



# The Canadian Quaker History Journal

No. 65

2000

**Timothy Rogers'  
Journal**

**Benjamin Lundy:  
Quaker Abolitionist**

**Memoir of  
William Allen**

**The Women of  
Yonge Street Meeting**

**Architectural Heritage  
of Sparta**

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**The Canadian Quaker History Journal** is published annually by the Canadian Friends Historical Association (as part of the annual membership subscription to the Association). Applications for membership may be made to the address listed below. Membership fees for 1998 are:

Libraries and Institutions	\$15.00
General Membership	\$10.00
Life Membership	\$200.00

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ISSN 1180-968X

G.S.T. No. R118831593

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WWW page: <http://www.interhop.net/museum/>

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**Timothy Rogers:  
The Story He Wanted to Tell**

*Christopher Densmore*

[Talk to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Friends Historical Association, Newmarket,  
Ontario, September 30, 2000.]

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Like Quakers of his era, Timothy Rogers knew the Bible thoroughly, and quoted Scripture frequently in his journal. It is therefore fitting that I begin this talk with a passage from the Bible, the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, Chapter 11, and verses 3-4: 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (KJV)

"He being dead yet speaketh." Timothy Rogers left us his journal, and so he continues to speak directly to us. His journal is not simply a record of things done, but a story that he wanted to tell. His purpose is clearly laid out in the opening page:

Whereas God almighty has in his infinite wisdom caused me to live among the sons of men and as I have went through many things in my days that may be instructing both to my children and others I cannot feel easy without giving a short account of my pilgrimage in this life.

And who is this Timothy Rogers, that we should be interested in what he has to say? He is an important name in Canadian Quaker history. Arthur G. Dorland in his *Quakers in Canada* recounts how Rogers came to Yonge Street from Vermont in

1800 -- two hundred years ago this year-- to look over the land. He obviously liked what he saw, for he agreed to settle forty farms of two hundred acres each in the district. In the winter of 1800-1801, Rogers and his family moved, by sleigh in the dead of winter, to Yonge Street. This marks the beginning of the Yonge Street Friends Meeting. This was a critical event for Canadian Quaker history. There was a Quaker community on the Niagara Peninsula dating from the late 1780s, but only formally organized as Pelham Monthly Meeting in 1799 as a far distant outpost of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The second center of Quakerism in Upper Canada was in Prince Edward County, where Adolphustown Monthly Meeting, part of New York Yearly Meeting was organized in 1799. The arrival of Rogers and other Quakers from Vermont to the Newmarket area formed the basis of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, the third important center of Quakerism in Upper Canada. Yonge Street, roughly midway between Pelham and Adolphustown, in effect linked the Canadian Quaker communities, that then structurally joined together in Canada Half-Yearly Meeting in 1810, and ultimately in Canada Yearly Meeting.

Researchers, genealogists in particular, often state that Quakers were excellent record keepers. As a user of Quaker records-- and as the recorder of a monthly meeting-- I can attest that Quaker records are not as comprehensive or accurate as researchers hope or believe. More significantly, Quakers have conventions about what is

recorded in the official minutes, which sometimes obscures what is written. The "query" answered in each monthly meeting whether "love and unity are maintained as becomes brethren" is sometimes answered positively right up until the times the meeting divides over this or that issue.

There is also a tradition of Quaker journals. When Timothy Rogers was becoming convinced of Quaker principles at the beginning of the American Revolution, he read the journals of George Fox and John Woolman. His own journal is a form of spiritual autobiography-- or perhaps spiritual bookkeeping, because Rogers is careful to tally his faults against his progress in the Truth. Timothy Rogers is clearly a part of this tradition, and his journal can be read in conjunction with those of his contemporaries and near Joseph Hoag, Joshua Evans and Rufus Hall. Rogers accompanied both Hoag and Evans in their travels in the ministry in the 1790s. Most Quaker journals of this era were published by Quakers and for Quakers, after being reviewed by Yearly Meeting committees to see that no unguarded comment remained to trouble Friends, or be used against them by the world's people. Rogers' journal, having never been edited for publication by pious editors, is probably a more accurate portrayal of the tensions as well as the unity in Quaker communities.

Another reading-- this one from the prologue to a 1953 novel by L.P. Hartley, called *The Go-Between*:

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there. When I came upon the diary, it was lying at the bottom of a rather battered red cardboard collar-box. My first impression was that it was a present someone had brought me from abroad.

Hartley's metaphor of the "past being a foreign country" was used in 1985 by geographer David Lowenthal as a title for book on contemporary attitudes toward the past. Lowenthal's book has become very important for those thinking seriously about what is now called "heritage tourism." In reading over Timothy Rogers's journal we are "heritage tourists" traveling not to a place but to another time.

So who is Timothy Rogers? Rogers was born in low circumstances in New London, Connecticut in 1756. He doesn't know his father. At the age of six or seven, this small child travels with his uncle to Dutchess County, New York. At the age of nine, he is put out to work. Being ill-treated, his uncle rescues him from his first employer and places him with another who does better. In the hands of a Charles Dickens, this could be a story of poverty and neglect. Timothy Rogers covers this period of his life in a few sentences, seemingly to fill in the gaps and to explain his poor spelling-- as he only had a few weeks of school.

At the age of twenty-one, with a new bride, Timothy Rogers sets off for Vermont, which is then largely uncleared new lands. Over the next two decades, Rogers opens up new farms in Danby, Vermont, then in Saratoga (now North Easton), New York) and then in Ferrisburg, Vermont. In the hands of another, we would have a story of pioneer life-- lands cleared and adversities mastered. Rogers was proud of his skills in clearing new land, but does not provide details. The fact that his early pioneering days in Danby and Saratoga were probably made difficult by a virtual civil war between Yankees and Yorkers in Vermont, and by the Burgoyne Campaign, are not mentioned.

Historians are constantly frustrated with diarists who stubbornly refuse to answer our questions. We have to remember that it is the diarist who is telling the story, and that

we are only guests in this journey to the past that is another country.

Fortunately, we do sometimes have alternative sources of information. The opening pages of the records of the Clerk of Ferrisburg, Vermont, contain a lengthy entry in the hands of Timothy Rogers dated the 3rd Day of the 10th Month 1785, explaining what had happened to the earlier records. This account was later reproduced in a local history of Vermont, complete with Rogers's very unique spelling.

[On] the second day of the tenth month I Timothy Rogers of Ferrisburg was moving from Boton Bay in Ferrisburg to Little Otter Creek.. and as I went by water I did not get up the bay till about midnight and my wife and five children and one woman Peggy Smith by name and one child was all in an open boat and it was a dark and rainy time. We landed about a quarter of a mile from the house. Some of the hands went up and got fire. When they got down again the fire was so rained out that we kindled some fire by the side of a tree to light barks that my family might see a little to walk up to house for my wife was sick I led her by the hand. This morning, being the third day of the tenth month 1785 about sun rise one of the men told me that the tree by which the fire was kindled was burn down and burnt up a large chest of drawers that was packed as full as it could be of clothes and writings of great importance.

Weren't our pioneer ancestors quaint? I would be easy to miss the implications of the next few lines:

Writings of great importance. I suppose I had about forty deeds for about six thousand acres of land. note and bonds for about to thousand dollars and all the other proprietor's records of Ferrisburg.

What do we know about Timothy Rogers so far. Born in low circumstances, put out to work as a child, ill treated, ill educated, can't spell, took off to the wilderness at the age of twenty-one. Now, we find him camped out by near the shores of Little Otter Creek in Vermont with his wife and five children. And why is it Timothy Rogers that has to explain what has happened to the records? Because it is Timothy Rogers who is the Clerk for the Proprietors of Ferrisburg, a responsible position that involves the buying and selling of thousands of acres of land, overseeing the settlement of the Town of Ferrisburg and the City of Vergennes. He is also, at the same time, the Clerk of the Proprietors of the Town of Hungerford and in two years the owner of the mills that will grind the corn for the new settlers of Ferrisburg. He is, in fact, a highly successful entrepreneur and one of the leading citizens of Ferrisburg. These are the skills that he will use fifteen years later to lead a migration of friends, neighbors and relatives from Ferrisburg to Upper Canada.

I titled this paper "the story he wanted to tell" because it is the Quaker story that interested Rogers. Rogers is traveling back and forth to Albany and New York, and northward to Montreal in the course of his business, but he is far more interested in recording his travels on the business of Friends. He talked not at all about going to Montreal to find a market for Vermont potash, but much about going to Nova Scotia as the companion to Quaker minister Joshua Evans. He passes over establishing

mills on the Otter Creek in a few words, but spends pages on the establishment of Quaker meetings at Danby and Ferrisburg. And the journal shows that the establishing a Quaker meeting at this time wasn't always easy. Even in a period of the rapid numerical and geographical

expansion of Quakerism, Quakers seem to have taken the Biblical injunction to "lay hands suddenly on no man" (I Timothy 5:22) very seriously. Meetings spent months, and sometimes years, deciding whether an individual was ready to be received as a member, or whether a group of Friends was ready to form a meeting.

This caution was a trouble to Timothy Rogers. Friends could, when led by the spirit, rise and speak in meeting. Meetings could, when they felt that an individual was speaking under the right guidance, and if that individual spoke frequently, acknowledge that person as a Friends minister. Not, of course, a minister in the sense used by most churches, but a recognition that an individual had the spiritual authority to speak to and on behalf of the Society of Friends. Probably many Friends of this time never spoke publicly in meeting and most others only rarely. Those who spoke who did not meet with the approval of the ministers and elders would be advised that perhaps it was better wait for better light.

Rogers' journal is a story of spiritual progression. As a young man he becomes convinced of Friends principles, and becomes a Quaker. As an adult, his speaking in meeting is at times discouraged by the elders, and he is disheartened. But Rogers' journey does not end with this discouragement. In a letter to a Friend in Nova Scotia, written in 1809, and almost at the end of the journal, Rogers writes:

Now, dearest friends, I may inform you, that after I returned to my visit

[to Nova Scotia in 1796]... my trials and probations were so many, that time would fail me to write of them. And as I believe they were for my own improvement... [But] the great King and Lord of all our blessings, spiritually and outwardly, hath visited me by His spirit in an acceptable time, and when very much needed...

You may now understand that I, having had many troubles for some years, waited for the waters of affliction to cease. And a prospect or opening in my mind was revived in my mind with clearness or a removal to the westward... After opening the prospect to my wife and dear friends, way opened for it and I traveled between four and five hundred miles to a place called Yonge Street, about thirty miles from York, in Upper Canada...

This last is a remarkable passage. There is an element of discontent, of being unfulfilled and trouble running through much of the journal. His release from his troubles, by the visitation of God and His spirit, coincides with a clearness that it was right and proper to settle in Upper Canada. Rogers' spiritual and temporal journeys end together, in peace, and in Canada.

I alluded before to the current interest in heritage tourism. People are interested in visiting the past, both through text and through place. People seem to be more interested in hearing authentic voices and trying to understand the experiences of individuals. The generic pioneer cabin, with the man holding the gun and the woman spinning flax is no longer enough. And there is a political and cultural side to heritage tourism-- what is the story that we want to tell by preserving the past, both in text and

in place.

Timothy Rogers was a pioneer builder of Upper Canada and a committed Quaker. His commitment to Quakerism in 1775 and 1776 in Dutchess County was marked by his refusal to take up arms for either side in the Revolution. He would not have qualified as a United Empire Loyalist. In 1812, Rogers, now a British citizen again, passes between the lines of the British and American armies as a neutral Quaker on his way to New York Yearly Meeting. His story is not that of the warrior-- he rejected that way. It was not the story of the entrepreneur. He was that, but that was not what was his story. His story is that of the Quaker, and I will close by quoting from the end of Rogers' journal:

Dear fellow-laborers and companions in trials and sorrows, let us die to all outward man's contrivance about the Gospel rule, which I believe the natural part in us is too apt to be meddling in. Oh, my friends, how it wants to be called wise, and looks for applause! But surely this disposition dies when simple honesty arises in the heart, in the love of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Then all is concord, and the honest Truth; the Lamb, becomes "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," spiritually. This has been slain from the foundation of the world, and has arisen from this death, by slaying the spirit of the world. Thus all that is wrong in us being slain by grace, the wolf must die also...

Rogers is, of course, thinking about the verses in the book of Isaiah, about the lion lying down with the lamb. He is telling us a story, and that story had a plot, and that plot is the his spiritual travels through trials and

tribulations until he reaches the Peaceable Kingdom. That he tells us much along the way of the settlement and Vermont and Upper Canada, about the mechanics of Quaker discipline, about his travels through Nova Scotia in the 1790s, adds to the interest (and to the historical value of the journal). But it is the settling of his story, not the story itself.



**Hannah James**

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**‘a turbulent and contentious spirit’:  
Discipline among Women in the Yonge Street Community of Friends**

*Robynne Rogers Healey*

Paper Presented to the  
Canadian Friends Historical Association Annual Meeting, September 30, 2000,

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At the December 1806 business meeting of the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, the women’s meeting sent a request across to the men’s meeting soliciting their assistance in the difficult case of Kezia James. The women complained that Kezia James “has been guilty of unbecoming behaviour in a meeting for worship and through a turbulent and contentious spirit hath been endeavouring to defame the character of friends—not only amongst members but to those not of our society, whereby she hath wilfully asserted things which appear to be false.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, given the nature of meeting minutes, the specifics of Kezia James’s assertions are unknown. However, the men did agree to assist the women in the case. A group of men was appointed to join the women in a visit to the James household on Yonge Street.<sup>2</sup> In February of 1807, the appointed committee reported back to the Monthly Meeting that they “had an opportunity with her and afterwards had her and her accusers face to face and they being unitedly of the opinion that the charge against her was justly supported and she not appearing to them to be in a suitable disposition of mind at present to make satisfaction for her misconduct,” it was decided that she be disowned.<sup>3</sup> Kezia James disagreed with the committee’s decision and, following her rights laid out in the Discipline, promptly informed the monthly meeting that she had decided to appeal to the Yearly Meeting.<sup>4</sup> This was not a decision taken lightly as appeals required the attendance of the appellant at the appeal to defend their

case. A trip from Yonge Street to Philadelphia would have been both time consuming and costly. Yet, in August of 1808, the monthly meeting of men recorded that Amos Armitage, John Doan and Reuben Burr were appointed “to attend the Yearly meeting with the proceedings of this meeting in [Kezia James’s] case.”<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, those who had been appointed to attend the yearly meeting in the case could not attend. David Willson was added to the group and they were instructed to attend the following yearly meeting with the minutes regarding James’s case.<sup>6</sup> The case does not appear again the minutes.<sup>7</sup> However, it did not disappear. Kezia James pressed her case and was successful in eventually having the decision of the monthly meeting against her overturned.<sup>8</sup>

The particular case against Kezia James, evocative as it is in the minutes, with its reference to her unbecoming behaviour and troublesome spirit, illustrates a number of issues related to discipline within the Society in general and within the community at Yonge Street specifically. The meeting minutes provide the skeletal record of the community.<sup>9</sup> Although it cannot be denied that there are times when the minutes are maddeningly silent in their cursory form, a careful examination of the meeting minutes in the context of the Discipline and other meeting records can be much more revealing than might originally be thought. The priorities set by the community and the issues of foremost importance to Friends on Yonge Street can be determined by their

place in the minutes. In the case of the Upper Canadian meetings, the minutes show the impact of the frontier on the implementation of the Discipline with business occasionally taking considerably longer to transact than it did in other meetings. Because women had separate business meetings, the minutes also provide a window into the community of women, illuminating those issues of importance to Quaker women. Through an examination of both the men's and women's business meeting minutes, we can determine the impact of gender in realizing the testimonies set out in the Discipline. Specifically of interest, the minutes show that, while women and men faced similar cases of dealings within the context of the Discipline, women were more likely to appeal their disownments than men were. This attests to the value women placed on their membership in the Society and the rights that they felt their membership gave them and their own understanding of their position in the Yonge Street community of Friends.

The socialization of women and girls within the business meetings of the Society of Friends had a lasting impact on their interactions with those outside the Society in the mid-nineteenth century when Friends began to extend their organizational involvements to mainstream movements such as the temperance or abolition movements. Through their socialization in the meeting girls and women put into practice the precepts of Friends that they learned through their formal and informal education. Through the business of the meeting, Quaker women came to a greater understanding of how they could shape their community. It was here that notions of spiritual equality gained their clearest expression. The community, however, had limitations. Although the Discipline itself was clear on how to deal with those who failed

to adhere to the testimonies, determining departures from the Discipline in areas relating to contentiousness was not so easy. Transgressions of the Discipline were fairly obvious if Friends married non-Friends or wore inappropriate garments. However, questions of what constituted a spirit of disunity were not readily answered. It is in these cases that we find individual meetings interpreting the goals of the Discipline within the context of their own community. These difficult cases also clarify the role that individual personalities played in determining who or what was defined as obstreperous. Although not a frequently recorded offence, to be branded as one who encouraged disunity was something to be taken seriously. Such a spirit was evidence that the individual in question was not being led by the Inner Light. To be quarrelsome was the anathema of being a good Friend. The minutes show that gender did not play a role in how contentiousness was treated within the meeting. To be of a turbulent and contentious spirit was frowned upon equally among both men and women. However, even though the transgression was treated equally, these cases provide some evidence of the strong women who gave leadership to and molded the Yonge Street community. These cases demonstrate that the community of Friends on Yonge Street was not simply defined unilaterally by the central authority of the Yearly Meeting and the Discipline it espoused. It was actively shaped by those who lived in the community and were responsible for interpreting and executing the Discipline within the context of the meeting. Women were persistent participants in this process, influencing their community at every level.

