, “an actual hero.” And reading this deeply researched book about Dickinson, it will be impossible for Delaware readers to disagree with Sweeney’s comment that “It is time to bring him out of the shadows.”

“Delaware’s John Dickinson: The Constant Watchman of Liberty” is available at the Delaware Public Archives in Dover and from the Delaware Heritage Commission at <https://heritage.delaware.gov/book-orders/>, \$20 plus \$5 postage if ordered online.

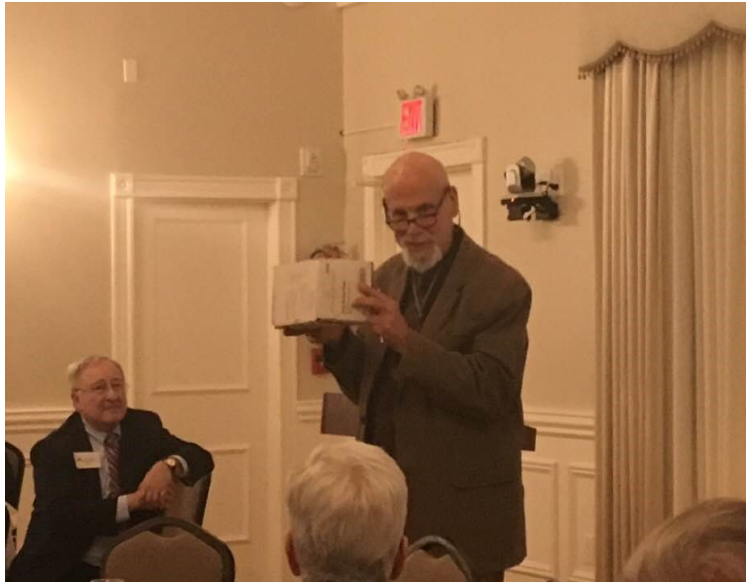




Wilmington Concert Opera's co-founders Marisa Robinson and Kirsten C. Kunckle with accompanist Tim Crawford



Rebecca Wilson, executive director of the Old Swedes Foundation; historian Kim Burdick and award-winning artist Eunice LaFate, a QHHPF board member and owner of LaFate Gallery



Keynote speaker Dr. David Ames, QHHPF President Bayard Marin

At the QHHPF 25th Anniversary Celebration

A Special Honor

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation proudly presented its Thomas Garrett Award for Outstanding Community Service to a recently retired member of the Wilmington Police Department who had been called "the cop who believes all things are possible."

Although Daniel Selekman retired last fall after 21 years behind the badge, he remains a force in the city — still hailed on the streets of West Center City as the beloved "Lieutenant Dan."

Many West Side residents attended his September walk-out ceremony, where many said he was known for leaving his patrol car to walk the streets, talk to residents and help anyone he could, even buying and delivering diapers to mothers in need.

Selekman said the neighborhood opened his eyes, taught him how to connect and "serve the right way — the human way." After being presented QHHPF's highest service honor at the QHHPF 25th Anniversary Dinner celebration, Selekman received a well-deserved standing ovation, cheers and applause, followed by plenty of handshakes and hugs.



Dickinson Mansion Officially Opened Mansion—

Continued From First Page



Walter Potts

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE JAMES R. QUIGLEY (left) and **Henry Francis duPont** receive gavel made of original wood from the re-

stored John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Shown with them is **Mrs. Henry Ridgely**, president of the State Archives Commission.

By WILLIAM P. FRANK
The Kent County plantation home of John Dickinson—the patriot who preferred to fight for national independence than vote for it in 1776—has officially become another of Delaware's shrines and show places.

Located south of Dover on the Kitts Hummock Road, not too far from the Dover Air Base, this two-story Georgian brick mansion—facing the broad flat fields that lead down to the St. Jones River, has been restored after considerable research and painstaking work at public expense and through private contributions.

Opened yesterday to a large group of specially invited guests—state officials, county and

Actualy, he claimed citizenship in both Pennsylvania and Delaware but the mansion on the St. Jones River, near Dover, that has been restored by and is now under the administration of the Delaware Archives Department, was his first Delaware home. He died in 1808 and was buried in the Friends Cemetery at the corner of Fourth and Washington Streets, Wilmington.

Race Against Time

The story behind the story of the restoration and opening of the Dickinson mansion is one of a race against time.

Neglected for years, the old house faced complete ruin at

the Battleship Delaware and is now part of the State Museum in Dover.

