

REDLANDS FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

Newberry Friends Meeting is the official name for a Quaker Meetinghouse located at the intersection of Old Quaker Road and Lewisberry Road (PA Route 382). This building site is known locally as Redlands to distinguish it from the original area Meetinghouse built in Newberrytown. The terms Quaker and Friends (Religious Society of Friends) are used interchangeably.

Friends were settling in this area as early as 1738. Without documentation there is no solid evidence to the claim that Newberrytown was the first Friends Meeting west of the Susquehanna River. It is recorded that a Meeting was held at the home of John Day in the Ninth Month, 1739. The original Meetinghouse was a log cabin constructed in 1745. During the initial Friends settlement period and up to the early 1800's, Meetinghouses were being organized every ten miles. This allowed Friends to not have to travel beyond five miles to attend Meeting. Warrington, Huntington, and Menallen were the next Meetings along this line.

As more Quakers began settling further west in this area, the tract on which the original Meetinghouse was built (but not including the cemetery) was sold on Second Month, Eighteenth Day, 1811 and signed by Governor Simon Snyder. Still located along the Old Susquehanna Trail is the original Newberrytown Friends Cemetery. There are no known documents listing burials. The first headstones were only small pieces of fieldstone. An acceptance of worldly elegance evolved, first with initials, then names on stones, and finally carved headstones. A few of the Scotch-Irish surnames included in journals when mentioning the Newberrytown Meetinghouse are Kirk, Whinery, Miller, Taylor, Boyd, Low, Hutton, and from Holland, Garretson.

There is no evidence that the stone building across the road from the cemetery was ever a Friends Meetinghouse. Judging from the

stumps, at one time there were numerous black walnut trees dotting the cemetery grounds. Within the cemetery a veteran of the Mexican War is buried, and located in the back of the cemetery is an unknown-use, small foundation (outhouse?). After 1950, the chain link fence along the road was installed to limit access and offer some protection. There is no record of the number of times it has been damaged by heavy snow plowing or more frequently by hit and run accidents.

In 1811 a new site for a Meetinghouse (Redlands) was selected for its central location and convenience for the Friends then attending Newberrytown. Samuel Garretson and Alice Blackburn Garretson transferred by deed on Tenth Month, Fourth Day 1811 by the sale of 5 acres to Jesse Wickersham and George Garretson representing the Trust for The Religious Society of Friends. Construction was begun that fall and winter. Even before the building was completed in 1812, Meetings for Worship were being held. The upping block was used for ladies in buggies or arriving sidesaddle. It is probably not in its original location after the road widening and it being struck by several modern vehicles.

In the following years, the Newberrytown Friends Meeting experienced a steadily declining attendance, although many who were not attending still maintained their membership. There were several reasons for the decline, including the western expansion of the country and fewer Friends emigrating from England. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa were the primary destinations from this area. There is even a burial of a Musician from Co. B. 2nd Iowa Infantry in the Redlands Cemetery. Pre Civil War there were several schisms in the Society itself with the Hicksites, the Orthodox, and the Wilburites all claiming to be "True Friends". Often families split in different directions with Meetinghouses identified with only one branch.

Some Meetings were "unprogrammed" (silent worship) while others turned to "programmed" services with singing, scripture reading, and

sermons. Besides those there were moral concerns within the society: marriage by a "hireling", marriage to a cousin, attendance at another denominations service (even if it be a funeral or marriage), incurring debt, drunkenness, brawling, fornication, gambling, and not attending Meeting, were all grounds of disownment. Then there were social issues: slavery, women's rights, temperance, and the impending Civil War, all fragmenting local Meetings.

By 1863 Redlands, Warrington, and Huntington were laid down for lack of attendees although their membership lists each showed in excess of 50 members. Redlands listed 52 members, but there had not been a First Day Meeting for Worship for several months due to lack of attendees. The care of these 3 Meetinghouses' properties was entrusted to Menallen Friends Monthly Meeting to manage as it was the only fully functioning Meeting willing to assume the responsibility.

For the next several decades, the management and care of the Meetinghouses and cemeteries consisted of loosely defined agreements between Menallen trustees and local residents living nearby the laid down Meetinghouses. In 1894, Cyrus S. Griest and Samuel H. Harris reported to Menallen that the Redlands Meetinghouse was in bad repair, and the fence was broken in several places. A new agreement was reached with Henry Miller to be the new caretaker of the property and to try to raise monies locally for the needed repairs. Cyrus V. Garretson informed Menallen in 1896 that \$85.00 had been raised for building repair. Andrew Hutton along with Harry and Malinda Miller helped in the Meetinghouse repair. Harry and Malinda were responsible for the erection of a new fence around the graveyard.

Up until 1934 the Redlands Meetinghouse had been open and largely unattended. During that time other denominations had occasionally used the Meetinghouse for services, families on hard times used it as a residence, and vagabonds had used it for protection from the weather

as noted by some still existing graffiti. Due to the deterioration of the Meetinghouse, Julia Kister and the Millers saw a need for a caretakers' cottage to house someone to oversee the upkeep of the property. Throughout that summer meetings were held in the woods of the Meetinghouse. A Mr. L. Baum of Wormlesyburg gave the first dollar. Late in the fall of 1934 a cellar and well were dug. The well was 100 feet deep and cost \$108.70. Members of Menallen and local residents contributing monies, material, and labor were Julia Kister, (daughter-in-law of Friend Charlotte Frasier Kister), Charles Brenzier, Lloyd Hutton, and West Shore Lumber Company. The cottage was completed in 1935 with the Millers assuming the role of caretakers.