The Quaker meeting was the dominant force in the expression of a Friend's faith. The meeting was not only an apparatus that oversaw discipline and enforced the unique

testimonies of the Society of Friends. It was, above all, the body which provided 'care' to the flock. In addition to implementing the Discipline and providing spiritual shepherding, the monthly meeting was concerned with supplying education to children and fostering parents in raising their children consistently with the ideals of Quakerism. The meeting provided schools, a library of Quaker books, and assisted parents in placing their children in appropriate apprentice positions. For those in need the meeting ensured that relief was available and that needy children were educated to 'fit them for business.' Those experiencing financial difficulties were given financial counsel to assist them in clearing themselves of debt. When differences arose between members, the meeting provided an arbitrator to expeditiously settle the problems. Essentially, as the body that implemented the Discipline, the meeting was set up to oversee all aspects of a Friend's life.

The apparatus of hierarchical meetings that evolved had begun as a mechanism to ensure a standard of behaviour among all members of the Society of Friends. As much as it became an exercise in social control, the original concern that created the Discipline and the meeting apparatus was the consideration that the Society would suffer as a result of the errant behaviour of some of its members. The Discipline had developed in order to ensure "the preservation of all in unity of faith and practice." As a unifying and centralizing force in the Society, it provided the framework:

for the government of Friends, overseers, and meeting, with a view that in the exercise thereof, the unfaithful, the immoral, and the libertine professors may be seasonably reminded of their danger and of their duty; as well as of

the labour which in gospel love hath been from time to time bestowed for their help and recovery."<sup>10</sup>

The Discipline governed a Friend's life from birth to death. It stated that Friends were required to register their children's births with the meeting, it set stipulations for their religious and academic education, it set standards for the choice of an appropriate spouse, and it ensured that burial occurred in a decent and orderly fashion. In between birth and death, the Discipline codified a Friend's behaviour. The Discipline was a living document; it could and did change as need determined. As time passed, Friends became stricter in some areas; in others they became more tolerant.

The Discipline was formally implemented in a structure of hierarchical meetings which began at the Preparative Meeting. However, prior to an issue coming to the attention of the business meeting, it had been extensively discussed informally at the community level. The method of invoking the Discipline was based on Christ's instructions to his disciples in Matthew 18: 15-17:

if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every work may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen-man and a publican.<sup>11</sup>

Complaints against individuals who had committed an infraction of the Discipline were ideally to be dealt with following this injunction. Friends would watch over each

other's behaviour and bring to the attention of their fellow believers what they believed were infractions of the Discipline. In some cases incidents of behaviour could be dealt with privately and might only include an admonition to the individual in question. This might apply to areas such as keeping company with a non-member or failing to use plain language. However, cases which were in opposition to the testimonies of the Discipline and stood to harm the Society in the eyes of non-Friends, required further 'dealing' or treatment. Complaints were given in writing to an overseer who was responsible for determining the nature and extent of the infraction, for visiting the offender and ascertaining the disposition of the offender towards the transgression, and, if necessary, for presenting the complaint at the preparative meeting. Once the complaint was entered at the preparative meeting, the appropriate supporting evidence was also collected and representatives were selected to take the business forward to the monthly meeting. Therefore, once the complaint had reached the monthly meeting, it was fairly well established, in the minds of the overseers at least, that the transgressor was guilty.

The monthly meeting appointed a committee to visit the miscreant to judge their disposition. Usually the committee tried to accomplish this before the next monthly meeting. However, there were times when the nature of the offence or the exigencies of the circumstances of distance, weather, or health could delay the case for a number of months. This was often the case in the early years of the Yonge Street meeting, especially when business had to be dealt with through the monthly meeting at Pelham. Even when Yonge Street had its own monthly meeting, those who lived at Uxbridge or Pickering in the years before the roads were well developed found that distance remained an issue in executing the

business of the meeting.<sup>12</sup> However, once the offender had been visited by the committee, the transgressor could either ignore the committee or choose to acknowledge the error and submit an offering of acknowledgement to the monthly meeting, publicly condemning their behaviour. These were presented in writing to the Monthly Meeting and were usually quite straightforward. For instance, consider the acknowledgement produced by Jane Hollinshead following her marriage to a non-member:

Whereas I the subscriber (having had a right of membership amongst friends) have so far deviated as to accomplish my marriage contrary to the good order used amongst them, which breach of order, I freely condemn as an error in me, and desire friends may pass it by, and continue me a member, hoping my futer conduct may render me worthy.<sup>13</sup>

Once the acknowledgement was entered at the monthly meeting, those in attendance decided whether or not to accept it. Acceptance or rejection of the acknowledgement depended greatly on the report of the visiting committee. There were occasions where acknowledgements were rejected because the committee did not feel that the offender had demonstrated a suitably remorseful disposition. If the acknowledgement was accepted, the paper was 'published', or read in the meeting for worship to which the individual belonged. Depending on the nature of the offence, the acknowledgement could also be posted on the door of the meeting house or in the public marketplace. This was considered a suitable chastisement and warning to others who might be tempted to follow the wrong path.

If the offender did not condemn their

transgression or if the acknowledgement was not accepted, the miscreant was testified against. Testimonies of disownment clearly laid out three points: the violations for which the offender was being disowned, the fact that treatment had been attempted, and a statement indicating the desire of the meeting that the transgressor come to an awareness of their sin so that they might be reinstated into membership. This fulfilled the instruction in the Discipline that disowned Friends “be made sensible that they themselves [were] the sole cause of their separation from religious communion and fellowship.”<sup>14</sup> Usually there was a single offence which resulted in the disownment. However, in serious cases where the infraction or series of transgressions stood to bring serious harm to the Society, the testimony listed the catalogue of deviations as well as comments about the individual’s poor spiritual state. This was the case in the testimony against Joseph Leavens:

Whereas Joseph Leavens having had a birthright amongst friends but for want of taking heed to the Dictates of truth in his own breast has for a long time neglected to attend our meetings for worship and Discipline and has suffered his unmortified will so to predominate as to beget in his mind a spirit of hardness toards his friends in which Disposition he has made use of many unsavory Disrespectful Expresions respecting friends who Resides in the neighbourhood friends who have visited us from a Distance & our meetings, likewise as a spectator attended military Exhibitions on the Days of General muster or trainings and horserasing at which place he laid a wager and is in the practice of uncovering his head, making use of the Compliments of the wourld and

Denying that he is a member of our society when amongst other People for which Deviations we have endeavoured to treat with him which had not the Desired Effect, therefore we Disown him from being a member of our Society untill he through true repentance and amendment of life condemns the same to the satisfaction of this meeting which that he may is our sincere Desire.<sup>15</sup>

The testimony was published in the same way that acknowledgements were published. Thereafter, the transgressor was considered disowned and no longer under the care of the meeting.

For Quakers, disownment was not the equivalent of banishment, nor was it ever considered final. Disownment did not signify a fall from grace or damnation. Disowned Friends could continue to attend meeting for worship; they were not, however, permitted to attend the meeting for business. This effectively silenced any formal voice they might have in their community. At any time after being disowned, a Quaker could acknowledge his or her wrongdoing and come back under the care of the meeting. There was no kind of behaviour or belief that Friends could not forgive, as long as the individual demonstrated suitable remorse and condemned their transgressions to the satisfaction of the meeting. Disownment, as translated by Quakers from Christ’s injunction, was not a judgement on the salvation of the offender; it existed to ensure the integrity of the reputation of the Society and its religious testimonies. Historically Quakers had come to realise that they could not force their members to behave in certain ways. By denying fellowship with those who refused to follow the behavioural mandates established by the yearly meetings, however, Friends could ensure that their persecutors

had no fodder with which to slander the Society. However, many Friends who were no longer on membership lists continued to worship and identify themselves as Quakers.<sup>16</sup>

§

The frequency with which contraventions of the Discipline appear in the meeting minutes indicate that the community was often faced with challenges, however subtle, to the rules of testimonies under which Friends lived. Those testimonies which seemed to create the most discussion in the Yonge Street meeting were similar to those that created difficulties in other meetings. Contraventions of the testimonies on plainness, marriage to non-members, sexual sins, oaths, and military activity were relatively common in the minutes. They were also treated in a relatively straightforward manner.<sup>17</sup>

Plainness was one of the most important testimonies for Friends. Not only was it regularly queried, but it appears consistently as a matter of concern in the meeting minutes.<sup>18</sup> The object of the testimony requiring plainness in dress and address was first and foremost to provide a distinctive marker of identification which would separate Friends from society and identify them as ‘a peculiar people.’ Plain speech originated in the language of George Fox’s day which applied ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ to the singular usage and ‘you’ to the plural. ‘You’ was also used when addressing someone of superior social standing. Since Quakers claimed that everyone was equal in the sight of God, they eschewed use of the term ‘you’ as well as any complimentary titles that might be attached to names. Friends also refused to use the names of the days of the week or months of the year, claiming their “ancient testimony against the superstitious observance of days and times, and calling

the days and months by heathen names.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the days of the week and months of the year were numbered, beginning with Sunday as First Day and January as First Month. Neither were feasts and festivals observed since, “the principle of Friends is for continual fasting and refraining from those things which defile the soul and make it unfit for becoming the temple of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>20</sup>

In the context of frontier Upper Canada this presented some difficulty to Friends who participated in community events such as shivarees and communal barn-raising, which often included non-Friends. At times, these events got out of hand, especially if liquor ran freely. A number of young men were chastised for attending a shivaree. Festivals were also disapproved of. Nineteen-year-old John Rogers was dealt with because he had “so far disregarded good order as to join with a noisy company shooting off guns at the time called New Year.”<sup>21</sup>

Although an adult, Rogers may have been forgiven for his transgression because of his relatively young age. But Job Webb was viewed in especially disparaging terms. Not only did he allow fiddling and dancing in his own house but at a barn raising he showed another person how to dance.<sup>22</sup>

Webb’s departure from the Discipline was viewed so negatively for a number of reasons. First, his behaviour encouraged others to transgress. Moreover, this behaviour was displayed at a barn raising which would have been attended by members of the community who were not Friends. To jeopardize the cause of Truth among non-Quakers was especially abhorrent to Friends. Finally, as a mature male, Webb was expected to act as a role model for younger Friends.

In addition to serving as an immediate identification of those who followed the teachings of Friends, plainness in dress

functioned as a levelling influence among Quakers. Initially, plainness in dress referred only to simplicity in apparel. Quakers avoided frills, bright colours and fussy styles. Ideally, adherence to simplicity in one's manner of dress and speech were outward signs of inward grace; they were a visible representation of a changed heart that focussed on the Inner Light. In accordance with the tenets of Quakerism, this testimony was in no way to become a ritual. However, over time the humanity of the faithful began to show through. Plainness became an end in itself. Counsel in the advices in 1682 had cautioned that Friends "be not found in wearing Superfluity of apparel." This had quickly become much more specific. By 1695 Friends were admonished that:

none wear long lapped Sleeves, or Coats gathered at the Sides, or superfluous Buttons, or broad Ribbons about their Hats or long curled Perukes; & that no women their children or Servants dress their Heads immodestly or wear their Garments indecently, as is too common, nor wear long Scarfs and that all be careful about making buying or wearing (as much as they can) striped or flowered Stuffs or other useless and superfluous Things.<sup>23</sup>

No longer was simplicity enough; simplicity became uniformity. With uniformity came the expectation of conformity. At times that conformity to an outward uniform took precedence over spiritual growth. Moreover, as some Friends began to amass great wealth, they found ways to signify their wealth while adhering to the letter of the Discipline. For instance, while the cut of a specific item of apparel might be considered simple or plain, the fabric chosen for the

garment or bonnet could immediately identify those Friends with greater financial resources.<sup>24</sup> Oatmeal or grey-coloured silk could be fashioned into a simple dress; this made a much finer garment, however, than the same dress fabricated with oatmeal or grey-coloured poplin. More than any of the other testimonies, plainness in dress and address served as a boundary between the Society of Friends and the world. It allowed for a symbolic separation from the society in which Friends lived and, as a result, stimulated their group consciousness as a peculiar people.

By the time that Friends arrived on Yonge Street, notions of plainness had become quite ritualized in the Discipline. However, unlike the marriage testimony, the meeting appeared to be far more flexible in carrying out the rules on plainness. There are few specific references to departures from plainness in the minutes. When it does appear, it is usually accompanied by some other offence such as attending places of diversion, drinking to excess, or neglecting meeting. General concerns about issues of plainness were primarily directed toward the youth of each generation whose apparel and speech patterns seemed to be a source of concern for parents regardless of the period! In fact, the women of the Pelham Monthly Meeting were so concerned at one point about "the deviation of the youth in both dress and address" that a committee of six women was appointed to visit the youth of the meeting to discuss their concern.<sup>25</sup> The generation gap that surrounded the testimony on plainness may account for the flexibility in its implementation. Friends could bemoan the passing of plainness in dress and address; yet, they remained powerless to stop it. As Friends moved further and further into mainstream society, their apparel became less important as a signature of their membership in the Society of Friends.<sup>26</sup> Among the Orthodox especially,

it became increasingly difficult to distinguish Friends from non-Friends on the basis of their clothing and manner of speech.

While the testimony on plainness did the most to visibly separate Friends from the world, the testimonies on oaths and peace were responsible for their detachment from mainstream society. Friends believed that Christ's teachings to "swear not at all" made them responsible to tell the truth at all times. Oaths were considered not only unnecessary but wrong. In the early stages of Quakerism in England, followers had been thrown into jail for their refusal to swear an oath. Later, Quakers were permitted to make a solemn affirmation in place of an oath. However, since an oath was still required for service on juries or service in any public office or government position, Friends were excluded from those positions in Upper Canada.<sup>27</sup> As the testimony on oaths excluded Friends from public office, the peace testimony prohibited Friends from involvement in military conflict. The peace testimony originated in the belief that the Inner Light was to guide and guard all aspects of life. Therefore, to follow the precepts of the Inner Light meant that the seeds of war within an individual were destroyed. The tenet of peace, which was to characterize dealings between Friends, was naturally extended to their dealings with those outside the Society. Friends were exhorted to "be vigilant in keeping up to the peaceable Principles professed by us as a People," and were forbidden from uniting with those who "may be for making Warlike Preparations, offensive or defensive." Friends were also reminded to "demean themselves in a Christian & peaceable manner, thereby to demonstrate to the World, that our Practices, (when we are put to the Trial), correspond with our Principles."<sup>28</sup> As a result of the wars which seemed to be a constant fixture of colonial life, especially in the eighteenth century, the

peace testimony was extended to include any activity that might be related to war. By 1810 it became a disownable offence "to bear arms, or actively comply with military requisitions, be concerned in warlike preparations, offensive or defensive, by sea or land, pay a fine, penalty, or tax, in lieu of personal service, deal in prize goods, directly or indirectly, or be concerned in promoting the publication of writings which tend to excite the spirit of war."<sup>29</sup> This created significant problems for those Friends who lived on or near Yonge Street, a military artery that connected York to Lake Simcoe. During periods of military conflict Friends were faced with threats to their person and property. In cases where Yonge Street Friends found themselves directly in the centre of military activity, one might think that they would have been forgiven for defending themselves or their property. However, the minutes indicate that the meeting was rigid in their interpretation of the Discipline on this issue. Anyone with the slightest involvement in war activities was brought to task, no matter how justifiable or minor their activity was. Some, like Nicholas Brown, presented an acknowledgement even before a complaint could be entered.<sup>30</sup>

While dealings in these areas of the Discipline seemed to be more straight forward, the issue of contentiousness was treated far more subjectively. Difficult Friends were dealt with under two sections of the Discipline: Charity and Unity and Defamation and Detraction.<sup>31</sup> By 1810 when Yonge Street switched to the 1810 New York Discipline the issue of unity had been integrated into the section on Defamation and Detraction, which stated:

When any are guilty of tattling, tale-bearing, reproaching, back-biting, or speaking evil of others, or busily meddling with their affairs, when not

concerned, tending to excite strife and discord, or cause disesteem amongst brethren or neighbours, they are to be suitably treated with, and if they do not make satisfactions therefor, they should be disowned.<sup>32</sup>

The subjective nature of the cases relating to infractions of this testimony give us a window through which we can glimpse the meeting hierarchies and politics that had evolved in the Yonge Street community. What appears is a certain tension between the weighty Friends who were in positions of leadership and those who remained outside the Select group.

The weighty Friends comprised a sort of meeting oligarchy. Although the development of these oligarchies was not an intentional aspect of the meeting apparatus, once in place they played a large role in determining the direction that individual meetings would take.<sup>33</sup> Belonging to the group of weighty Friends were elders, ministers, clerks and overseers, although only the ministers and elders met as part of the Select Meeting of Ministers and Elders. The meeting elders were the spiritual guardians of the meeting. They wielded the most influence in spiritual matters, having the authority to censor even ministers. It was the elders and ministers who were primarily responsible for maintaining love and unity among their flock.<sup>34</sup> Because the clerk was responsible for interpreting the 'sense of the meeting,' they were influential in directing the course of business meetings. In terms of implementing the letter of the Discipline at the community level, however, the overseers held extremely authoritative positions.