Earlier, the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., held its annual meeting in Legislative Hall. Dr. John A. Munroe of the University of Delaware was reelected president; Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr., first vice president; William Ferguson of Bridgeville, second vice president; Mrs. Harry V. Holloway, secretary; Miss Elizabeth B. Alden, treasurer.

Elected to the board of directors were Mr. Ferguson, Mrs. Holloway and Mrs. W. Ellison Barnard.

The organization voted to pay for the furnishings of one of the rooms in the mansion.

Yesterday also marked the initial appearance of "A News Letter from the Friends of John Dickinson Mansion," giving something of the history of the project, and listing the gifts and services pledged or already provided by individuals and groups for the restoration.

Survivors of 18th Century

The mansion is one of the finer eighteenth century houses surviving in lower Delaware. The state, on Sept. 17, 1932, received as a gift the brick structure on a 12-acre plot through the efforts of the Historic Activities Committee, National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware, with Mrs. Reese, as their chairman. This committee had raised a fund of \$25,000 so the State could purchase the property and begin its restoration.

The drive for funds brought in contributions large and small from many Delawareans and citizens of neighboring states who realized the historic significance of the property. The next year a similar amount was appropriated by the Legislature for the restoration work.

Samuel Dickinson built the house and moved his family into

stand with three casters and two crucets all with the Dickinson family coat of arms. Also among the furnishings are a portrait of Judge Samuel Dickinson, a bracket clock once owned by John Dickinson, his open armchair and numerous books and pamphlets from his extensive library.

The other furnishings of the Mansion represent those typical of the period and of the Middle Atlantic States area.

Many of the furnishings were contributed by interested individuals or by organizations, among them were the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, in the State of Delaware; Daughters of the American Revolution; Delaware State Society; Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc.; the Dickinson Club of Delaware, in cooperation with the Dickinson College; State Federation of Women's Clubs; Daughters of American Colonists, Delaware State Society; Delaware Chapter of Daughters of Founders and Patriots; Friends of Old Dover; the Quota Club of Wilmington; and the Daughters of Colonial Wars, Delaware State Society.

The plan for landscaping the gardens, a contribution of the Garden Club of Wilmington, was executed by Alden Hopkins, the eminent landscape architect of Williamsburg, Va. In addition to private contributions of boxwood and funds for planting, there have been cash gifts from the Garden Club of Wilmington, the Cross Country Garden Club, and the Gordon Heights Garden Club.

The John Dickinson Mansion is open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m., Sundays 1 to 5 p. m., closed Mondays. Visitors are escorted through the building.

Appointments in advance may be made for groups by writing to P. O. Box 710, Dover, Del. or by telephoning to Dover 9439.



"I should be glad to know how the Building goes on: or what Hedging is making. My Honoured Father used to talk of it, & I am very fond of it, since I have been in England: If all the grounds about our House were enclosed with Hedges, it is not possible to conceive how beautiful they would look. Would not two Vistas cut due East & West, Parallel with the Front of our house, the first till it comes to the next open fields & the other to the Creek contributes much to the beauty of the Place. And I think that the charming Walk down to the Wharf, proves that a Vista opposite to the back Door would be very fine. Please to tell Me, Whether the yard is altered."

~ John Dickinson writing from London

Neglected for years, the old house faced complete ruin at the time the State Archives Commission and many individuals, interested in the life of John Dickinson, banded together to save the building.

The house was built around 1740 by Samuel Dickinson, father of the noted patriot. It has gone through many tribulations, including a disastrous fire.

The fate of many old Delaware homes seemed to be in store for it when it was purchased in 1952 through private contributions of \$25,000 collected through the activities of the Historic Activities Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames in Delaware.

It was formally presented to the state of Delaware in that same year and given over to the State Archives Commission. From then on, it was a case of study and research and reconstruction, financed by state funds and contributions from individuals and public spirited organizations interested in the heritage of Delaware.

Yesterday marked the culmination of all the work. A simple ceremony took place in the office of Gov. J. Caleb Boggs in the presence of a small group of men and women who either personally or through their organizations had helped to make the restoration and furnishing of the mansion possible.

Gavels Presented

Highlighting the somewhat informal program in Governor Boggs' office was the presentation of two gavels, made from original wood taken from the basement of the mansion.

David F. Anderson, Wilmington attorney and a member of the State Archives Commission, presented one gavel to Speaker of the House of Representatives James Quigley for his interest in legislation that helped to make the restoration possible.

