

PH 363529

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 2 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 7 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Friends Meeting House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 4th & West Streets
 CITY, TOWN: Wilmington VICINITY OF: _____
 STATE: Delaware CODE: 10 COUNTY: New Castle CODE: 002
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends
 STREET & NUMBER: 4th & West Streets
 CITY, TOWN: Wilmington VICINITY OF: _____ STATE: Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: New Castle Court House
 STREET & NUMBER: Public Building, Rodney Square
 CITY, TOWN: Wilmington STATE: Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Survey of Delaware Historic Sites & Buildings, N-874
 DATE: June-August, 1975
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Hall of Records
 CITY, TOWN: Dover STATE: Delaware 19901

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Friends Meeting House, majestically situated on Quaker Hill, was built between 1815 and 1817 and has changed little since it was built. What change has occurred has not altered the integrity of the building.

It has a six-bay, two-story, brick facade laid in Flemish bond. There are double doors in the second and fifth bays. These doors and the side doors each have porticos with hipped roofs supported by a pair of tapered Ionic columns.

There are two interior end chimneys, probably originally used for stoves which heated the large meeting room. The stoves are no longer in the building. A corner fireplace was added when the meeting room was partitioned off. It is the only fireplace in the building.

The north and south three-bay gable ends are pedimented. The brickwork is seven-course common bond. A double door with pillared portico and a small gallery door are in both ends. There is also a small added window in the north end.

The windows on the first floor have twelve-over-twelve light sashes while the second-floor and attic windows are eight-over-twelve. The first- and second-floor windows have four-panelled shutters. All of the cellar windows have marble lintels.

A one-story, nineteenth-century wing is to the west of the building. Its flat roof has a center gable. A corbelled cornice is still visible under the roofline. In 1951 an annex was added to this wing; however, the back wall of the nineteenth-century wing is still visible in the annex and forms its east wall.

Originally, the meeting house was completely open on the inside; however, in this century an office or social hall with a corner fireplace and vestibule on the first floor and glassed-in classrooms on the second floor were partitioned off.

The main room is wainscotted, and all of the interior woodwork is stained a dark mahogany. The original pews or benches remain and are arranged in much the same manner as they have always been. The main room has four-step risers on the sides. Also remaining is the large sounding board on the west wall.

A gallery is on the north, east, and south walls. The gallery stairs are in the north-east and southeast corners of the main floor. Outside access to the gallery is also attained through small doors on the north and south ends. The gallery once had four-step risers; but when it was partitioned off for classrooms, the risers were removed. The second-floor windows, however, are quite high because of the original configuration of the gallery.

The attic stairway is in the northwest corner of the gallery. The original beams are visible in the attic, although they were reinforced in this century for the addition of the heavy tile roof. Also visible in the attic is the massive mechanism for the top portion of the moveable partition once used to segregate the sexes at meetings. The moveable wooden partition had counter-balanced sections. The top section is still in place; however, the bottom section, which rose from the basement, was removed.

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The meeting house sits on the southeast corner of the lot bounded by Fourth, Fifth, Washington, and West streets. The lot is surrounded by an iron fence on three sides and a brick wall on the east side. The original carriage gates are still on the north and south fences. Within the fence is the burial ground. Massive trees add to the overall beauty of the meeting house and its surrounding lot.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Friends Meeting House, where most of the prominent Quaker families who first settled in Wilmington worshipped, is one of the most important religious buildings in Wilmington. It remains an important center for Wilmington Quakers. The Friends Meeting House is also outstanding because of its architecture. It is an excellent example of the type of meeting house constructed by Delaware Quakers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Although Wilmington was originally founded by the Swedes, it was Pennsylvania Quaker families such as the Shipleys who settled it. Originally it was called Willingtown, and by 1739 it had a population of over 600. Such Quaker families as the Canbys and the Tatnalls had gristmills along the Brandywine River and remained important millers for over a century. Indeed the economic base for the town was provided by the same Quaker merchants who settled around Quaker Hill where they built their first meeting house in 1738, two years after Wilmington was incorporated.

The earliest meeting house was located on Fourth Street across from the present one. In 1748 a larger meeting house was needed, and a building which stood on the same lot as the present one was built. Its capacity was 500 worshippers; however, the meeting grew so large that by 1815 a new meeting house was needed.

Between October 26, 1815, and September 25, 1817, the third and present meeting house was planned and built. The majority of the members of the meeting donated funds for the building; and upon completion, no money was owed. The original patrons of the building were some of the most important Wilmington Quakers, including merchants, Samuel Canby, Thomas Lea, Edward Tatnall, and James Canby; banker, Joseph Bailey; and members of the Mendenhall, Price, Seal, Hilles, Alrichs, and Ferris families.

This meeting house, completed in 1817, has changed little to the present day. Its large size reflects its considerable membership. Its detail is simple but well executed. Outstanding among its features are the porticoed doorways, Flemish bond brickwork, interior panelling, and massive wooden moveable partition. It represents the Quaker influence in Wilmington architecture so prevalent through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In 1817 when the present meeting house was completed, Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends was called Wilmington Preparative Meeting and included the Stanton Preparative Meeting. Today the meeting includes the Appoquinimink Preparative Meeting at Odessa.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ferris, Benjamin, "A Sketch of the Proceedings," Delaware History, XIII, 1968-1969, 67-80.

_____, Friends in Wilmington, 1738-1938.

Hoffecker, Carol E., Wilmington, Delaware: Portrait of an Industrial City, 1830-1890, University Press of Virginia, 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 Acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	4 5 2 4 7 0	4 3 9 9 0 5 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block bounded by West, Fourth, Washington, and West streets in Wilmington, Delaware.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susanne N. Fox, Research Archivist

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

May 10, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Hall of Records

TELEPHONE

(302) 678-5314

CITY OR TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

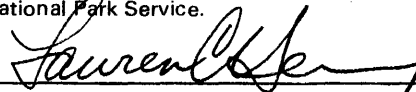
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE 7/30/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/9/96

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/2/76

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Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Delaware, 1609-1888, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1888.

Zebley, Frank A., The Churches of Delaware, Wilmington, 1947.

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Between the time it was constructed and the Civil War, the meeting was involved in the Hicksite Schism, a division between orthodox Quakers and followers of Elias Hicks. A frequent speaker at the meeting, Hicks caused a split in the once-united group. In 1828 the orthodox members left to form their own meeting and to build their own meeting house at Ninth and Tatnall streets. From 1828 until 1942 the two meetings were separate, but today they are part of the Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends and meet in the building being nominated.

Members of the meeting were active in the Underground Railroad. In 1787, Delaware passed a law prohibiting the importation and exportation of slaves. The following year, Delaware Quakers formed the Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. This organization was active throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

Thomas Garrett, one of the most famous abolitionists, lived in Wilmington and worshipped at Friends Meeting House. Garrett was responsible for saving nearly 2900 Blacks by means of the Underground Railroad. He is buried in the burial ground adjacent to the building.

The Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends has always been active in the education of both boys and girls. As early as 1748, the original 1738 meeting house was converted to a school. As enlarged, it remained until the 1930's when the Friends School moved to the suburbs. William and Emma Bancroft, members of the meeting, contributed greatly to education by their donations to Antioch, Swarthmore, George School, and the parks of Wilmington.

The burial ground contains the remains of several of the most prominent citizens of Wilmington and of Delaware, including John Dickinson, "The Penman of the Revolution," and author of the Letters From A Pennsylvania Farmer; Thomas Garrett, the famous abolitionist; and Caleb P. Bennett, the former Governor of Delaware from 1833 to 1836.