Overseers were appointed to watch over the membership to guide them in the principles of Quakerism. The Discipline recognised that it was "the duty of every faithful member of our society to advise and admon-

ish those who are guilty of unbecoming or disorderly conduct." Yet it was especially the work of the overseer who was "to treat with [the offender] in the spirit of meekness and restoring love, patiently endeavouring to instruct and advise them."<sup>35</sup> Great consideration went into the selection of overseers. Those selected as overseers were to demonstrate sound judgement and have a great depth of religious insight and experience. The number of overseers selected was determined by the size of the meeting. The Discipline indicated that the monthly meeting appoint "two or more faithful and judicious Friends" to this position in each preparative meeting.<sup>36</sup> There were always both male and female overseers. The first overseers appointed at Yonge Street were Isaac Phillips, Asa Rogers, Sarah Rogers and Edith Phillips. Isaac and Edith Phillips were husband and wife and among the first of the Pennsylvanians in the area. Asa Rogers was Timothy Rogers's son-in-law and Sarah Rogers was Timothy's wife. Interestingly, Timothy Rogers was never appointed as an overseer. The choice of the first overseers was no doubt done very carefully by those from the Pelham Monthly Meeting. The appointments made allowed for an equal representation among the men and women from the Vermont and Pennsylvania settlers.

Complaints against individuals could be brought to the overseers by members of the Quaker community or non-Friends. The overseers then determined whether there were grounds for the complaint to be entered into the minutes of the preparative meeting. The complaint could not be sent to the monthly meeting without first going through the preparative. Given their authority and influence in exercising the Discipline, overseers could wield a fair degree of influence in the daily functioning of a Quaker community, especially when it came time to qualify contentiousness.

From the minutes it is impossible to discern whether certain individuals or families were viewed as naturally difficult and were, therefore, more prone to be charged with creating disunity. To be fair to the overseers and weighty Friends, it is possible that certain individuals were more obstreperous. However, it is intriguing that those who were viewed as troublesome and contentious seemed to share family connections. Consider the James family. Kezia James was not the only James woman who was chastised for her troublesome nature. Ann James, Kezia James's daughter, was also known for her fiery spirit. In 1805 it was reported to the Pelham Monthly Meeting that Ann James had "got into a turbulent disposition rejecting all counsel and advice of her Friends and [had] been guilty of tatling and wilfully saying things that appears to be false."<sup>37</sup> Although she was not disowned for this offence, a number of years later she entered the minutes again as a result of some unusual "communications" with which she disturbed meetings. These were communications that the women felt did "not proceed from the right authority." Even though women Friends had apparently repeatedly offered Ann James counsel and advice about the content of her communications, she had obviously not accepted their admonitions.<sup>38</sup> In the world of Quakerism, Ann James would have viewed her communications as part of her burgeoning ministry—an expression of what she felt the Inner Light was leading her to share with Friends. In the wake of the David Willson scandal only a year or two earlier, the women were obviously exerting even more care over those who spoke publicly in meeting. However, the debate about Ann James's 'ministry' was not confined to the meetings for worship and business. Amy Hughes, the daughter of Eleanor and Job Hughes wrote a rather caustic letter to Ann James criticising her behaviour.<sup>39</sup> Hughes

then married Stephen Bowerman, a Friend from Adolphustown, and moved with him to the verge of the Adolphustown Monthly Meeting. In response to the letter, Ann James quickly launched her own complaint against Amy Bowerman for writing a letter, the tone of which was detractory. This required the involvement of the Adolphustown meeting, to which Bowerman had moved. It also seemed to take the spotlight off James. But it created problems for Bowerman because Yonge Street Monthly Meeting refused to forward a certificate on her behalf until the matter was settled. Without a certificate Bowerman held no membership in the meeting in which she lived. As the daughter and wife of active Friends, Bowerman's inability to be formally involved in her new meeting would, no doubt, have been a source of aggravation to her. Both parties stood their ground. With distance complicating issues, the discussion carried on for a period of two years. The Adolphustown meeting finally requested that a certificate for Bowerman be forwarded. The Adolphustown women explained that even though they disagreed with the tone of the letter that Bowerman had sent to James, they felt the precautions that Bowerman had taken prior to forwarding her letter would have a great deal of weight in a superior meeting.<sup>40</sup> The minutes do not state what those precautions were. However, it is obvious that the subject of appeal had arisen. Perhaps Bowerman finally forced the issue by reminding the Adolphustown committee that any attempt to disown her would easily be over turned at superior meeting. Maybe those on the committee came to the conclusion themselves. The origin of the 'threat' to appeal is not as important as the centrality that the idea of appeal itself made in the final decision of the committee. Yonge Street forwarded a certificate and the issue was dropped with neither woman being dis-

owned or acknowledging their transgression for causing disunity. The case of Ann James and Amy Bowerman shows us two women who were well versed in the Discipline and in meeting politics. The references to appeal demonstrate that both women were familiar with the Discipline and that they confidently acted within its parameters to shape their community. Neither hesitated in using the avenues available to them to support their beliefs and actions. Nor did they wilt under pressure from weighty Friends. Unlike Bowerman, Ann James did not come from a weighty family. Her insistence on pressing for her rights in the face of a detraction from a well-connected Friend demonstrates the strength of her will. She showed the same strength of will in her

choice of a marriage partner.

Ann James married quite late for a woman Friend. In the spring of 1816, at the age of forty-one, Ann James married John Lampton Hodgson, another member of the Adolphustown meeting. Hodgson himself had a colourful past with Friends. In June of 1800 he had requested membership, on the basis of convincement, among Friends at Adolphustown. Not long afterward he was recommended as an overseer in the Kingston Preparative Meeting. He was not in this position long. Sometime prior to 1802 he removed to Coeyman's Monthly Meeting in New York State. There he left Friends to join the Shakers. Word travelled back to Friends in Adolphustown and they requested the assistance of the Coeyman



Five generations of the James family.

Monthly Meeting in treating with him. Nineteen months later, the minutes finally show that Hodgson had been disowned, since he did not appear disposed to return to Friends. Obviously Hodgson was given to changes of heart, for a year later he acknowledged the error of his ways in the Coeyman Monthly Meeting. News of his acknowledgement and a request for a certificate on his behalf reached Adolphustown in May 1805. Sometime later he returned to Upper Canada and became active in the Adolphustown Monthly Meeting; by 1812 he was again appointed as an overseer.<sup>41</sup> Hodgson would have been an overseer at the same time that Bowerman and James were involved in their dispute and could have met her as a result of dealings between the meetings. After their marriage, James and Bowerman were once again in the same meeting, attending worship and business meetings at the same meeting house. How they got along in the Adolphustown meeting is unknown. Their earlier experiences and the strength of will demonstrated by both women would have provided for some colourful meetings.

In the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, the Jameses continued to be active. Ann James's brother Ezekiel James Jr. had established his family in Uxbridge where they worked to shape their community. They built and opened a school on his land in 1817, the same year that the Uxbridge Preparative Meeting was established under the authority of the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting. Both the school and the Uxbridge meeting house were built in close proximity to each other. The James School, built at the expense of Ezekiel James, was non-sectarian and was, therefore, open to the children of non-Friends as well as Friends in the Uxbridge area. James's continued commitment to the principles of education for children in the community was, no doubt, an extension of his family's faith. Friends

were well known for establishing schools soon after they settled in areas.<sup>42</sup> However, there was a healthy dose of practicality laced with Ezekiel James's commitment to education. By 1817 he and Ruth Lundy had been married ten years. They had five children, the oldest of which was nine. Although Ruth James would have been spending time teaching the children to read and write at home and they would have been learning in meeting, James and his wife were no doubt concerned for their children's formal education. Unless they were to board away from home, Yonge Street was too far away to send young children. Possibly, Ezekiel and Ruth James came to the conclusion that the only way they were going to get a formal school near home was to build it themselves. In addition to the formal business of the women's meeting, women became involved informally in matters that related to the community. Often this activity never entered the minutes. Women were eager participants in cases, working alongside men, influencing overseers in determining the merit of complaints to be taken before the preparative meeting. The case in which this stands out most clearly is that of Philip Phillips and William Lundy's bull. Philip Phillips was the brother of Isaac Phillips who, along with Samuel Lundy in 1800, had secured land patents for Pennsylvania Friends on the east side of Yonge Street in East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch townships. Obviously Philip Phillips shared few of his brother's sterling religious qualities.<sup>43</sup> Early in the meeting minutes, Phillips acknowledged "partaking of spiritous liquor at a public gathering."<sup>44</sup> It was a few years later, however, that Phillips appears again in the minutes charged with being:

so unguarded that instead of prudently labouring for the support of good will and harmony he has made use of some expressions casting aspersions

on some of his neighbours which has been the cause of a considerable increase of discord between him and them.<sup>45</sup>

Phillips was hastily disowned, although he later claimed he did not receive a copy of the testimony against him. The story would end there if it were left for the minutes alone to tell. However, in an unsorted collection of small pieces of paper which were read in the meeting, but not recorded in the minutes, small bits of the rest of the story are told.

Philip Phillips and William Lundy were neighbours. Lundy lived on lot 94 in the fourth concession of Whitchurch; Phillips lived just north on lot 96 in the fourth concession of East Gwillimbury. Sometime in 1811 William Lundy's bull died. According to Lundy, the bull had been murdered and Philip Phillips was criminally charged with the act. A criminal charge was outside the purview of the meeting and so it does not appear in the minutes. However, Phillips claimed he had not killed the bull and some years later attempted to bring a complaint of defamation and detraction against William Lundy. Phillips gave the complaint "into the hands of the overseers hoping that a true inquiry [would] take place that the just cause may be known."<sup>46</sup>

The overseers at the time, Henry Widdifield and Henry Bonnel ignored Phillips's complaint against Lundy. This threw the whole neighbourhood into a tailspin and spawned a flurry of written complaints from Phillips against numerous Friends. These give us some idea of the politics of implementing the Discipline. Phillips first charged William Lundy as being "guilty of spreading an Evil Report which is he believed that Philip Philips or someone about his plase did privately and militously kill his bull." At the same time Phillips accused William Lundy's brother

John Lundy of "spreading an evil report which is that Philip Phillips told him he had a pike poal or an Iron Pike in the End of a poal Provided in order to Fight or Kill William Lundy's Bull." In the same complaint Phillips was upset about the involvement of John Lundy's wife, Elizabeth, who, "as she stood at the meeting house Doar,"<sup>47</sup> overheard a conversation that Phillips and his wife Rachel were having about the destination of the load on their sleigh. Phillips accused Elizabeth Lundy of falsely reporting the contents of the conversation he had with his wife. At the same time Phillips reproached both Issac Webb and Watson Playter for "by falls [sic] and deceiving means indever[ing] to subvert the overseers from taking notis of a complaint [he] had against Henry Widdifield." Finally, he denounced Henry Widdifield who:

in discourse with Lewis Powel told thought [sic] he could prove me a liar and he appeared as tho he was pleasd in doing it: with the idea that it would invalidate my word so that it would be of no account in a case then under notis between William Lundy and me, wherein I was criminally charged by sd Lundy. Henry Widdifeld at that time, was one of the overseers that had the case in chard: ...And I hereby complain of the man, as moli-tious and intending privately to inger me: also, Guilty of Detraction against me and spreading it.<sup>48</sup>

Asa Rogers, the overseer to whom Phillips presented this catalogue of complaints, refused to bring them before the meeting, and returned them to Phillips.<sup>49</sup> In the meantime, the neighbours began taking sides; some even went so far as to send in their own written declarations, certifying that they "heard John Lundy say that he had heard Philip Phillips say that he had some

clubs and a pike pole or a stick with an iron in it to fight Wm Londys bull.”<sup>50</sup> William Lundy’s wife, Agness, also got involved causing Phillips to launch a complaint against her. The overseers still refused to take the complaints to the Preparative Meeting and, in a last desperate measure, Phillips brought them forward to the monthly meeting himself. In June of 1817, Phillips presented a written complaint against the Whitchurch Preparative Meeting for their refusal to bring forward complaints he had given to the overseers against Agness Lundy, William Lundy and John Lundy. Phillips noted that “in justis [sic] to myself, and friends also to releiv [sic] the contrite minds” he was “under the necessity of handing [the complaint] to the meeting [himself].”<sup>51</sup>

At this point the Monthly Meeting must have reminded Phillips that he was no longer a member and had no place in the business meeting. Phillips requested a copy of the testimony against him, which he claimed he had never received.<sup>52</sup> All formal avenues exhausted, Phillips appears to have given up his search for justice and settled for disturbing business meetings, and the weighty Friends who presided over them, by his continued presence. In this he was successful in soliciting Lewis Powell’s assistance. Powell was then dealt with for disregarding harmony and good order by supporting

a person who several years ago was dealt with and disowned as an offender, and has of late, for a considerable length of time been in the practice of intruding in our meetings for discipline by keeping his seat in the time of transacting the business thereof and it evidently appears that the conduct of said Lewis Powell has had a tendency greatly to strengthen and encourage him.<sup>53</sup>

That summer Powell acknowledged his actions. The document he presented to the meeting appears to be a sincere acknowledgement: “If I have contended to the lessoning the harmony of the meeting or to the incouragement [sic]of Philip Philips to Disturb our meetings it was more than I intended at that time, or to hurt the tender mind in any, If I have by anything I have done I am sinceraly [sic]sorry for it, and hope I shall bee enabled to be every cautious in these respects for the futer [sic]....”<sup>54</sup>

The acknowledgement was not accepted nor recorded in the meeting minutes. Lewis Powell was disowned. Whether he and Phillips continued to be unwelcome guests at business meetings is unknown. On this the minutes are silent. Powell did inform the meeting that he intended to appeal his disownment but because he did not appear at the Half-Years Meeting to pursue his case, it was put off to the next Half-Year’s Meeting.<sup>55</sup>

After this Powell disappears from the minutes until 1827 when he acknowledged his error and requested reinstatement in membership.<sup>56</sup>

One wonders how many other intriguing stories lie beneath the perfunctory minutes.<sup>57</sup> In addition to illuminating some of the more convoluted aspects of meeting politics, the case of William Lundy’s bull shows us the informal power that women had in propelling decisions that technically had nothing to do with them. In a community where discipline was implemented on the basis of member complaints, gossip and innuendo were a powerful mechanism for shaping the fellowship. Elizabeth and Agness Lundy were never formally involved in launching the complaint against Phillip Phillips. However, they were actively associated with the decision that was made against him. The fact that Phillips launched formal complaints against both of

the Lundy women for their informal involvement demonstrates the extent of his concern over the potential impact of their gossip. His fears were not unfounded. Whether Phillips was guilty or not, these women obviously carried more weight with the overseers than he did. His inability to have his case heard at any level rendered him powerless within the context of the Quaker community. Although the women involved in this case were not the only reason that Phillips was disowned, they certainly contributed to his disownment and demonstrate the extent to which women extended their influence in the community of Friends.

Women in the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting were as eager as men to embrace issues of discipline relating to doctrine. As seen in the schism which led to the creation of the Children of Peace, women Friends at Yonge Street brooked no hesitation in voicing their opinion on matters of doctrine. Similarly, they were as actively involved in the unpleasantities that surrounded the Hicksite-Orthodox split as men were. In fact, the first evidence of trouble at Yonge Street emerges in the minutes of the women's meeting. In answering the queries in 1827, the women had to admit that "Love and Unity [were] not so fully maintained as desired."<sup>58</sup> After the separation occurred, the minutes of both sides reveal the depth of animosity that had erupted in the community. Both sides viewed themselves as the original group of Friends. Each group quickly disowned those who did not stay with them. Among the first Orthodox women disowned by the Hicksites were: Anna Rogers, Mary Pearson, Esther Doan, Elizabeth North, Olive Rogers and Eunice Huff. All were active Friends. According to the Hicksite women's minutes these Friends were not satisfied simply with separating themselves from Friends. They "manifested fixed disunity" with the Society, actively set

up and held meetings contrary to the Discipline, and in a finishing punch, "defame[ed] the character of some of [their] neighbours."<sup>59</sup> There was a great deal of acrimony between Friends during this period and accusations flew between the two groups. During the tumultuous summer of 1828 the Orthodox and Hicksite factions carried out their battle within and without the meeting house on Yonge Street. Often the struggle focused around who would get possession of the meetinghouse. When the Monthly Meeting met in August, both sides insisted on holding their own meetings and neither group would retreat. Amos Armitage, a Hicksite, commented that the crowd that milled about the meetinghouse that night was "rude and noisy." He specifically noted that among the crowd "it may be stated were a few female members of society."<sup>60</sup> From the tone, it is apparent that women's involvement in these activities did not impress Armitage. However, the women refused to remain silent. They had invested as much in their meetinghouse as the men and no one was prepared to give it up easily. The whole schism dealt a great blow to the Society of Friends. While the Hicksite women lost a group of active women Friends, strong women elders like Martha Armitage and Edith Phillips and ministers Margaret Brown and Margaret Bonnell supported the Hicksite cause. Therefore, even though each group claimed some active weighty women Friends, the strength of the Society had been severely damaged. Never again would the community have the strength it had in its early years. With their numbers depleted on both sides, Hicksite and Orthodox women had to spend a period of time regrouping. Within a few years, the minutes of the two groups reveal that their interests began to include an outward focus the larger society of which they were a part. Women Friends became involved in movements associated with native education,

abolition, women's rights, temperance, peace, and other social concerns.

Through their involvement in the meeting structure and the business of the meeting, women Friends were well versed in the process of assessing community issues and conveying their opinions on those issues they considered important. They also expected that they could appeal decisions they considered unjust. Because Friends were "a peculiar people," a group that held itself apart from the larger society in which they lived, there was not a direct translation of these processes into the mainstream. However, as Friends became involved in mainstream organisations, they were quick to learn and use the processes specific to their needs. Friends began to challenge the government on issues they viewed as unfair. High on their list was the question of the clergy reserves. Because the Discipline made it clear that Friends could not support a hireling ministry, they were not permitted to rent clergy reserve land, since the funds from that land supported the Church of England. Reform sentiment around Yonge Street ran high as is evidenced by Friends' increased involvement in politics and their role in the Rebellion of 1837.