Henry P. Cannon II, another member of the mission, presented the second gavel to Henry Francis duPont who is chairman of the furnishings committee for the Dickinson mansion and who was applauded for his personal interest in seeing to it that the

house and moved his family into it in 1740 from another of his estates, "Crosia-dore," in Talbot County, Md.

Samuel's sons, John and Philemon, spent their boyhood there and John lived much of his later life here when his public affairs permitted.

Although away from the family home for long periods, Dickinson never forgot his home and devoted much time and thought to its maintenance.

In 1804, when Dickinson was living in his town house in Wilmington, a fire destroyed the interior of the mansion. Thereafter the house was repaired to be used only by tenants.

Careful Study Made

A careful study for the restoration was undertaken among manuscript sources and on the site itself. The building had suffered considerably during the years and careful research, documentary, architectural and archaeological, was required before extensive restoration could be undertaken. The restoration was directed by Mr. deValinger, Jr., state archivist and director of the Delaware State Museum.

An advisory committee of seven members, Mrs. J. Wheeler Campbell, Mrs. Lamont duPont Copeland, Henry Francis duPont, Mrs. J. Allen Frear, Jr., Dr. Munroe, Mrs. Reese, and H. Rodney Sharp, assisted the Public Archives Commission in the restoration, furnishings and decorations.

An organization consisting of those who contributed to the original \$25,000 fund and many additional new members, known as The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., is continuing its active program of publications and contributions toward the purchase of furnishings.

The mansion has a well-proportioned center hall with a fine wide staircase leading upstairs. To the right is the parlor, a finely proportioned room of large size which was the principal room of the house. Across the hall are the library and a small parlor.

Beyond them is the large dining room and the summer kitchen.



Preservation activist Mabel Lloyd Ridgely and Governor Elbert N. Carvel at the ceremony donating the Dickinson Mansion to the state (Delaware Public Archives photos)

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Henry P. Cannon II, another member of the mission, presented the second gavel to Henry Francis duPont who is chairman of the furnishings committee for the Dickinson mansion and who was applauded for his personal interest in seeing to it that the house was so excellently refurnished.

Governor Boggs, on behalf of the state, said, "We are confident that future generations will thank all who have helped to preserve this important part of our cultural heritage for them."

DeValinger Lauded

Another brief speaker was Mrs. Henry Ridgely of Dover, president of the State Archives Commission, who lauded Leon deValinger, state archivist, for his major role in supervising the restoration and bringing the project to today's culmination.

Later in the day, hundreds of men and women toured the home, admired the formal garden—and as part of the day's reception, punch was served from the huge silver bowl that had once been part of the furnishings of

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Beyond them is the large dining room and the summer kitchen.

On the second floor are the main bedchamber over the parlor, two small bedchambers and a dressing room. The cellar contains the original kitchen and an exhibit room devoted to John Dickinson and the restoration of the mansion. The dining room wing was added in 1752 and the summer kitchen wing, with slave quarters above, was built in 1754.

Antique Furnishings

The mansion is furnished with pieces dating from 1750 to 1800, including some which were owned by John Dickinson. Among these are a large silver coffee pot made by John David of Philadelphia, a silver salver made by Richard Rew of London, a pair of silver sauce boats made by Philip Syng of Philadelphia, an unusual silver condiment



Project to expand Quaker Hill landmark

A troublesome, deteriorating house on Quaker Hill is being saved and renovated in the expansion of a landmark site just honored for excellence in historic preservation.

That news comes from Brother Ronald Giannone, founder and executive director of the nonprofit Ministry of Car-

Giannone and the ministry were among the recipients of the inaugural Chadis Preservation Citations at this fall's gala Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation 25th Anniversary Dinner.

The award honored the ministry's high-quality, deeply detailed restoration of the 11-room house at Fourth and Washington streets, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and long teetering near demolition by neglect.

Now used for staff housing and called Josephine Bakhita House, the house was built in 1881 as a showpiece for its architect, said anniversary keynote speaker David Ames, former director of University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design.

Its years-long renovation was funded by grants from Laffey-McHugh, Welfare and Longwood foundations, Delaware State Housing Authority and Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, as well as a federal Economic Development Initiative grant secured by the state's supportive congressional delegation.

After its 2001 dedication, QHHPF founder/president Bayard Marin called the building's transformation "nearly a miracle."