An anecdote handed down tells of Malinda Miller discovering the state highway crew storing explosives in the Redlands Meetinghouse. She promptly went in and threw the dynamite out. The highway crew was there to straighten the Lewisberry-Newberrytown Road. This straightening entailed the removal of the caretaker's cottage and loss of Meetinghouse land. Quakers were reimbursed for both, and the funds were invested and used for several years to cover maintenance of the Meetinghouse. Malinda continued in her role of caretaker. A marker recognizing her dedication to the upkeep of the Meetinghouse is located on the grounds.

Around 1950, Meetings for Worship began being held yearly to maintain Redlands as a House of Worship for exemption from local property taxes. Lacking electricity, viable heat, and running water, the date was set as the Third First Day of Ninth Month. In 2015, to accommodate more chance attendees, the Meeting for Worship was extended to be the Third First Day, Fourth Month through the Ninth Month, a schedule that still continues to this day. A commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the move to Redlands was held in the Ninth Month 2011 with Quakers, attendees, neighbors, and passerby's attending.

Sources used for this information came from various papers and by documents from Julia Kister, Edwin C. Tyson, Albert Cook Myers, and Virginia Wright Parry.

Compiled 2024 by Barclay Brooks

Newberry Friends Cemetery

Location is 2350 Old Trail Rd next to Fisher Auto Parts
Find A Grave.com has 93 records of those buried there.
The earliest is 1770. The latest was 1936.

The most famous was Eli Lewis. Although Eli was a Quaker by faith, he strongly believed in the need to separate the Colonies from Mother England. He traveled back and forth from York Co., PA, to Philadelphia, PA, for several years before the war. When it became time for war, Eli was given the rank of Major and led the 1st Battalion of York Co. Militia. He was a printer and shopkeeper. He started the first newspaper in the area "The Harrisburg Advertiser." Eli was the founder of the town of Lewisberry in York Co.,

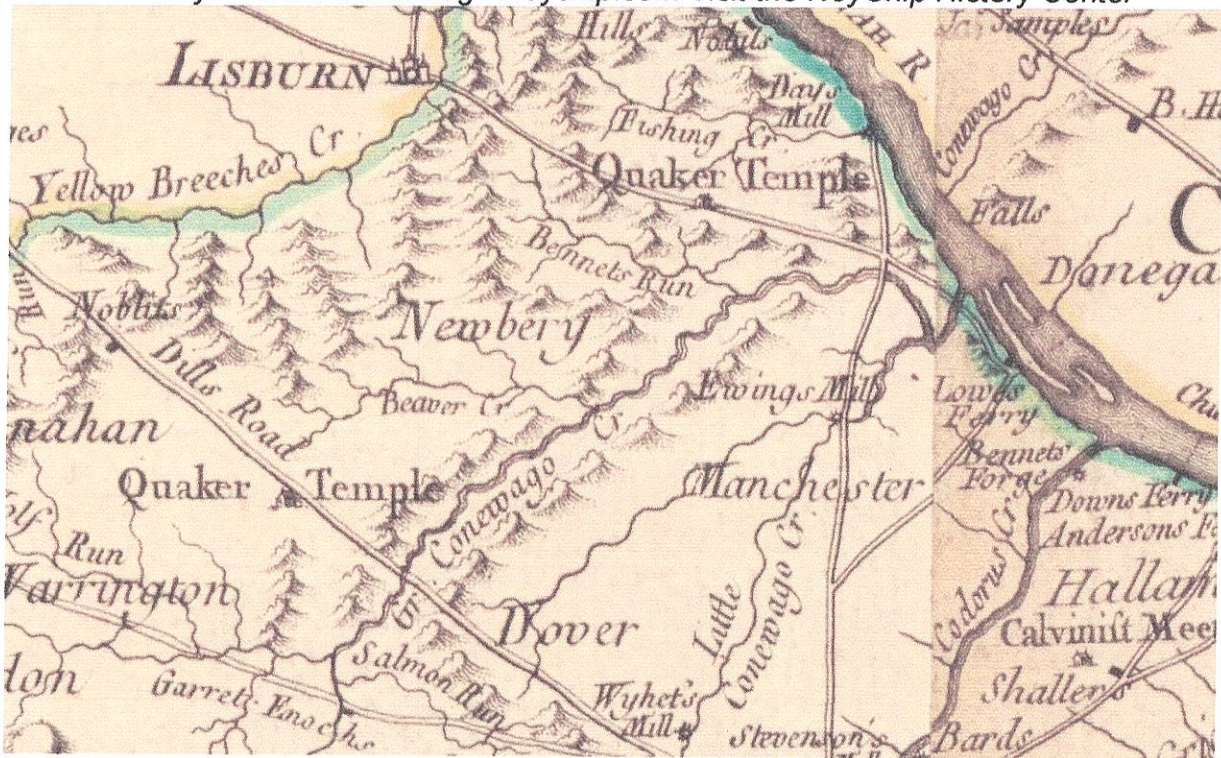
Redland Friends Cemetery

Location Old Quaker Rd and Lewisberry Rd behind the Redland Friends Meetinghouse
Find A Grave.com has 134 records of those buried there.
The earliest is 1825. The latest was 1979.

Websites: Quaker.org en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quakers
midatlanticroots.com/drupal/newberry-friends-meeting
friendsacademy.org/blog/a-brief-history-of-quakerism

Newberry Meetinghouse is now a private home 2197 York Haven Rd. Newberry Town.

Information by Charles Stambaugh Neychip.com Visit the NeyChip History Center



W. Scull map published in 1770 showing the Newberry Quaker Temple (meeting house)