Women, whose husbands and sons were arrested for their involvement in the uprising, used various avenues of appeal to assist their loved ones. Most notable for the public attention she drew was Elizabeth Lount whose husband, Samuel Lount, was executed in April 1838. Samuel Lount, who hailed from Holland Landing had been a Member of Parliament. He was hanged in York after being convicted of treason for his part in the Rebellion of 1837. After Lount was arrested, Elizabeth Lount attempted to access all avenues of appeal to free him. According to her memory of events, Lount followed her husband to York subsequent to his arrest.<sup>61</sup> After arriving in York, Elizabeth Lount

went to the Governor requesting permission to visit her husband. The request was denied and the Governor told Lount that her husband "looked well." According to Lount, this was not the case. When she finally obtained a pass from a Captain Fuller which allowed her to visit her husband, she says she found him "a shadow, pale and debilitated." When Lount discovered that Chief Justice John Beverly Robinson had sentenced Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews to execution by hanging, Elizabeth Lount and another woman from York went again to visit the Governor. The women pleaded with the Governor to extend mercy to the men, presenting a petition signed by thirty-five thousand Upper Canadians supporting the request for clemency. Lount claimed she also knelt before Governor Arthur and begged for her husband's life for the sake of his wife and children. The Governor refused to capitulate and Elizabeth Lount concluded that "neither prayer nor petitions could subdue the hard heart of the Governor." After the execution the Governor refused to turn the bodies of Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews over to their families afraid, Lount surmised, that "the generous sympathies of a noble people, who have been too long ruled by threats, might rise, and in retributive justice fall with tenfold force upon himself and those who were his chief advisers." After her husband's death, Elizabeth Lount felt compelled to leave Upper Canada with her seven children. She returned to the United States. Even from the United States, however, Lount used a final act of recourse and wrote a stinging open letter to John Beverly Robinson, the man who had condemned her husband to hang. The letter, published in the Pontiac, Michigan Herald would have certainly made its way back to Upper Canada for residents of that province to read.<sup>62</sup> In fact, this was Lount's objective. The letter would also have encouraged active discussion

about the politics of Upper Canada. Lount was not at all cautious, calling Governor Arthur a “coward and a tyrant” for refusing “a defenceless woman the corpse of her murdered husband.” About Robinson, Lount was equally scathing. She called upon her significant rhetorical skills in her assessment of the state of Upper Canadian politics:

But, sir, all is not over yet. No government whose only acts are those of violence and cruelty, whose statute book is stained with the blood of innocent sufferers, and whose land is watered by the tears of widows and orphans, can long stand contiguous to a nation abounding in free institutions. O Canada, my own country, from which I am now exiled by a party whose mercy is worse than death—I love thee still. ... I do not write to excite your sympathy, for that I neither respect or covet. I write that Canada may know her children will not silently submit to the most egregious outrages upon private property, and even life itself. \_ Sir, the officers of the government of Canada, civil and military, are placed over the people without their consent. They form a combination too powerful for the prayers of an humble citizen to move. Be their acts however corrupt, the law is by themselves administered, and consequently they are beyond its reach; while if the private citizen offend he is neither safe in his property or person. If these things are so, I ask you, sir, how long will the people of Canada tamely submit? Will they not soon rise in their strength, as one man, and burst asunder the chains that bind them to the earth and revolutionize and disenthral Canada from the

grasp of tyrants?<sup>63</sup>

Lount’s stinging appraisal of Robinson and his cronies who were in control of Upper Canadian politics probably had little impact on them. However, it no doubt went a long way to heighten reform sentiments within the Yonge Street Friends’ community where the Lount families were well-respected. Although there is no evidence that the letter was circulated among Friends, it was certainly Lount’s objective for it to circulate not only among Friends but throughout mainstream society as well. We do not know how the community or the meeting felt about Samuel Lount’s involvement in the Rebellion. Strict Friends continued to maintain a dogmatic line on the peace testimony and many Friends were dealt with in the Monthly Meeting for their involvement in the uprising. From Robinson’s point of view, Lount would most certainly have been viewed as being possessed of turbulent and contentious spirit.” Whether she was viewed that way by her community is unknown, although the support her husband received would indicate she, too, was supported.

Elizabeth’s Lount’s effort to shape the community and country in which she had lived was built on a long legacy of Quaker women’s activities which had gained expression in their separate business meetings. Not only were women accustomed to having a voice in the way their community developed, they expected to have their views considered. The assumption that women should be active participants in the shaping of their community was based in a faith that granted spiritual equality to women and men. It developed through an intricate process of daily community discipline and was exercised in meetings for worship and business. Much of the specifics of that process is lost to us because of the way that meetings were recorded and the politics that developed within the communi-

ty. Nevertheless, even the glimpses of turbulent and contentious Friends provided to us from the minutes show us that women Friends came to accept and expect that they would be involved in shaping their world. Not only was it their right; they felt it was their responsibility. It was a responsibility they took seriously as they engaged the society around them.

### Footnotes:

- 1) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, 1806-1818, MS 303, Reel 27, B-2-83, 18-12-1806.
- 2) Appointed in this case were Samuel Lundy, Francis Wasly and Abraham Webster.
- 3) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, 12-02-1807. Israel Lundy and David Willson were appointed to assist the women in preparing a testimony against Kezia James. The depth of contentiousness in this case is seen in the fact that the women did not deliver the prepared testimony themselves, as would normally have been the case. Rather, two of the meetings most elite members, Asa Rogers and Timothy Rogers, were appointed to deliver it to Kezia James and to inform her of her right to appeal.
- 4) Normally appeals from monthly meetings went up to quarterly meetings. However, the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting reported directly to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting until the three Upper Canadian meetings were unified in 1809 under the Canada Half-Years Meeting which had the authority of a quarterly meeting. That meeting was subordinate to the New York Yearly Meeting.
- 5) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting of Men Friends, MS 303, Reel 59, C397A, 10-08-1808.
- 6) *Ibid.*, 16-02-1809. One of the probable reasons for the appointees inability to attend the Yearly Meeting was no doubt the first epidemic which was claiming the lives of Friends on Yonge Street at an alarming rate. In fact, Ezekiel James Senior, the husband of Kezia James, died in this epidemic. This in itself would have hindered James's own pursuit of the appeal.
- 7) The reason that the case disappeared from the minutes for a period of time was no doubt due to the fact that the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting changed

from being under the care of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to the New York Yearly Meeting. In the transfer of business from one yearly meeting to another, it would have been easy for long-standing cases like this one to slip through the cracks.

- 8) Personal correspondence with Sandra Fuller, descendant of Kezia James. September 2000.
- 9) The meeting minutes of the Society of Friends function much like the 'case file' records that have increasingly been used by historians seeking to shed some light on the lives of those in the past who have left no personal records. For a discussion of the merits and pitfalls of using these types of records see Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).
- 10) *Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in New York, For the State of New York, and Parts Adjacent: As revised and adopted, in the sixth month, 1810* (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1810), 5-6. CYM Archives.
- 11) All scriptural passages are taken from the King James Bible, which was the translation used by the Society of Friends during the period covered by this work.
- 12) For instance, one travelling minister, frustrated at the length of his journey in Upper Canada, commented on the difficulties Upper Canadian Friends endured in their business and daily lives:
 

I feel often very thoughtful at being delayed so long in this province but don't see how I could have avoided it, friends being scattered over such an extensive country & the roads so exceeding bad—I consider it a favour to have escaped thus far without bodily injury, except from the bites of mosquitos, the effects of which have been rather taxing & occasion me to some almost sleepless nights. The first settlers in the different parts of this woody country, many of whom are friends, have had & some of them still have many hardships to endure. The cutting down of the Trees and the burning of them is exceedingly Labourious, but they are exceedingly hardy & seem contented with their allotment.
- 13) CYM Archives, Box 23, "Yonge Street," unmarked file. Dated 16-02-1815. All spelling as in original..
- 14) New York Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1810, 5.
- 15) CYM Archives, Box 21 "Pelham," unmarked file. Dated 01-12-1802. All spelling as in original.

16) The 1851 census records over 7, 000 Friends in Ontario. Yet, the Monthly Meeting records for the same year only record 1,000 members. Therefore, people were identifying themselves as Friends, without having membership in the Society. Figures from Albert Schrauwers, "The Spirit of Capitalism and the Collapse of Community: The Children of Peace in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *The Canadian Quaker History Journal*, 63(1998):64.

17) By far, transgression of the marriage testimony accounts for the most disownments, especially in the post-1755 reformation period. This is dealt with in more detail in the chapter on kinship and will not be discussed here.

18) The third query, which followed questions about attendance at meeting for worship and the maintenance of love and unity asked, "Are Friends careful to bring up those under their direction in plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel \_." Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1765.

19) New York Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1810, 69.

20) Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1806, 28.

21) Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Friends, 1804-1862, Reel 26, B-2-76, 11-05-1815.

22) *Ibid.*, 06-06-1833.

23) *A Collection of Christian and Brotherly Advices Given Forth from time to time by the Yearly Meeting of Friends for Pennsylvania and New Jersey held at Burlington & Philadelphia alphabetically digested under proper heads*, 211. CYM Archives. Hereafter referred to as *Advices of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*.

24) The issue of fabrics also arose in the late eighteenth century among Friends who were staunch supporters of anti-slavery. These individuals refused to use any cotton fabrics, since the labour that produced cotton was enslaved. At the same time they derided their fellow Quakers for their consumption of the products of slave labour.

25) Pelham Monthly Meeting of Women Friends, 1810-1842, C-3-52, 06-06-1816.

26) This is seen especially in the multigenerational photo of women that comes from the Armitage file at the CYM Archives. Although all were Friends, the apparel of the women is less and less plain, with each succeeding generation.

27) This problem presented itself early in Upper Canada. Philip Dorland, a Quaker from

Adolphustown had been elected to the first Parliament of Upper Canada as the member for Adolphustown and Prince Edward. Dorland travelled the two hundred miles from Adolphustown to Niagara to serve in the first Parliament which met in September 1792. As each member prepared to take his seat, he was required to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. As a Quaker, Dorland refused. Since there was no provision in Upper Canada for an affirmation, Dorland was disqualified and a new election was called for his seat.

28) *Advices of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*, 305. This advice was entered in 1739.

29) New York Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1810, 45.

30) Brown appeared and "voluntarily acknowledged" that he had complied with military requisitions because, when his team was impressed, he drove the horses rather than letting them go with those who had impressed them. Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, 1806-1818, Reel 27, B-2-83, 13-01-1814.

31) The Discipline of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for 1806 included both of these sections; the 1810 Discipline of the New York Yearly Meeting only included a section on Defamation and Detraction. Essentially both sections related to the second query which asked, "Are love and unity maintained as becomes brethren; if differences arise, is due care taken speedily to end them; and do Friends avoid and discourage tale-bearing and distraction?" *Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in New York, For the State of New York, and Parts Adjacent: As revised and adopted, in the sixth month 1810.* (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1810), 35.

32) *Ibid.*, 55.

33) The meeting oligarchy in the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting is discussed elsewhere in my dissertation. Albert Schrauwers has also explored this oligarchy in his work. See especially *Awaiting the Millenium: The Children of Peace and the Village of Hope, 1812-1889* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), chapter one. The fact that 'marginal' Friends were continually challenging this oligarchy helps us to understand their willingness to challenge the larger political oligarchies that developed in Upper Canada.

34) The Queries for Ministers and Elders sets the maintenance of love and unity as one of the key roles

of the select Friends.

35) New York Yearly Meeting Discipline, 1810, 31.

36) Ibid.

37) Pelham Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1799-1806, C-3-44, 07-08-1805.

38) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, 1806-1818, 18-08-1814.

39) It is entirely possible that Ann James had criticized Hughes mother Eleanor Hughes or her sister Rachel Lundy. After a nasty schism, Eleanor Hughes had left Friends to join Willson. Rachel Lundy, who also separated from Friends, had been accused of having an affair with David Willson. It can safely be stated that Ann James's circle of close personal friends were theologically opposed to Willson and those who followed him. An examination of James's wedding certificate from 1816 lists families who later fell firmly into the Orthodox camp. In addition to James's immediate family, present at the wedding were the Linvills, Winns, Rogerses, and William and Esther Doan. Therefore, conflict between groups within the community was obviously brewing long before the formal schism occurred in 1828. Of course, in 1814 Yonge Street Monthly Meeting was still reeling from the effects of the Davidite schism.

40) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, Women, 1806-1817, C-2-110, 16-02-1815.

41) Adolphustown Monthly Meeting, 1798-1813, B-2-1, 26-06-1800, 15-04-1802, 17-11-1803, 16-05-1805, and 19-03-1812.

42) For instance, the school on Yonge Street originally opened in 1806, about the same time that the monthly meeting was established.

43) Isaac was very active in the Yonge Street meeting and, in addition to serving on numerous committees, was one of the first overseers of the Yonge Street Preparative Meeting. He was also appointed an elder in the Monthly Meeting.

44) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting of Friends, Reel 59, C397A, 12-11-1807.

45) Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Friends, 1804-1862, Reel 26, B-2-76, 11-07-1811.

46) Miscellaneous papers relating to Yonge Street, 1807-1876, Reel 54, 22-10-1816.

47) Ibid., no date.

49) On the outside of the letter is written "Asa Rogers overseer returned to Philip Phillips."

50) Joseph Pearson and George Vernon sent in similar declarations. Both were dated 03-04-1817.

51) Ibid., 12-06-1817.

52) Ibid.

53) Whitchurch Preparative Meeting of Friends, 1816-1841, Reel 26, B-2-73, 15-04-1818.

54) Miscellaneous papers relating to Yonge Street, 13-08-1818.

55) Ibid., Extracts from the Canada Half-Years Meeting held at West Lake, 03-04-1819.

56) 26:48

57) For instance, in 1826 Timothy Rogers's son, Stephen Rogers, was charged with being "guilty of tarring and carrying a woman on a rail." His accomplices, James and Isaac Eves were likewise charged. Yet, there is no context or further explanation given for this act. Nor are we told the name of the woman upon whom this act was perpetrated. She must have been a Friend since Rogers would most certainly have been charged with wounding the reputation of the Society if she had not been. All we know is that the Eves brothers were continued as members but Rogers was disowned, even though he offered an acknowledgement. The committee in his case were "of the united judgement that [he was] not in a suitable state of mind to make this meeting satisfaction, his outward conduct not corresponding with this paper of condemnation." Yonge Street Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1818-1828, Reel 27, B-2-84, 13-07-1826.

58) Yonge Street Monthly Meeting of Women Friends, 1818-1832, Reel 49, C-3-111, 18-10-1827.

59) Miscellaneous Papers relating to Yonge Street, 12-03-1829 and 14-05-1829; Yonge Street Monthly Meeting of Women Friends, 1818-1832, Reel 49, C-3-111, 13-11-1828 and 18-12-1828.

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## Quaker Abolitionist Benjamin Lundy and His Visit to Canada

*Ronald Mattson  
Stoney Friends Meeting*

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Benjamin Lundy, gentle Quaker, inspired visionary, steadfast abolitionist, and an 1832 visitor to the Wilberforce Community in Canada, is a little-known figure in North American history. Yet he was a leading abolitionist in the 1820s and 1830s and was known as a ceaseless worker against slavery and for universal emancipation. As William Lloyd Garrison was to write, after Lundy's death:

"To Benjamin Lundy, more than to any other human being, am I indebted for having my attention called to the wretched condition of the slaves in this liberty-loving, slavery-idolizing country. He it was who first informed, quickened, inflamed my mind on the subject of American slavery, and by whom I was induced to consecrate my life to the overthrow of that dreadful system of iniquity... Thousands stand ready to testify how much they are indebted to him, under God, for their conversion to the side of emancipation, from a state of total apathy to its success."<sup>1</sup>

Beginning with a circular promulgated on his 27th birthday (4 January 1816) and followed by an organizational meeting of the "Union Humane Society" at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, three months later, Benjamin Lundy was to spend his life fighting for the freedom of his Negro brothers and sisters. "I have no idea of a reformation

being effected by oily words [of slave owners] flowing in honied [sic] accents... shielded with the breastplate of power, and elated with the idea of self-sufficiency, they laugh to scorn everything like mildness and persuasion, and must be addressed in such language as will ready their adamantine hearts..."<sup>2</sup> To address adamantine hearts became his life's mission.

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Benjamin Lundy, son of Joseph and Elizabeth Shotwell Lundy, was, as Quakers would say, "... born 4th day of 1st month, 1789, in Sussex County [New Jersey, and] ... was brought up in the religious faith of the Society of Friends, ... was trained to their plain way of living; and in their faith and way ho lived and died."<sup>3</sup> His early schooling, learning to read and write, was very limited and was interrupted by the death of his mother and handicapped by a partial loss of hearing. Finally, one winter quarter's attendance when he was 16, studying arithmetic, completed his formal education.<sup>4</sup>

In 1808, when he was 20, "he left his father's home, not in rebellion -for the ties between Lundy and his family always remained close - but to travel,"<sup>5</sup> seeking to learn a trade and to discover his life's calling.

Both of those goals, learning a trade and finding his life's calling, happened after he reached Wheeling, Virginia [now West Virginia]. He becomes an apprentice to



**Benjamin Lundy**

learn the task of making saddles and working with leather, but Wheeling becomes much more important in Lundy's story for it is here that he receives his life's call, his moment of Truth.