Giannone said the ministry will maintain the same quality of workmanship and historic sensitivity as it expands Josephine Bakhita House to include the house next door. Also historic but less significant, the much smaller house at 403 Washington Street needed major repair and sparked neighbor complaints of loitering and illicit activity in its alley.

After buying the smaller house, the ministry went through Wilmington's process of dissolving the property line between the parcels and getting city plan approval.

"It's a beautiful area — Wilmington's first neighborhood — with tremendous, national-level history, thanks to the Quakers and their commitment to civil rights and abolition of slavery," Giannone said.

Josephine Bakhita is patron saint of Sudan, where she was born in the late 1800s and kidnapped into slavery. She was sold repeatedly but escaped, won a court case affirming her freedom and spent the rest of her life as a nun teaching forgiveness.

Giannone — who admired Quaker Hill long before the ministry's presence there - expanded with connection to the house next door. Thoughtful and careful design largely will eliminate the problematic alley and convert the smaller building into three bedrooms, architecturally accessible including their bathrooms.

"We're also planning landscaping that will be beautiful and enhance the neighborhood," Giannone said. The ministry has started public outreach about the project, is excited about its historic compatibility and looks forward to sharing its progress, he said.

The Ministry of Caring, founded in 1977, is best known for its Emmanuel Dining Room, where volunteer churches, synagogues, temples and other groups serve breakfast and lunch daily. The ministry also provides emergency shelter, housing, clothing, medical and dental care, job assistance, child care and other services that include housing for low-income seniors.

Learn more at ministryofcaring.org. Bakhita House, other projects and programs are detailed in a book, "40 Years of Hope & Charity: The Story of the Ministry of Caring," sold on its website. The Quill thanks the ministry for providing this information.



The architect used the house to advertise his skills.
(Courtesy of David Ames)

Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

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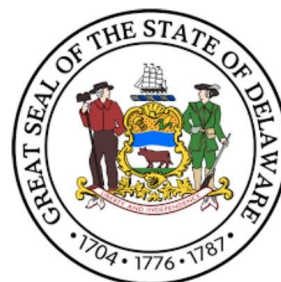
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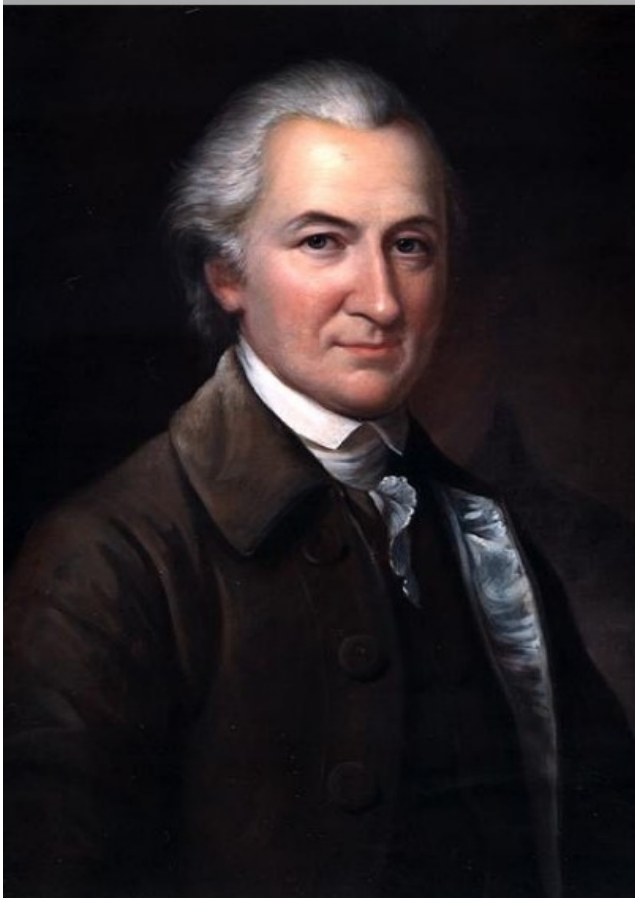
**Cordially invite you to join us in commemorating Founding Father, author
and patriot John Dickinson**

Saturday February 16th 10am-12pm

Friends Meeting House

401 N West Street Wilmington 19801

**Refreshments to follow at 521 N West
contact Ashley Cloud: ashley@quakerhillhistoric.org**



***"It is not our duty to leave
wealth to our children,
but it is our duty to leave
Liberty to them."***



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.
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