Comparable to George Fox's Pendle Hill experience - where he saw a new people to be gathered - or John Wesley's Aldersgate transformation - where his heart was strangely warmed - Benjamin Lundy became a changed person when he saw chained slaves being transported to the waiting steamships for travel down the Ohio River. As he was to write about himself 23 years later (and the same year he came to Canada):

“That was the place where his youthful eye first caught a view of the 'cursed whip' and the 'hellish manacle,' where he first saw the slaves in chains forced along like brutes to the Southern markets for human flesh and blood! Then did his young heart bound within his bosom, and his heated blood boil in his veins, so seeing droves of a dozen or twenty ragged men, chained together and driven through the streets, *bare-headed* and *bare-footed, in mud and snow*, by the remorseless 'SOUL SELLERS,' with horse-whips and bludgeons in their hands!!! It was the frequent repetition of such scenes as these, *in the town* of Wheeling, Virginia, that made those durable impressions on his mind relative to the horrors of the slave system which induced him to devote himself to the cause of *Universal Emancipation*.”<sup>6</sup>

"A solemn vow to God" was one that was not to be broken during his lifetime.

While in Wheeling his roommate was Benjamin Stanton, another plain-speaking

Quaker youth from nearby Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, the spiritual center of Ohio's Quakers and the site of a soon to be created Yearly Meeting Meeting House. In 1811, Lundy goes to work at Mt. Pleasant for Jesse Thomas, a brother-in-law of his Wheeling roommate and a dedicated opponent to slavery. "He was then between twenty-two and twenty-three years old, of a slight frame, small stature, warm temperament, social and genial manners, and possessed of an unbounded generosity."<sup>7</sup> After a successful period as a journeyman, he travels back East to see his family, but by 1815 returns to Mt. Pleasant to marry Esther Lewis. Together they move to nearby St. Clairsville.

The next year, on his 27th birthday, he issues a circular calling for an organization of the Union Humane Society in Ohio, intending "to form a national society to embrace all existing antislavery organizations and thereby create a grand concert of anti-slavery sentiment and activity. Nothing ... would halt the new momentum of the slave system."<sup>8</sup> The Union Humane Society took for its guidance the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence, and vowed to use every means to seek gradual emancipation. What followed was a growing commitment to direct all his energies toward the task of removing the institution of slavery from the United States.

Late in 1819, Lundy travels down-river to Missouri to set up a saddle and harness shop. The depression of 1819 had caused a general business panic and his business fails. While he had found no market for goods, he becomes deeply involved in the political ferment that was taking place. Missouri, in 1820, prepares for a state Constitutional Convention. In establishing the state, the United States Congress had not required Missouri to permit slavery, so an anti-slavery clause in the pending

Constitution would be possible. Lundy and others work hard to elect an anti-slavery delegation to the Constitutional Convention. The vote is taken and the antislavery proponents loose. Lundy was to write: "Hell is about to enlarge her borders; and tyrants her domain...."<sup>9</sup>

Returning penniless to Ohio, Lundy moves his wife and children back to Mt. Pleasant. And it was here, in 1821, that Benjamin Lundy begins publication of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*. His promise was to make the *Genius* "an active instrument in the attempt to abolish that cruel and disgraceful system in the American Republic."<sup>10</sup> Lundy frequently borrowed a press to print his monthly paper and in 1822 is invited to Tennessee to take over the press of a suspended newspaper of the Tennessee Manumission Society, the *Emancipator*, as the editor had died. It was in East Tennessee, at Greenville, that Lundy now published the *Genius*. And it was from here that he traveled via horseback and foot to Philadelphia for the 1823 fall Meeting of the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery. This group, many of them cosmopolitan Friends, was not known for its radical views, although the delegation from Pennsylvania presented a graphic report. "Instead of witnessing the gradual advancement of emancipation to reduce the number of slaves in the United States, we have had with sorrow to observe their numbers progressively increase: - like cattle for the market, they are driven from one State to another, and sold to the highest bidder."<sup>11</sup>

While Benjamin Lundy was recognized and the *Genius* recommended to its members, the Philadelphia trip was more important to Lundy in making him realize that he was too isolated in Tennessee from what was happening both in the United States and around the world. He came to see that he would be more effective and able to

produce a better paper if he moved to a location on the East Coast. His mind made up, he walks to Baltimore in the spring of 1824 to begin publishing the *Genius* in this new location and to find a home so that his wife and family, by now three children, could join him.

His days in the City of Baltimore, sometimes called the "the 19th Century Black Capital of America,"<sup>12</sup> were extremely busy. He was able to set up a print shop with the financial help of John Needles, a local Quaker, and he quickly became involved in the local anti-slavery community. While many were interested in early abolition of this evil, there were others who also were involved with the American Colonization Society, ten active in many areas of the country. "On the one hand they were confronted with doubts about the Negro's capacity to live in America as a free man, on the other by surmises that white Americans would never accept him as an equal." Lundy, along with John Needles and Elisha Tyson, another Baltimore Quaker, were clear in their views that colonization should only be a voluntary process; they knew the bitterness of racial intolerance and believed that some Blacks would rather live in a more favorable climate.<sup>13</sup>

One such territory that seemed a possible site for colonization was the Republic of Haiti, a country created and governed by free Negroes. The President of the country had promised land grants and tools to anyone emigrating to this island nation, and had also promised to bear part of the cost of transportation. He had even sent a special agent to the United States, "Citizen" John Granville. Granville was so convincing that 600 Negroes emigrated from New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia during the later part of 1824.<sup>14</sup> The early immigrants wrote letters to the United States, telling of their favorable treatment but on June 25, 1825,

the Secretary General of Haiti declared that there would be no more aid given to the new settlers. Dismayed at this news, Lundy immediately made plans to travel to Haiti to get the government to reverse its decision. Before he could leave, however, he had to find an acting editor for the *Genius* and make arrangements for the care of his wife, Esther, who was once again pregnant and a semi-invalid. An editor was found and his wife urged him to go, as he would only be gone for eight weeks.<sup>15</sup>

He found the Haitian government unwilling to reverse their decision and the negotiations with the Haitian Philanthropic Society, to assist future immigrants with transportation assistance, taking much too long. "Just as he made ready to sail for home, a vessel arrived from Baltimore bearing news that on April 4 his wife had died in childbirth."<sup>16</sup> The twins were named Esther and Benjamin, and they, with their three siblings, were cared for by Quaker relatives and Friends.

As Merton Dillon would write:

"The death of his wife intensified Lundy's attachment to the anti-slavery cause. His life, long dedicated to the crusade for freedom, now became indistinguishable from it. Few distractions remained to impede his single-minded pursuit of that cause. Released, however tragically, from the responsibilities that had tended to bind him to place and to family, he now found himself even freer than before to devote himself to the very limit of endurance wherever the need seemed greatest and wherever his presence might accomplish the most for the antislavery cause."<sup>17</sup>

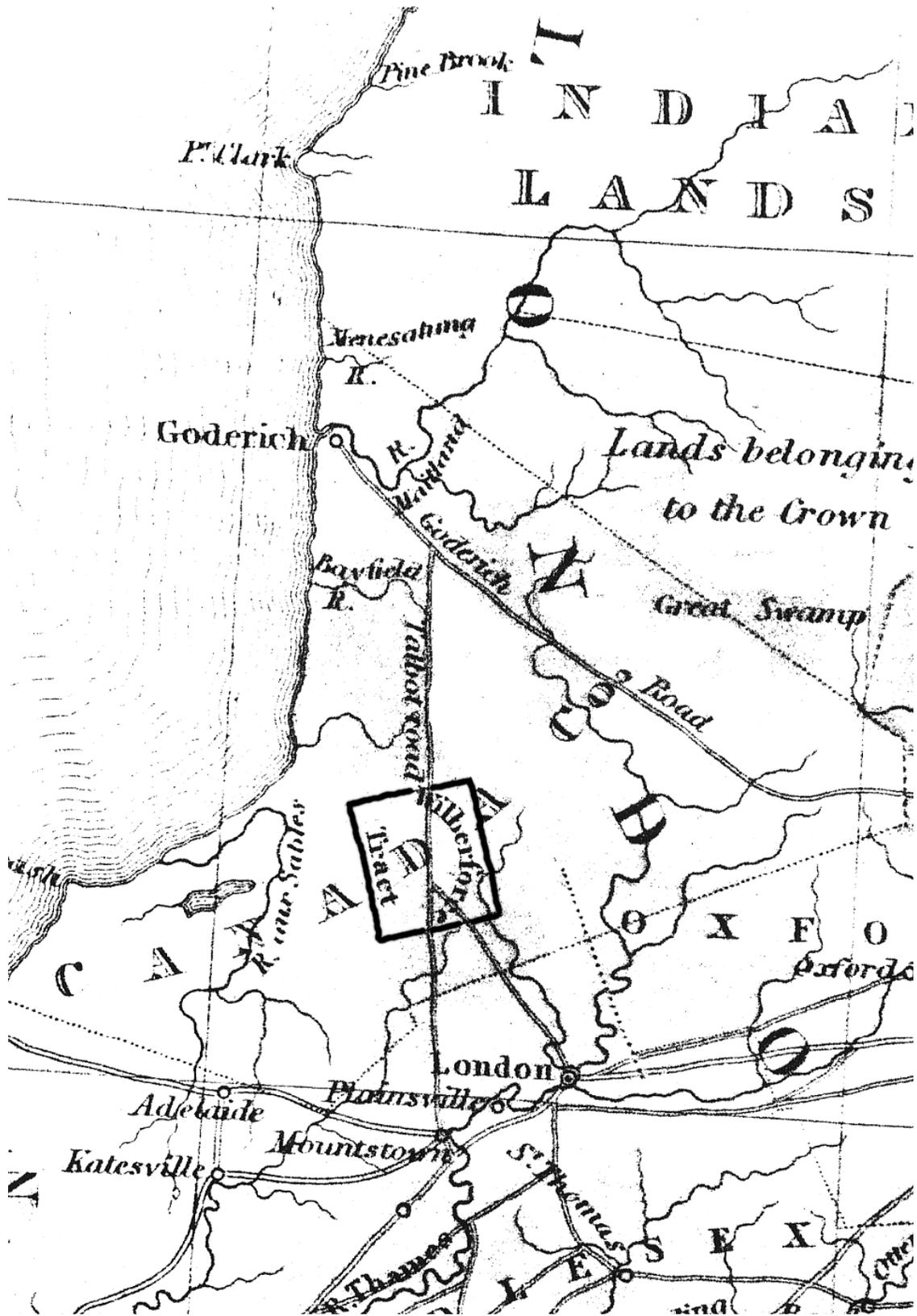
The one part of his life was closing, but

even greater challenges lay ahead. He would convince William Lloyd Garrison of the moral necessity of abolishing slavery and together, for a brief time, they would work together on the *Genius*. He would confront notorious slave traders and be beaten and hauled into court. He would continue to write and to address members of Congress. Finally, he would spend much of his remaining efforts on searching for places of safety for those Negroes who desired to emigrate. Places such as Canada, and then the Republic of Texas.

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On a cold winter's day in January, 1832,<sup>18</sup> Benjamin Lundy crossed from Lewiston, New York, to Queenstown, Upper Canada. This crossing began an eleven day journey (across what is now Western Ontario) that would take him via sled, stage, ferry and on foot to Hamilton, Ancaster, Berntford, and ultimately Detroit, Michigan, but only after a 2 1/2 day visit to the Wilberforce community some 12 to 14 miles northwest of London. That community, designed as a haven for free Negroes from the United States, primarily from Cincinnati, Ohio, had come into being only some two years earlier. These former Ohio residents, now struggling to create a safe and free community at the Wilberforce settlement, had fled to Canada to escape the harsh and repressive laws of Ohio.

The Wilberforce community was of particular interest to abolitionist Benjamin Lundy for while he was committed to multiple methods of seeking to eliminate slavery in the United States, he was also interested in promoting safe emigration for Negroes who desired to move from their present inhospitable - and often dangerous - living conditions. He felt however, that he needed to personally inspect any areas that he



The Wilberforce Tract (just north of London, Ontario)

would recommend.

Canada had passed their first anti-slavery law in 1793, legally forbidden importation of slaves in 1808 and had exhibited a very enlightened position if an oft-told account is to be accepted. James C. Brown and Stephen Dutton of Cincinnati, Ohio, free Negroes, in the winter of 1829-1830, had registered the community's name with the purchase of lands from the Canada Company, a land speculation venture. They desired to establish an intentional colony in the Huron Tract in Upper Canada. Brown and Dutton had interviewed the British governmental officials at York (now Toronto) to find out if they would be accepted in Canada and eligible to receive asylum from the Canadian government. The reported response Brown received to his inquiry when he raised the question with the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Colborne, was: "Tell the Republicans on your side of the line that we Royalists do not know men by their color. Should you come to us you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of His Majesty's subjects."<sup>19</sup> Land was purchased and a settlement was started in this inaccessible area.

When Lundy arrived at the Wilberforce settlement on January 17, 1832, two years after the fateful interview, there were approximately 150 free and perhaps once-fugitive Negroes in the community. Later accounts would suggest that while it was a new settlement it was also a gateway for a "rendezvous of 2,000 refugees who had soon passed on seeking homes in other parts [of Canada]."<sup>20</sup> His trip to Wilberforce was no accident. It was a continuation and an integral part of his life-long dedication to a conscious effort to abolish slavery in the United States and to secure equal treatment for his Negro brothers and sisters.

His diary, kept conscientiously as he traveled across Canada, recorded myriad

details as to weather, soil conditions, timber growth and general conditions of interest to prospective settlers. His description of the Wilberforce community, once he arrived, is best described in his own words:

"It will be recollected that the Wilberforce Settlement was commenced by a few colored persons from Cincinnati, Ohio, who were induced to seek asylum there from the storm of persecution that appeared to be gathering in that section of country and directing its force towards them... The business was badly managed at first. The persons who acted as agents contracted for more land than they could pay for according to agreement. A new bargain was then made, and another failure to comply with the terms succeeded. Confidence in their ability to prosecute the business successfully was impaired. At length, a smaller quantity of land has been secured to the company and individuals have made purchases on their own account. A number of very respectable and intelligent men have taken up their residence there. Some of these are in good easy circumstances - a few even wealthy - and it is believed that everything will go on well hereafter.

"The members of the Settlement have entered into an Association for mutual assistance, etc. They have appointed a Board of Managers, of which Austin Steward, ... formerly of Rochester, New York, is the President. The Rev. Benjamin Paul, late of New York City, is their treasurer.... Full confidence may be placed in those at present selected to manage the public concerns of the

settlement; and the true friends of the oppressed could scarcely render a more acceptable service to the cause of philanthropy than by assisting, with pecuniary and other means, the persecuted colored man in obtaining a residence there. Under the liberal provisions of the government regulations, as now interpreted and administered, *all are free and equal*. Every citizen, without distinction of color or caste, is entitled to all the privileges and immunities that the most favoured [sic] individual can claim....

"There are, at this time, about thirty-two families residing in the settlement which averages about five individuals to each (It is stated by the settlers that upwards of 2,000 persons have visited and intend to establish themselves at that place, most of whom were necessitated to go to other parts of the province where they could clear the land, plant, etc.). Four or five of the families now there arrived about twenty months since - the rest at later periods, and some few of them quite recently. Twenty-five families have purchased land and most of them have erected tolerably comfortable homes and cleared a few acres of ground. They have purchased nearly 2,000 acres in the whole, 200 of which are cleared and about 60 sown with wheat. The settlers have cut a wide road through seven miles and a quarter of very thickly and heavily timbered land for the Canada Company - the price for which was placed to their credit in the purchase of their several lots. It should also be remarked that in clearing they leave no trees dead-

ened and standing, as it is customary with many in new settlements; but cut all off, though the labor is great. They have about 100 head of cattle and swine, and a few horses. Oxen are mostly used with them for hauling, ploughing [sic], etc. They have a substantial sawmill erected on a branch of the Au Sable [river], within the precincts of their settlement and, of course, they will hence have no difficulty in procuring lumber for building. (Their dwellings are as yet constructed of logs - some of them hewed and a few have well-shingled roofs.) There are [sic] one grist mill and two other saw mills within eight or nine miles of the settlement and one grist mill is partly built within five or six miles of them. Several small stores are located also near by; and a tailor, shoemaker and blacksmith reside among them. They have two good schools for the education of their children, one of which is under the charge of Thomas J. Paul, son of the Rev. B. Paul, a youth of fine promise. Such are the excellent regulations, and so high is the reputation of this school that a number of respectable white people send their children to it in preference to others that are conducted by white teachers. In the summer season a daughter of the same gentleman, a quite accomplished and amiable young woman, also teaches a school for girls. A Sabbath School is likewise kept up in the warm season, under the direction of Austin Steward. Two regular meetings for religious worship are established among them, for the Baptist and Methodist denominations. A Temperance Society has

also been organized, the members of which have pledged themselves to exert their influence in discouraging both the vending and use of all kinds of ardent spirits. The settlers generally are sober, industrious and thrifty. In their houses things mostly appear clean, neat and comfortable."...

"But the settlement at Wilberforce [as opposed to other settlements of Negroes in Canada] will be, by far, the most important, as there are men of known intelligence and public spirit there who will give it a consequence that probably will not, at least very soon, be attached to the others. It will indeed, be viewed by the colored people as a nucleus for an extensive emigration from the northern and middle parts of the union especially from Virginia and several contiguous states. Many will go there and obtain information there that will induce them to settle in other places when the price of land shall rise and more new settlements be opened. They will thus scatter over the province, some one way and some another; but many will stop here, as at a central point, which first shall have attracted their attention, and where they will find intelligent friends and brethren."<sup>21</sup>

Even though Lundy was in the settlement for only slightly more than two days, he had reached his objective: he had seen for himself that it was possible for a liberty-seeking group of people to establish a community away from the evils of slavery, where all men and women were treated as equals. While the Settlement would never grow to the proportions envisioned by the

early settlers, it did remain a beacon of hope as the situation grew considerably worse in the United States. His departure from the community was a time of sadness, on both sides.

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The seven years remaining in Benjamin Lundy's life were equally full of writing and traveling. He continued to publish *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, and he traveled on two major trips to the Republic of Texas, similar to the one made to Canada.

Toward the end of the decade of the 1830s, after his announced retirement, a disastrous fire at Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia saw his lifetime collection of papers and correspondence destroyed. He moved, almost penniless, to Putnam County, Illinois, to be near his children. He continued his work on abolitionist causes and even began plans for publishing another newspaper. But in early August, 1839, he contracts a fever that was prevalent in the state and on August 22nd, late in the evening, one of America's great workers for the cause of abolition, died. He was buried two days later in the Friends Burial Ground, next to the Meeting House, in McNabb, Illinois.

As Lundy's biographer would write: "Although his unceasing labor moved the antislavery crusade nearer its goals, the glory of his life did not lie in success, for he never achieved that. Final, unchallenged success in the cause to which he dedicated his life always eluded him as it eludes all men. But success postponed is neither failure nor tragedy. The record of his triumph remains vivid for all to read - a life lived selflessly in devotion to the cause of human equality and freedom"<sup>22</sup>

Footnotes:

- 1) William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, September 20, 1839, as quote in *Friends Intelligencer and Journal*, XLVI, No.19 (Philadelphia), 11 Fifth Month 1889, p.308.
- 2) Dillon, Merton L. *Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1966), p.54. He is quoting Lundy, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, I, (June, 1827), pp. 101 and 102.
- 3) Armstrong, William Clinton. *The Lundy Family and their Descendants of Whatsoever Surname with a Biographical Sketch of Benjamin Lundy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Privately printed, 1902), p.350.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- 5) Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy* p.3.
- 6) Quoted in "Benjamin Lundy," *Friends Intelligencer and Journal*, 18 Fifth Month 1889, p.308. A footnote to this biographical statement acknowledges that it was taken from an article in *The Cosmopolitan*, (New York, n.d. given), written by Frank B. Sanborn, also the author of *A Lift of John Brown*.
- 7) Thomas, Nathan Macy. *Nathan M. Thomas, Birthright Member of the Sodety of Friends, Pioneer Physician, Early and Ernest Advocate of the Abolition of Slavery, Friend and Helper of the Fugitive Slave; An Account of His Lift Written by Himself* (Cassopolis, Michigan, 1925), p. 16.
- 8) Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy* p. 18.
- 9) *Emancipator*. (Jonesboro, Tennessee), September 30, 1820, p. 89.
- 10) *Philanthropist*, VT (Mt. Pleasant, Ohio), 2 June 1821, pp. 72-73.
- 11) Dillon, *Benjamin tandy*, p. 81. He is quoting from *Minutes of the Eighteenth Session of the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African Race ...* (Philadelphia, 1824).
- 12) See Leroy Graham *Baltimore: The Nineteenth Century Black Capital* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).
- 13) Dillon, *Benjamin tandy*, p.87.
- 14) *Ibid.*, p. 92. While Lundy considered the colonization schemes a temporary matter " - the great mass of Americans must forever remain of the soil of their birth, and there be restored to their rights." *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- 15) *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
- 16) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 17) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 18) See David M. Ludlum. *Early American Wnters II: 1821-1879* (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1968), p.16. He argues that December, 1831, and January, 1832, were one of the coldest periods in recorded meteorological history in the Northeastern states.
- 19) See Benjamin Drew, *A Northside View of Slavery* (Boston, 1856), pp.244-245. Quoted in Fred Landon, "A Pioneer Abolitionist in Upper Canada," *Ontario History* Vol. LII (1960), No.2., p.77.
- 20) See Fred Landon, editor, "The Diary of Benjamin Lundy Written During His Journey Through Upper Canada, January, 1832" (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society's "Papers and Records"), Vol.19. This is the standard account of Lundy's Wilberforce visit.
- 21) *Ibid.*, *Diary* of Benjamin Lundy, pp. 4-6. (This *Diary* first appeared in three successive issues of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, March, April and May, 1832.)
- 22) Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy*, p. 262.

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## Memoirs of William Allen

*Fred L. Ryon  
Ministerial Companion to William Allen and later  
Friends Minister  
Pelham Monthly Meeting*

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William Allen, a negro minister and evangelist of the Society of Friends - commonly called Quakers - was well known and highly appreciated by the members of Indiana, Ohio, New York and Canada Yearly Meetings.<sup>1</sup>

His type of Christian work was principally evangelistic, though I recollect hearing it said of him by ministers of Ohio Yearly Meeting, that William Allen was a natural born sermonizer.

No financial arrangements were ever entered into between the meeting he was to serve and himself, although, as I have known him for a goodly number of years, he has never suffered lack of food, raiment, shelter or loving Christian care. It is therefore apparent that he worked for God; that he looked to God for his remuneration and that his God amply provided for his every need.

William Allen was born in the state of Tennessee. He was born of a full blood Negro slave mother. His father was a white man of Irish extraction, a Southern planter and a slave owner. Allen was therefore a slave to his own father; a chattel rather than a son. To his father he may have owed much of his fluency of language and natural wit.

William Allen was a man of great physical power. His weight as I knew him was a minimum of two hundred fifty pounds, while in height he measured a full six feet when in his eighties. For this reason alone, he would have been an exceedingly valuable slave and could have been sold for a

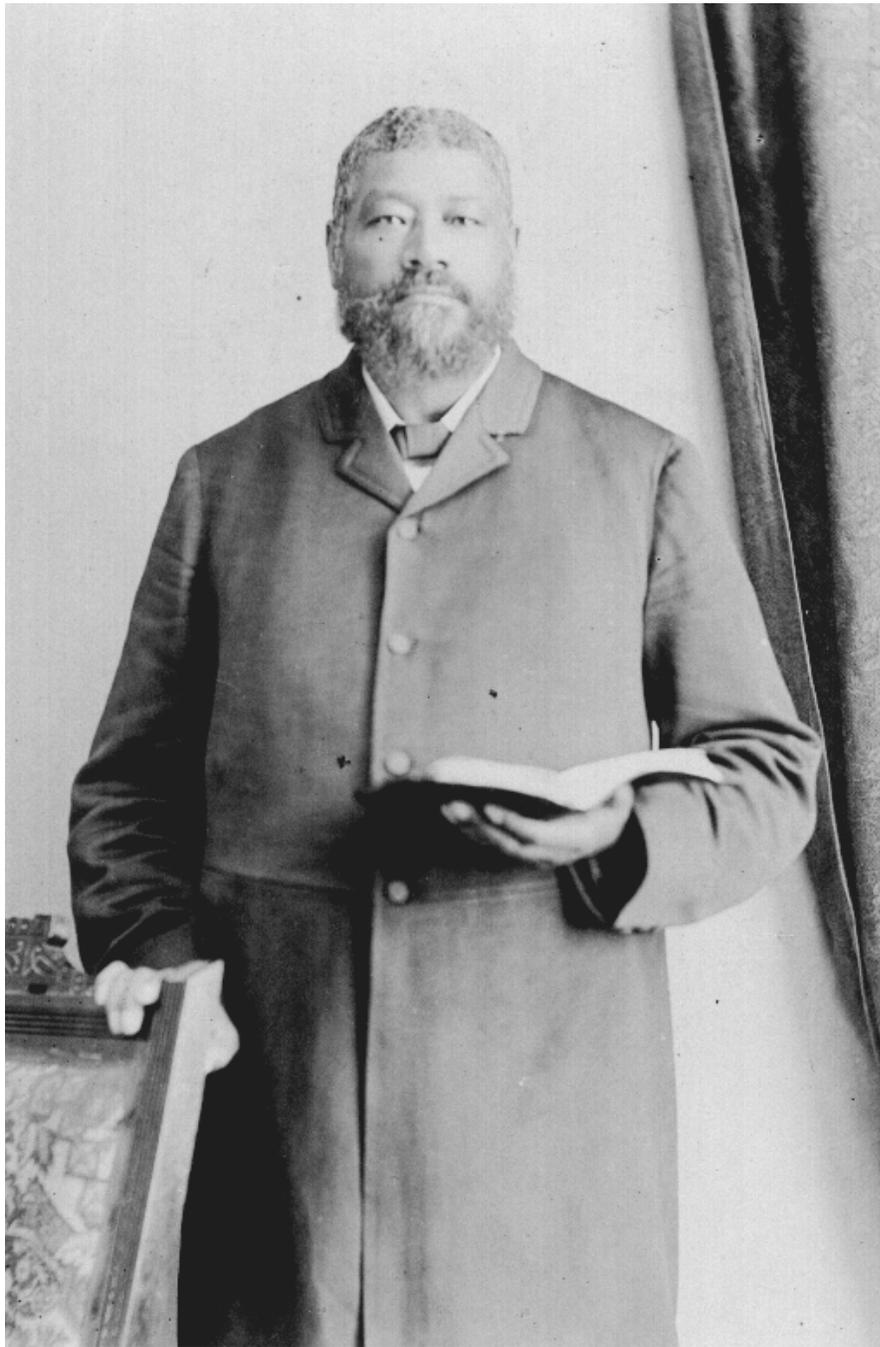
large sum of money had his "Master" so chosen to dispose of him. That William never was put on the block for sale is evident from the fact that his father, in his last will and testament, bequeathed to him his personal freedom, upon entering his twenty-first birthday. Thus it would appear that his father was not utterly void of conscience. He would not allow his own flesh and blood, regardless of colour, to be enslaved and trafficked in as a soulless beast of the field. And thus it was that with a somewhat purged conscience, he passed on to meet the Judge of all the earth whom we know is a wise, a just and a merciful God. William always testified that he was well treated as a slave. Only in the face of death, however, did fatherhood assert itself.

Of his mother William was evidently allowed to know but little. He saw her placed on the block and sold down the river. It is quite understandable that her separation should be desirable to the father. The sale of a chattel would be simple and the removal of the accuser of his conscience would prove a relief.

Other slaves were less fortunate. William told of the cruelties practiced on other slaves by less kindly disposed owners. Women slave owners he said were more cruel than men. On one occasion the slaves from several neighbouring estates were hauling dirt to form a dam across a stream, driving out into the deep water and dumping their load. One slave, owned by a woman, when in the middle of the stream, dove to the bottom and caught firm hold of the



**Fred and Olive Ryon**



**William Allen, Friends Minister and Evangelist**

spokes of the wheel and held on until dead. His owner was summoned and when she arrived, looked at the dead body unaffectedly, saying "I don't care about the loss of the nigger if I could only have him alive to give him one more good thrashing." Sometimes, William said, the poor slaves were faced up to a post, their arms around it and their hands bound. Their backs were bared and then they were flogged until their backs were lacerated and bleeding, then treated with a solution of salt and water.

While many slaves were well cared for and properly nourished, others, less fortunate, were under fed. He told me that the slaves had a report going around amongst them, that "In Indiana pigs already roasted and with knives sticking in their backs were running wild through the woodlands, squealing a crying 'Eat me, eat me'." While this seems ridiculous to a more enlightened people, it may easily have been a hungry slaves dream, to whom it had seemed a reality and who had thus reported it to his fellow slaves, spreading the good news of this Promised Land throughout the adjoining plantations.

Ridiculous as this may seem to you and me, it was evidently not without its appeal to the long enslaved Negro mind, for upon receiving his freedom, William Allen promptly sought asylum in that "Promised Land" of abundance, Indiana.

A booklet published by Jesse M. Walton of Ontario, Canada, on the life of William Allen, states that "Attempts were made by his father's white heirs to retain William in bondage by legal sharp practice." Of this fact I have no knowledge, although it appeals to me as altogether probable. From the same source I also learn that for a time William was engaged as a teamster running escaped slaves at night by the "Underground Railway" from the land of their bondage to Canada, a hazardous under-

taking in which the Quakers were prominently associated.

The location chosen by William Allen in the state of Indiana was in the vicinity of what is now known as Blue River Meeting. He was not however, among Friends, but among that anti-slavery body of Christians known as Wesleyan Methodists. They proved to be not only theoretical, but practical anti-slavists. Soon the naturally religious mind of William had opened wide for the Christ to enter in. He was soon received into the church in full membership. His deep devotion, his remarkable gift of language and natural oratory as well as his clarity of thought soon found recognition and he was ordained a minister in that denomination.

In the meantime he had become interested in the accumulation of earthly possessions. In this too he was proving an inherent ability. He had rented fields, purchased a very valuable team of horses; and planted his crops. His field of wheat showed promise of abundant harvest as the time of reaping drew near.

There is no question of his ability to acquire wealth. Yet his God had evidently discovered in him a greater and more important gift - the gift of winning souls. William had evidently felt the call of God to preach the Word. The growing signs of worldly prosperity was alluring. He would first secure enough of this worlds goods to provide for his declining years. It was not a refusal to preach the gospel but a waiting for that "more convenient time - procrastination that thief of time."

But evidently those rich gifts, lying dormant and which God had given for a specific purpose were needed then and there.

"The fields were white unto the harvest."

About this time adverse winds of circumstances began to appear on the horizon

of his life. They came thick and fast. His valuable team of horses had died. His wheat field which had given such promise proved to be blasted and worthless save for the straw, which he gave to a neighbour for the cutting. All this, while his neighbour's field of wheat, just over the fence, was filled out perfectly.

Moreover, to add to his calamity, his sweetheart to whom he was engaged to be married at no far distant day had sickened and died. How greta was his love for her can only be measured by his long life of devotion to her memory. None other was ever met who could fill her place in his affections. He remained single to the end of life. His promise to her was not "Unto death do us part" but rather "Till death do us unite."

I cannot think it altogether too visionary to believe that she ever lived enshrined in his heart. To the end of his life he continued faithful to his one and only love. What an example of fidelity and devotion.

Nor did all this misfortune turn him away from his God. On the contrary it gave him to understand that his God was speaking and calling him to a service far greater and more important, the salvation of immortal souls. It was then that William Allen made full surrender of his life to God, to preach his everlasting gospel.

As heretofore stated he had been ordained a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist church, with all the rights and privileges and authority accorded their ministers generally. Thus it came to pass that he was called upon to serve in the passing of the elements in the so called "Lord's Supper." He said that often there were those who had been addicts to the drink habit who would cling to the cup as he held it to their lips, loath to release it until they had drained the last dregs. This troubled William. To him it seemed like

"Placing his cup to his brother's lips."

So heavily weighted this matter upon his mind that he took the concern to his presiding official. After listening to the statement of William, his Elder said: "You are a Quaker." This to William was pure Greek. "What are Quakers?" he asked. The he was kindly told that they were a religious sect that did not practice the outward ordinances but considered them instead as real though spiritual christian experiences - not symbolic but the spiritual reality.

He was directed to the Quaker meeting not so far distant, possibly the meeting known as Blue River. This seems to have met his approval for he was received a member, recorded a minister according to the custom of Friends.

During his years of slavery, William had not been allowed to learn to read or write. If he was caught trying to learn he was duly punished. He was determined however, to lean and watched the school children as they passed to and fro from school, with their text books under their arms, wondering what those books contained. On one of these occasions a child chanced to loose a leaf from her reader. The wind whisped it away in the direction where William chanced to be standing, watching. he noted the place of its landing and when the children were passed and out of sight, looking all about him, to assure himself that no one could see him, he picked up the fallen leaf and secreted it about his person.

This lone leaf became his text book and in fact his library. Stranger than fiction though it may seem, from this solitary leaf of a school child's reader, he learned to read his Bible.

As he met a child on the way from school he would produce his treasured leaf and inquire, "What does this mark mean?" Thus, laboriously, one by one he learned the letters of the alphabet. Then he learned that

through a combination of these characters words were formed which were connected to express thought. It was thus he learned to read and write. Rising above so great a handicap to so great a height makes him, to me, not only a self-made man, but a God-made man.

William was a student of the Bible. The well worn Bible left at his decease evidenced it. It was full of markings which he alone could have understood. He studied it not so much historically and theologically as spiritually and experimentally. It was never too easy for him to read but he was able to get his scripture first hand and because of his early handicap, the Holy Spirit seemed to bestow upon him especial insight and understanding of the scriptures. I heard him preach many, many sermons, yet I cannot recall any unsoundness in any statement he ever made, or any misquotation of the scriptures. He used no notes in speaking, yet was concise and without repetition. His sermons were orderly, logical and I could say, climacteric though apparently unstudied. One could but feel that his words and sermons were inspired of God.

He had been endowed by his creator with a most remarkable voice. When he spoke in a lighter vein his voice seemed to radiate laughter. When he spoke sorrowfully his voice was deluged with tears. I have seen the congregation at one moment convulsed with laughter and at the next moment in tears.

Yes, William Allen was evidently God-called; God endowed and God used. A mighty ambassador for his King.

My Christian relationship with William Allen began at Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends held at Damascus, Ohio, in August of 1882. Among the notables of the times were John Henry Douglas; Robert Douglas; Nathan and Esther Frame; Seth and Hulda Reese and Calvin Pritchard, then editor of

the Christian Worker. Among the highlights of that Yearly Meeting was a Minister's Meeting held in a tent on the meeting house grounds and conducted by John Henry Douglas. I was not among the elect at that gathering, though I was on the grounds and felt the impact of the meeting. Strong men were weeping; conservatives were shouting. It was a pentecostal outpouring. Above all could be heard the sonorous voice of William Allen, calling upon "All that was within him to praise and magnify the Lord." William's spacious body seemed all too small for the fullness of the blessing of God which came to him that day.

Not only was William Allen exalted by his position but he glorified his position. No word or act of his ever brought reproach or embarrassment to his church. Though his work was necessarily among the whites, he never "high hatted" those of his own colour.

At a certain Yearly Meeting another Negro was present who was asked to preach at a Negro Church on a First Day. This minister responded that he "did not preach to niggers." Needless to say William was given the appointment to which he responded graciously. It was one of the oft repeated sayings of William that "I think a white man is just as good as a Negro, if he behaves himself as well."

While we are wont to think of the remarkable qualities of his voice, it should be equally well remembered that he had a vocabulary and a voice that could, when occasion demanded, cut like a two edged sword. In a certain meeting which he was holding in New York Yearly Meeting, William was invited to attend a Conservative Friends meeting a few miles distant for a First Day morning meeting. This he gladly did. At the close of the service the lone elder of the meeting, now advanced in years, invited him to remain and hold a series of meetings there. I

remember the elder saying, "We are dying out anyway and if it don't do any good, it can't do any harm." William, as was his custom, talked the matter over with his young companion. It was decided that he would stay and hold the meetings provided he was allowed his customary freedom in the conduct of the meetings. To this the elder gave his full consent. As usual, the meeting house was filled each evening. However, among the congregation was a company of men who claimed to be infidels. By day they gathered in the village store and conspired against the meetings. They boasted that they would "break up that Nigger's meetings."

They came to the meeting in a body and sat near each other in the rear part of the room. They seemed to create an atmosphere that was impervious to the truth of the gospel, no matter how hard it was poured out. No word of appeal seemed to go beyond the lips of the speaker. William seemed to sense the condition and immediately his keen spirit rose to the condition and became "Master of the situation."

As in a flash his tactics changed and there was poured forth such a deluge of oratorical denunciation of infidelity as I had never heard before. The very foundation of the house seemed to tremble neath the tread of his indignant feet. The large part of the congregation was spellbound. Of course the so-called infidels were angered beyond measure. They simultaneously began slipping into their overshoes preparatory to leaving the house. Some of them had one shoe off and one shoe on, when just as suddenly as the tumult had begun, it ceased. In a manner and in a voice as calm and serene as a summer sky, William said, "Now if any one gets mad, I have a scriptural text for him - 'Anger rests in the bosom of fools.' Remember this is not where I place you, but where the Bible places you."

(Ec. 7:9)

None of the infidels finished putting on their overshoes, all remained until the close of the meeting. Afraid that they would become objects of ridicule, they had been caught in their own snare. The meeting closed regularly and in perfect order.

Young in Christian life and experience, I had never seen the like and indeed was frightened for the results. I had yet much to learn of the marvelous leadings of the Spirit of God, and His mighty spiritual forces, and that He makes no mistakes.

The results of the meeting justified the measures taken. In the services that followed there were satisfactory results, among which was the professed conversion of a Romanist who was the son-in-law of a devout Methodist. Needless to say, the father-in-law was lifted to the hallelujah heights.

Although the infidels did not reappear in the meetings, they had learned that a negro could be nobler and wiser than a white man. The victory had been twofold. William now felt that his work at this place was accomplished and made his plans to move on. Those who had sought to break up his meetings were on hand to greet him a friendly adieu. I have often wished I might know the final effect of that meeting upon those organized and self-styled infidels.

William Allen had a great fondness for children. They in turn seemed instinctively drawn to him. In his kindly Christian presence both youth and age forgot all about the difference in colour; intuitively one seemed inspired with a sense of his kindly, loving and pure regenerate nature that lay beneath that dusky exterior. In many homes where he had been so kindly entertained, the people told me that though at first they had felt a hesitancy about receiving him into their homes, once within the home they had forgotten all about race and colour and

really enjoyed and benefitted by his presence.

Cleanliness, both of body and of mind were notably among his characteristics. He was always particular that his kinky hair was kept closely cropped and his full beard trimmed. He always had a young man of theological bent to travel with him as companion. These young men were pushed forward in the early part of the service. Then William followed, and no matter how great the young man's embarrassment and confusion, William had the faculty of smoothing out and clarifying, until the youth was made to feel perfectly at ease or to feel that he had really spoken to edification. It is said that he started no less than thirty-seven young men in the ministry. A goodly number of these young men became ministers and pastors and prominent church workers whose lives have been spent in Christian work.

These young men companions were always white and were trained to do personal work. To them William committed the work that might be required with seekers at the altar. It may be added also, that he was strict regarding the deportment of these young men, both in and out of the services. One of the young men however, fell in love with a beautiful young lady, school teacher in Vermont, where they were holding evangelistic meetings. He had to cover his devotion deep out of sight however until their mission had been completed and he had reached his home in Ohio; then he took up the matter by mail. The young lady a little later gave up school teaching and became the wife of a much loved pastor of Des Moines, Iowa Friends Meeting. The writer has had personal acquaintanceship with six of the companions of William Allen, all of whom became ministers. Whatever he received in the way of finances, he religiously shared, 50-50, with his

companion. It is true neither of the twain was ever burdened with his receipts though William himself was heard to say that he never knew how much his wallet contained, but there was always enough. While the Friend of yesterday have been sometimes accused of parsimoniousness towards their ministers, be it known that outside the nominal salary, Friends meetings have, as a rule, been exceedingly generous toward those workers who were giving their entire time to Christian service. For instance, the writer knows of one Friend who purchased the material and paid the tailor to make a full English worsted suit for William. Not that his old suit was in any sense disreputable, but because he felt that William should have a second suit. No entry was ever made of this on the church records and in all probability was never whispered outside the family concerned until now.

William was not large alone in physique; he was great in his childlike faith. This was evidenced in his life in more ways than one. Many years ago when on one of his evangelistic excursions to Canada, he was just getting into a wagon to leave the meeting house, when the team of horses suddenly started, throwing him to the ground, where he was struck on the back of his head and neck.

This serious accident occurred at Bloomfield meeting house. As the result of this injury there developed a cancerous growth, the size of a man's hand. In spite of the pain, he covered the sore and continued to carry on.

Somewhere near the year 1880, this affliction reached its climax. At the time, William with his companion, Charles Sweet, were holding a series of meetings at what was then known as the South Street Meeting, in contrast to the North Street Meeting a few miles distant.

From the lips of Charles Sweet, I

learned the following facts. While still conducting meetings, William was suffering intense pain from the malicious sore. Especially was this true of nights. All night long, Charles would wring cloths out of almost boiling water and apply them to the sore to relieve, temporarily, the pain. Charles said the condition was fast becoming unendurable to him, and as opportunity offered he would steal quietly out of the room and pray to God for relief. When William noticed the frequent retirement of his companion, he inquired the reason. When Charles told him that he went out to pray for his relief, he said, "Why not unite our prayers?" Then there came to them a reminder of the scripture as found in the Epistle of James 5: 14.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon they decided upon a plan to try the fleece, wet or dry, as is related in Judges 6: 37. Their plan was, if able, to attend the meeting on First Day at eleven o'clock. And if they were invited to the home of Isaac McKeel and if James and Mary Chase and Samuel and Ann Simpkin were also invited, they would take it as evidence that it was God's will for them to ask the prayers of the company as instructed in the Epistle of James.

As "truth is often stranger than fiction" so all the conditions they sought were fully met. After the dinner hour, the matter of William's healing was broached. Gathered in one place were the ministers and elders of the church. As to the matter of prayer for healing, they were of one accord and thus of one mind which must have indexed the mind of God as results must prove.

William told me that all present offered a prayer; that he was the last one in order and when he arose from his knees all pain was gone. He could move his head any way without pain, though the sore seemed as yet, unchanged. In fact it never gave him pain from that time to the end of his life.

God's process of healing was not unnat-

ural. I had seen the sore at its worst. I had seen the same when it was in the process of healing. New and healthy flesh were forming around the edges of the wound. The new flesh was lighter in colour and easily distinguished from the old. I also saw it at a later date when the healing had become complete. The scar remained. That scar William carried with him to the grave.

He said sometimes people asked him why, if God had effected a healing of the sore, he had allowed so great a scar to remain? To this William was wont to reply, "He left the scar to convince just such people as you."

My personal acquaintance with William Allen began in the year 1882 at Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends, which I attended that year for my first time.

Later in the year William visited Adrian Quarterly Meeting, Michigan. He held services at Hanover, my home meeting; at Rollin, the home meeting of Elizabeth Comstock, the silver tongued orator of a past generation; also at Tecumseth. At the three meetings mentioned he had the companionship of two of his young men. From Tecumseh he went to Sandusky, Ohio, where he was joined by a third young man which made William's measure of joy full and running over. The weather was still warm and one day between services, William expressed a wish to sit under an orange tree and pick and eat oranges. Whereupon, the young theological students went out and cut a sapling and brought it up in the parlor of the home. They then went to the nearby store and bought oranges, fastening them on the tree. Then placing a chair under the would-be orange tree, they escorted William to the seat and invited him to "go to." For once William seemed at a loss for words. However, he appreciated the kindly gesture and all enjoyed the innocent pleasantries.

When unquestionably beyond his allotted four score and ten years, William was still carrying on his ministry. Not unlike Moses, the great lawgiver, "His eyes were not dimmed or his natural force abated."

To me this sketch of his life would indeed be incomplete without a record of an evangelistic itinerary in which I accompanied him throughout New York Yearly Meeting of Friends.

This itinerary began in the winter of 1883. His first series of meetings was at what was then known as the North Street meeting, in Scipio Quarter, N.Y. We were met at the station in Aurora by James Ostrander, who took us to his home for dinner and later took us to the home of Hiram Lyons where we remained permanently during the meetings there. I remember the daughter, Genevieve, remarking jocosely one day that it was a "den of Lyons." Samuel Simkin was the minister at the North Street meeting. We visited the South Street meeting of which James Chase was the minister, and who for several years was the beloved pastor of the Brooklyn, N.Y. Friends meeting. South Street meeting house was located at what was then known as Wheelers Corners. Later the two meetings were united in one congregation which is now known as Poplar Ridge Friends meeting.

While we were yet at South Street meeting we attended a tri-township Sunday School Convention, held at Ledyard, in the M.E. Church. William addressed the convention while I was given the tenor part in the choir. Dinner was served in the church. It was a memorable occasion and a fitting close to our work in those meetings.

Our next series of meetings was held at what was then the Hector Friends meeting. Here we made our home with Caleb Wixom and family. Here every courtesy was given us and I have happy memories of coasting

down hill, in the back fields with the boys of the family. Our reception in the meeting was truly splendid and results seemed to follow our departure. This meeting house was later moved to Perry City, where a younger generation is now successfully carrying on.

Other meetings belonging to Scipio Quarterly Meeting visited by William on this trip were Union Springs (the then home of Oakwood Friends Seminary) and Skaneateles meeting, where Chauncey B. Thorne was the able minister as also clerk of the Quarterly Meeting.

Leaving Skaneateles, William spent a few days with Friends in Rochester, then went on to Palmyra, N.Y., where we were met by Alexander Purdy and taken to his lovely home on his nursery farm not far from the city where we were royally entertained during our sojourn in this meeting. Services were held each night in the Friends meeting house in the city with a mid-week meeting on Wednesday and morning and evening services on Sunday. A stage provided by Alexander Purdy conveyed the employees of the farm to all the services. No deduction of time was made for their attendance of the mid-week meeting.

While we were being entertained at the Purdy home, it came to pass that Ellison R. Purdy and Edward Mott of Glens Falls were preaching their maiden sermons in a nearby school house. Both of whom attained high honours, later, in the work of the ministry of the Word.

To his credit William Allen (the far reaching nature of his ministry demonstrating) it seems altogether proper to state here, that one of the men, John Weaver, then employed on the farm, later removed to Clintondale, Ulster Co., N.Y. Through this man, Fred L. Ryon was invited by the meeting to become its pastor, which he did, being with them perhaps through one of the

most critical periods of their existence.

This would be but one instance out of thirty-seven showing the far reaching results of the ministry of William Allen.

At the close of the series of meetings at Palmyra, William Allen returned to Skaneateles to attend Scipio Quarterly Meeting. From here we made our way through the mightiest fields of snow that I had ever seen, from Syracuse to Watertown, N.Y. As a matter of fact, the snow was so banked up against the railroad track that in many places one could not see beyond the car window. At Watertown we hired a livery to take us out several miles to the home of Hiram Wilber. We found the house literally submerged in drifted snow. Cheerful lights were shining through the front windows but access through the front door was utterly impossible. The livery man with difficulty turned his team around and waited for us to gain entrance to the house. This we accomplished by wading snow, surmounting drifts and finally reaching the wood house door at the rear of the home; we passed through into a cheerful, well lighted and comfortable living room where the usual friendly welcome awaited us.

In spite of the unfavourable weather conditions a very satisfactory series of meetings was held. As I remember it, this meeting was known as Evans Mills. A son in this family, Wm. Wilber, attended Oakwood at Union Springs, and later became a minister of the gospel.

Following this series of meetings, William was invited by the elder of a nearby Conservative Friends Meeting to come conduct a similar meeting at LeRayville in his meeting house. William was assured that there would be no restrictions placed upon his methods of work. Harmony prevailed and the work was carried to a successful end. Incidents of this meeting have been recorded elsewhere in these pages.

His mission accomplished in this part of New York Yearly meeting, William now turned his face toward the Friends meetings in Vermont state. Friends took us to Watertown where we entrained for North Ferrisburg. We were routed northward through New York state and around the north end of Lake Champlain. It was night when we arrived at N. Ferrisburg. In the meantime the conductor had informed us that our train did not stop at that station. However, after much argument and prayer he consented to slow down the train sufficiently for us to land safely on the station platform. Planting our feet securely on the lower step of the coach, we awaited the signal when with alacrity we let ourselves down to the station platform. We landed standing upright but in total darkness save for the feeble flare of a kerosene lantern that was burning nearby. Happily this lantern proved to be the property of Peter Dakin, who with his farmhand, had ventured out over the hazardous roads of a Vermont winter breakup to meet us and convey us safely to his home, which was to be our home during the period of our stay in that meeting. In the home the traditional friendly welcome was awaiting us. After a few preliminaries we were invited into the dining room where a bountiful supper had been prepared and kept steaming hot for us. A little later and we were ensconced between snowy white sheets, on a downey bed of goose feathers sleeping the sleep of the just; trusting God for the morrow.

Awaking with the morning light, we looked out of our bedroom window to view for the first time, mountains. Westward across Lake Champlain, silhouetted against the horizon, majestic, immobile and serene were the Arirondacks. In their quiet manner of speech, they seemed to be saying: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear him."

The summer of 1884 and the winter of 1884-1885 were spent within the limits of Ferrisburg Quarterly Meeting, Vermont.

Meetings were held at N. Ferrisburg; Ferrisburg; Moncton Ridge; So. Starksboro; and Bristol where we were entertained by George Meader. Here we did not get to see the sun rise because of the mountains lying to the eastward. The valley to the west was a fertile plain through ran a clear mountain stream. Someone told us that there was only one fault to be found with this land and that was - there was not enough of it.

While at Bristol we held meetings in a schoolhouse not so far distant. It was in this meeting that I noticed for the first time the dominant enthusiastic characteristic of the Negro race in William Allen. In the congregation, on the front seat, near the platform, three men had taken their places. They all had excellent voices; were good singers and enthusiastic worshippers. They beat time with their feet, patted with their hands and were generous with their loud amens. I remembered William comparing some churches to a pump that had to be primed. He said you had to stand and pour, and pour, and pour before you could even get an amen. After the meeting William said to me, "Wasn't that a good meeting?" Even if the trio were "Holy Rollers" and I did not enthuse greatly over their methods, I was glad for the cheer and uplift it gave him, for I am sure he must have missed in the calm Quaker worship much of the demonstrative so natural to him.

Incidentally, one of the men told me that he had not been out to earlier meetings for the want of footwear. He said the local stores did not carry sizes larger than twelve's, so he had to send away and have his shoes made to order.

At the Ferrisburg meeting we were entertained in the home of the Deans. As was usually the case, the meeting house was

filled at the meeting hour, to capacity. Aside from the meetings which were our primary objective, there were other things that were of special interest to me; the massive barn built in the side of the mountain so that loads of hay and grain were driven from the yard directly into the roof and unloaded into the great mows beneath and on either side of the drive way. We visited the herd of sheep grazing among the rocks on the mountain side. Inquiring as to how the sheep could get food enough from among the rocks to satisfy their hunger, some one jocosely answered, "Oh, w file the sheep's noses, so they can get between the rocks." We were reminded also that, "The cattle on a thousand hills are mine." Peace, the peace of God and satisfaction of all life seemed to fulfill the words of the Psalmist (Ps. 145: 16). "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

We were told of a cave located on a far side of their farm. One day a member of the home took us to see this cave. It so aptly illustrates a certain portion of scripture that I think it worthy of description here.

We found it half way up the mountain side. Almost indiscernible among the rocks, it was pointed out to us not much larger than a man's body. Inside the opening we could discern nothing save the blackness of night. Our guide had brought with him some pine faggots. With these in his arms he slid feet first down an incline into the darkness. Then lighting the faggots he invited us to enter one by one in like manner as we had seen him go. Once inside we discovered by the flickering light, a large quadrangular space. The floor and the ceiling of this room was comparatively smooth, as also were the side walls, as though some mighty of the earth had pressed the sides apart leaving the walls intact. One could but think of the safety of such a refuge in the time of trouble and pursuit of an overwhelming enemy.

Also what a reminder to the Bible student of the scripture: "He shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isaiah 33: 16).

It was from the observation of such things as this that William drew his illustrations. He told of the old bell bow on the plantation that would persist in getting in the gateway and neither go in herself or let other cattle go in, to illustrate the way some people hindered others from becoming Christians.

The condition of "the almost Christian man" William illustrated by a person on the outside of the house on a cold winters night, about to perish with the cold, while just inside the window was warmth and comfort and happiness. Only the thickness of the pane of glass, he said, might mean the difference between life and death.

To those who thought they could not believe what they could not understand, he invited a trip with him to the barn-yard where were the horses, the cows, the pigs and the poultry. The horses had manes, the cattle had hair, the pigs had bristles, while the hens had feathers, yet they all fed on the same grain doled out to them by the farmer. Why this was so no one could understand yet everyone believed it. One does not have to understand to believe. Thus it might be written that faith is the evidence of the reality of things incomprehensible.

William was a stickler for good order and reverence in the Lord's house. Moreover, he had wisdom and tact in the securing and preserving of the same. It is told that in a meeting in Canada one evening the young people became somewhat hilarious. Something had greatly amused them and much giggling was going on among them. Suddenly, as was his wont in an emergency, his manner changed and speaking with rapier like stroke, he said, "It

appears to me that those young people have found a Hee-hee's nest containing a Haw-haw's egg." His methods of control in meetings were always effective, leaving the speaker on a little higher spiritual plane. Those who came to scoff, went away to praise.

While still at the Dean home in Ferrisburg we were taken on a picnic to the shore of Lake Champlain. Here we learned the lesson of the mobility of the earth itself, for we were told that the lake at that point had receded nearly a quarter of a mile in the lifetime of the oldest settlers. Literally, "The mountains had been carried into the midst of the sea."

It was also in this home that on a previous evangelistic mission, a former young man companion had fallen in love with the school-teacher daughter. Because of William's strict rulings in regard to the deportment of his young companions, the youth had been compelled to forego all demonstrations until his return to his home in Ohio. However, he promptly took the matter up by U.S. Mail, and we were informed of the engagement of the couple. The young man later became one of the popular pastors of Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Leaving this meeting, William visited the home meeting of the Joseph Hoag famed for his vision of the war between the states. The attendance was not so large as at Ferrisburg. One of the interesting features being the dismissal of the district school to attend the mid-week service in a body. We viewed with interest the well preserved home of the former minister and prophet.

This was the more interesting to me from the fact that my father's uncle had married Joseph Hoag's daughter. Their home had been established near Vandalia, Michigan, and was ever during their natural lifetime an "open house" to traveling

Friends.

The work in the Green Mountain state now being completed, I learned that William, from the very incipiency of this itinerary had planned to close it by attending New York Yearly Meeting at Glens Falls, N.Y.. His natural executive ability was thus demonstrated in the fact that the entire schedule was carried out without a single break. Without solicitation of any kind, we had been kindly and well cared for, our needs supplied, financial provision made for our expenses to the Yearly Meeting and the journey from there to our respective homes.

On our way to Glens Falls we passed through Castleton, Vt., the birth place of my grandfather, Paul Spink, who later moved to White Hall, N.Y., where my mother was born.

The Yearly Meeting was held in the spring of 1885. Luke Woodard was then pastor. To me the meeting was of much interest. It was my second Yearly Meeting attended. Some of the names of persons present and active in the meeting are James Wood, Hannah Leggett, Jonathan DeVoll, Emily U. Burgess, Dr. Stephen Birdsall, David Taber, and Alexander M. Purdy.

William Allen was appointed to attend the South Glens Falls Meeting on First Day. William Penn Angell was the minister.

With the closing of this meeting, our companionship was, for the time ended, and I returned to my home at Hanover, Michigan. It was not until about the year 1890 that we again met. At that time I had been called to the pastorate of the Pelham, Canada Friends Meeting. Rufus Garratt, a former companion to William Allen had been supplying and had given the meeting my name.

With a young man named Albion Gibson, William came from Ohio to attend Pelham Quarterly Meeting and perform

such other Christian service "as way might open". Following the Quarterly Meeting it seemed right to hold evangelistic meetings at a place a few miles distant where a community church had been built. These meetings proved very successful and as the result some twenty-five accessions were received into the Pelham meeting. Albion Ginson though a young man, was quite bald over his forehead, which gave him the appearance of much greater years than he had really experienced. At the close of one meeting, a little girl said to her mother, "I like the young man [meaning William Allen] but the old man's face runs so far back over his head that he can't see little children." Jesse M. Walton, in his sketch of the work of William Allen in Canada, speaks particularly of his fondness for little children and his generous attitude toward young people, and his ability to encourage and inspire them to high and noble aims, feeling keenly as he did, the denial of family ties, for he was neither white nor black. Always he had a kindly word for the children he met, and the majority of the children were attracted to and loved him.

This proved to be my last meeting with this remarkable man of God. I was also the last of American boys to serve as companion.

It would seem that this trip to Canada ended in his change of residence, from Ohio to Ontario, Canada. In his pamphlet entitled "The Life of William Allen", Jesse M. Walton of Aurora, Ont., says "His travels brought him to Canada, the land of freedom to which he had assisted many fearful fugitives." He spent some time at Mariposa Meeting, then went to Gowrie and in the early '90s arrived at Yonge Street and Newmarket meetings. When visiting other meetings he was usually accompanied by one or two young men who followed him as their friend and teacher. This, from the start,

made him an outstanding leader. He had the gift of appeal to young men as few have possessed. When he saw a young man of promise and ability, he would mark him for the ministry. His judgment in this respect was seldom ever wrong.

His powerful intellect combined with his deeply religious nature made him an outstanding minister, and a speaker of great acceptance among the Quakers. His eloquence and sincerity left a lasting impression upon the large audiences which gathered wherever it became known that he would hold service.

As the years passed, his ministry, broadened by diligent and continuous study, won for him the distinction of being known as the "traveling theological seminary of the Society of Friends."

In the winter of 1894, he with his young companion Walter J. Armitage, began a series of meetings at Uxbridge, Ontario. As was his custom, William asked the young man to read and explain a certain portion of scripture. The house was filled with young people from the village. When the young man arose to make his first public address, he was seized with stage fright. The young people, sensing his plight, began their levity. Almost instantly, William grasped the situation and walking to the rear of the room began addressing some pointed remarks to the amused audience. Then with impressive solemnity he opened his Bible and in a low well modulated voice, began to preach. As the intensity of his fervor increased, the windows of the old Meeting House vibrated with the volume of his tones. The audience became hushed in deep silence as before the presence of the deity itself. Many were white-faced and anxious as he closed his address, inviting them all to return the following night. Then he shook hands with each one present as they left the house. The next evening the Meeting House

was filled to overflowing. Those who had come the first night to laugh and scoff now remained to weep and pray.

Uxbridge, Pickering, Wellington, Bloomfield and Wooler were visited in turn. At Newmarket, through his special effort, forty young people came into the meeting. About this time, Harry Parry and Walter Armitage joined with him in meetings at Moscow, Plymouth and Colbrook. The following winter he conducted special meetings in Toronto. In 1897, after attending the Quarterly Meeting at Wooler, he with his companion, Walter Armitage, conducted a six weeks meeting at Bloomfield, with the building packed to the doors. Then going further east during the summer they held meetings in a large tent purchased by the Yearly Meeting. Later they went to Sunbury, where - it was said - William was preaching at his best.

His work in Canada was of an evangelistic nature that reflected the generations of untutored poetry and childlike faith. His purposeful life was overshadowed by the tragedy of the slavery of his race. Often his powerful voice could be heard far beyond the building in which he was speaking. Though most of those who were privileged to sit under his ministry have been called to a "better land", memories and stories still survive of this tall, powerful negro, as he appeared wearing the straight black coat buttoned almost to the neck, his kinky black hair and beard touched with the frost of "fulness of years" while his broad ebony features were aglow from the joy of his heart. Bible in his hand, speaking without notes, his silvery eloquence thrilling and inspiring his attentive audience.

One of his favorite words used in beginning an exhortation was the quaint "peradventure". Also one recalls him fearlessly denouncing falseness and hypocrisy, stating that he had never heard the Gospel being

handed out with kid gloves.

The work of Jesse M. Walton states that "Among traveling Friends and visitors who came to Quaker Meetings in Canada during all the years of the Friends' activities, none are more vividly or more fondly remembered than this remarkable Servant of God, William Allen, who being dead yet lives and still bears witness to the wondrous grace of God."

The last days of the earthly life of William Allen were spent in the home of his long-time and faithful friend, James Colquhoun, the father of Albert A. Colquhoun, minister of the Friends meeting at Hibbert, near Mitchell, Perth County, Ont.

It was from this home where he was so kindly cared for by loving hands and hearts that William Allen's life's turbulent voyage ended, passed on to his heavenly home, to be forever with his Lord whom he had so long and faith fully served.

His death occurred May 21, 1898. Internment was in the Friends cemetery adjacent to the Hibbert Meeting House. The last rites were conducted by Albert Colquhoun. Of this passing, our friend Jesse M. Walton quotes, author unknown:

And he has gone - His pure and noble spirit,  
Hath plumed its pinions for a world on high,  
Where his freed soul will evermore inherit  
Blessings supreme that never die.

Some years subsequent to his passing, while I was serving a second pastorate at the Pelham meeting, I was called to officiate at a Colquhoun family wedding. Olive Ryon accompanied me and together we visited the grave of William Allen. We found that the Colquhoun family had placed a modest marble stone to mark the last resting place of this faithful servant of God. Deeply chiseled upon the stone were the words:

Sacred to the memory of  
William Allen,  
A Friends Minister.

As I stood, my mind reverted to the beginnings of his eventful career and I could but wish that the inscription had included the fact that he was "A Negro Friends' Minister" for the glory of the heights to which he had risen is greatly enhanced by the knowledge of the depth from which he emerged.

If God can use such lowly lives  
To demonstrate the Light of Heaven;  
What might not man accomplish here,  
To whom the Lord much more has given.

As we stood with bowed heads in the light of undying memories and the hope of immortality, we had no tears to shed for this "Child of the King." He was to us one of the honoured guests of God, dwelling in a God prepared mansion, in the Land of the Unending Day.

With hearts bowed in meekness and overflowing devotion to Almighty God, who only is able to create such virtue and greatness out of deepest obscurity; and cause a life born under so adverse and deplorable conditions to become one of supreme victory and undying glory, we breathed our silent prayers, bade our Good Night here, and went forth to await our Good Morning, up there.

It seems opportune and desirable to incorporate here a tribute to William Allen sent to Jesse M. Walton by Rev. A.C. Hoffman of the Bay of Quinte Conference of Ontario. He says:

One of the most vivid and cherished memories of my early manhood is that of William Allen, Negro, Quaker Evangelist, who

conducted a revival in the Friends' Meeting House at Moscow, in my boyhood home in the County of Lennox-Addington.

It was the largest and most powerful revival ever held in the community, and was conducted by the ex-slave.

I recall the stalwart figure, the powerful preaching. He commanded the deepest respect of the young and old. He stood behind the simple railing with a Bible in his hand, his rich, musical, resounding voice proclaiming the Gospel, the power of which was evident in his own personality. Though of limited education and handicapped by his racial background, his appeal was compelling.

William Allen was a welcome guest in the homes of the community of all denominations. His reference to slavery days was full of pathos, and his graphic word-picture of his mother and his parting with her, burned into the memory of his audience.

I esteem it a great honour to pay my humble tribute to the memory of William Allen, one of the influences that gave direction to my young life.

And now as a fitting conclusion to this altogether incomplete record of the life of William Allen, Negro Friends' Minister and evangelist, I would lovingly dedicate the following lines:

### **Immortality**

Years are like the stars in Victors crown,  
Of Godlike life, noble and pure;  
Whose light shall glow, shining adown,  
Whilst mem'ry lives or loves endure.

Whilst mem'ry lives or loves endure.

How gracious beam those far flung rays,  
Their light undimmed by lapse of years;  
Their glitt'ring sheen lighting life's ways,  
Begetting hope, allaying fears.

No end is there to such a life:  
Stars brighter shine as sets the sun.  
The Godly life with light is rife,  
Nor dims, nor dies when day is done.

### **Footnotes:**

1. All Orthodox Quaker yearly meetings.
2. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

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## Sparta's Quaker Heritage

*by Nick May*

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This past summer saw a boost in the ongoing effort to preserve the architectural heritage of Sparta, a village in Elgin County, Ontario, first settled by Quakers in the years following the War of 1812. The Sparta and District Historical Association received a grant from the Ministry of Human Resources which allowed them to hire a student to begin compiling an inventory of buildings of historical and/or architectural significance in the village and immediate vicinity. Given the well-known but poorly documented Quaker contribution to the early development of this area, the completion of this inventory will contribute to the larger preservation of the pioneer

heritage of Quakers from their first settlement in Canada.

The process of meticulously cataloguing the architectural attributes and known history of each building and assessing its value in terms of heritage was greatly facilitated by the generous support of the Central Elgin Local Architectural Advisory Committee (LACAC) in the form of time and advice and by the equal degree of enthusiasm displayed by residents and home owners eager to share their knowledge of the area's rich history. This warm reception made the task extremely rewarding, and will no doubt ensure that the inventory when completed will serve as a valuable reference



The Sparta (Yarmouth Friends) Meetinghouse  
Built 1865, just north of the village.



John Moore House, just north of the Meetinghouse.  
Built 1822-24.



to this community on matters of historical and architectural heritage.

The built heritage of the Quakers who settled this area accounts for much of the uniqueness of Sparta and—despite its slow attrition when unrecognized over the years in the form of new windows or aluminum siding—has come down to us with a remarkable degree of integrity. Besides the Friends' Meeting House built amidst a grove on the north edge of the village in 1865, a number of homes attest to the Quaker ideals of their builders and to the prosperity of this rich agricultural region as these values soon flourished in new soil.

The Moore House, with its use of handmade strawberry bricks and naturally abundant fieldstone to create a five-bay Georgian home is the earliest surviving Quaker home in the area, completed in 1824. Equally valuable as an example of early Quaker architecture in Upper



The Haight-Zavitz House, west of Sparta.  
Built 1837



The Kipp-Sanderson House, built in the 1840's.



Abner Chase House, built 1874.

Canada is the Haight-Zavitz House, a clapboard frame house built in 1837 in the Greek Revival style popular among many of the area's early Friends. The Oille House, a frame structure built around the same time, exudes the philosophy of its builders in its graceful simplicity. The Kipp-Sanderson House is reputed to have been the site of Quaker meetings in the settlement's early days, though its Greek Revival accents have been strengthened since the time of its builder and original inhabitant, the Quaker John Kipp. North of the village, several homes reflect the increasing prosperity of subsequent generations of Friends, including the Chase House, an impressive Victorian structure built by Abner Chase in 1874 with similar-sized cobblestones laid in a herringbone pattern periodically broken by designs, and the elegant red brick Minard House built by John Minard across from his fur-



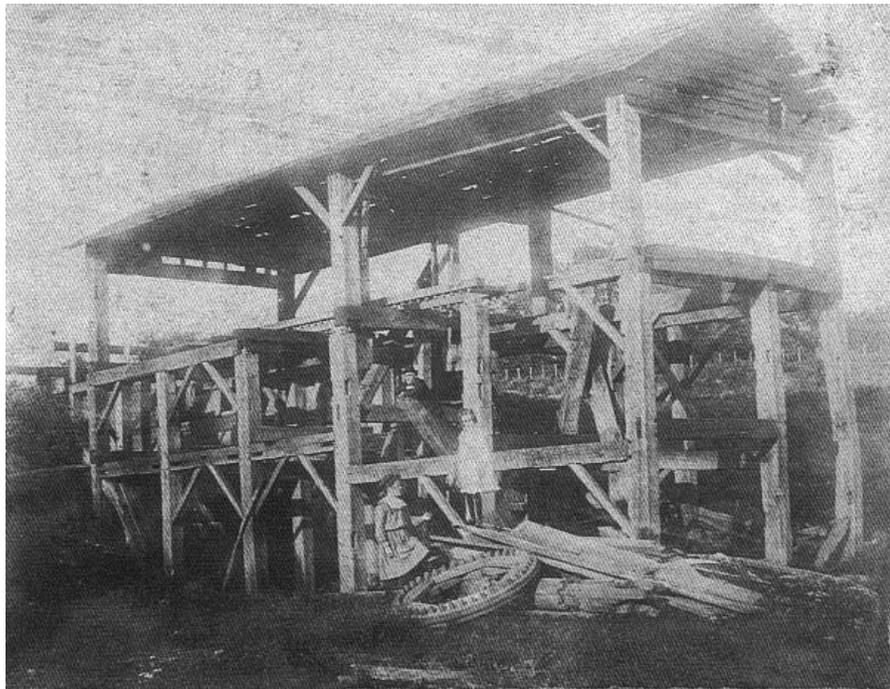
Sparta Store & Post Office  
(Oilles family)



John Minard House, on John Wise Line, 2 miles north of Sparta.

niture factory. Only half of the Schooley-Haight House remains today, its spacious original size—which included nine bedrooms to accommodate Quaker gatherings—later found to be too large for the modern family.

Approximately seventy buildings were placed on the inventory in this initial effort to catalogue Sparta, and many more remain to be included. The distinctively Quaker inheritance that has shaped



Upright sawmill on Beaver Creek built by Christian Zavitz.  
(First sawmill in the vicinity)



Adobe House, built 1829. Main Street, Sparta



Sparta Tea Room, built by the Mills family, 1840s.

so much of the history of Sparta includes the architectural ideals its first settlers brought to the task of forging a new community. Any efforts to document and preserve this Quaker heritage must therefore not overlook one of its most tangible expressions.



Top: Adobe Blacksmith Shop, built 1829. Now the Forge and Anvil Museum.

Middle: Katrina Zavitz House, on North St., built c. 1853.



Bottom: Temperance House, Sparta.

