



## History of Plymouth Monthly Meeting

**1682 -1684** Penn visits his colony and establishes the City of Philadelphia.

**1685** Francis Rawie and James Fox and the Plymouth, England Friends purchased over 5000 acres from William Penn.

**1686** Francis Rawie and James Fox, their families and other Friends came from Plymouth, Devonshire, England. The township was originally settled by members of the "Society of Friends", or Quakers. They sailed from Devonshire, England on the ship "Desire", arriving in Philadelphia on June 23, 1686. They also owned city lots in Philadelphia.

**1687** Cart road opened, Germantown Pike, by James Fox.

**1688** James Fox found limestone in Plymouth Township.

**1699** Fox died and their land was sold over time. Welsh Quakers had settled across the river in Radnor – Haverford. Some of them found land here attractive and moved to Plymouth. Hugh Jones purchased the James Fox House where meetings had been held. Each week, they had to cross the river at Matson Ford to go to meeting at Radnor or Haverford.

**1702** On September 12, Radnor and Haverford records show this minute:  
*'Friends about plimouth on the other side of the skoolkill propose to have a meeting first day at Hugh Jones for six months and to have a weekly meeting to be kept by course at Davd. Wms, at Hugh Jones, at Lewis Thomas, which this meeting consents to if the Quarterly Meeting approves thereof, and to be transmitted to them for their approbation.'*

**1704** October 6, is the date of the first deed for this property. The meetinghouse was built by the members with materials from their fields and woods and was completed in 1708??

**1708** is the date Meeting erection submitted to the National Register. The original building was one room.

**1714** Plymouth and Gwynedd Meetings became Gwynedd Monthly Meeting.

**1776** Eight members of Plymouth were visited by Elders because of their having not freed the Africans that they held as slaves. Six members responded positively. Two were reported to state a future date or sum of money to be earned before release.

**1777** During the Revolution, part of Lafayette's army camped in Plymouth Meeting on the way to Valley Forge. The British Army paused at the cross roads of Germantown Pike and Butler Pike unsure of how to pursue Lafayette's troops that were retreating from Barren Hill to Valley Forge by way of Mattson's Ford in Conshohocken. The meetinghouse was used as a hospital after the Battle of Germantown.

**1780** A school was established with a committee appointed by the meeting. A member of the Williams family left 100 pounds which was used to build the addition to the northeast side of the meetinghouse. It was a separate building no door between the two buildings. The room was partitioned, half for a schoolroom and the other half for Women's meetings.

**1793** Sandy Hill School in Whitpain was built functioned under the care of Plymouth Monthly Meeting

**1807** 04 Mo. 24 The School Committee viewed the ground that was proposed as a suitable place on the North Corner of the Meeting house lot, back of the stables near to George Pierces lot where a house 30 by 23 feet one story high with a cellar under one half and completed expense to be 500 Dollars to be used as a school.

**1809** 9th Month 1806 was held on the 25th. "The Committee appointed to repair the Meeting house are continued." The major alterations to the meetinghouse seem to have occurred (or were at least discussed) in 1809, when the meetinghouse was altered to accommodate sessions of the Monthly Meeting. A door was put through to join the original Meeting House with the School room/ Woman's Business room. The panels were added later.

**1812** Woman appointed to attend to the teaching of the girls attending the school.

**1813** there was enough traffic on the road so that it was very noisy in the Meetinghouse. The Butler Pike road was where the driveway is now. A group of neighboring farmers supplied the land to move the road out away from the meetinghouse.

**1813** 90 perches deeded to the trustees for education. Eight square building was erected as the school behind the meetinghouse and used for about 60 years.

**1818** First "female teacher in the school"

**1827** Friends separated into two groups over Theology and Authority of the Yearly Meeting vs the Monthly Meeting. Hicksite Friends remained in the original Meeting House and Orthodox Friends converted a private house that had been recently built in to their meetinghouse. This is the building now known as Journey's End and is used by the School for a classroom.

**1830** Before the Civil War, the Abolitionists were prominent in this area and in this Meeting. George Corson was the most well known. He built Abolition Hall to accommodate abolitionist meetings. Many of the famous Abolitionists attended these meetings and Meeting for

Worship here in the Meeting House. Walt Whitman, Mrs. Stephen Foster Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison.

**1840** Abolitionist meeting in school building

**1856** Joseph Williams and Knowles Lancaster deed to meeting 90 perches to erect a school house.

**1860** The original part of the present school building was opened.

**1867 The Meeting House was** gutted by a fire. Rebuilt by October 1867 for a cost of \$5,870

**1877-1879, 1880** School closed

**1881** School reopens

**1891** Third teacher hired and school enlarged. Yearly Meeting Committee on Education visit with the advice of making a graded school,

**1892** Mary H. White principal and Anna S. Thompson assistant. Course of study modeled after Friends Central.

**1895** Benjamin Smith hired as Principal.

**1898** Second story added.

**1906** Record attendance of 84 students.

**1907** A gymnasium was built along Germantown Pike. (unclear where this building was)

**1912** Two hundredth anniversary celebration. The school curriculum revised.

**1913** First records of a parent- teacher conference. Vocal instruction and funds for piano raised.

**1914** Attendance dropped to 30 students and Yearly Meeting Educational Committee stepped in to help.

**1933** The William Jeanes Library was started and flourished under the care of the Meeting. In 1971, it moved to a handsome new, building in Whitemarsh Township.

**1937** Plymouth Preparative Meeting became Plymouth Monthly Meeting.

**1945** The Annie H. Wilson wing was added. This is used for social purposes and by the community. Central heating was added at time.

**1945** Stoves heated these rooms.

**1955** Hicksite – Orthodox separation ended with the two groups reuniting. At Plymouth the Orthodox Meeting had closed on December 25<sup>th</sup> 1900.

**1953** Mary Knowles is employed as librarian. Later in the year she was accused of being a communist.

**1954** Plymouth Township begins withholding contributions to the Library because the Monthly Meeting's refusal to fire Mary from her post as librarian.

**1955** Plymouth Monthly Meeting receives a \$5000 award from the Fund for the Republic for their refusal to dismiss Mary Knowles as Librarian. Monthly Meeting is unable to unite on what to do with the award. It is placed in escrow and the decision is held over.

**1955** Carriage shed converted to classrooms.

**1957** Monthly Meeting decides to accept the Award from Fund for the Republic and donated \$1,000 to the Library.

**1977** 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary is celebrated. School begins its extended daycare program.

**1985** Journey's End property donated by the Corson Family to Meeting for educational needs. The house on the property was the Orthodox Meeting house

**2002** Steinbright and Art buildings opened.

**2004** Plymouth Monthly Meeting participates in the building of a school in Afghanistan for children and woman. Quarterly Meeting minute; *It was decided that this leading is a wise use of our limited resources. \$50,000 can provide a 10 room school building in Afghanistan for children in need and jobs for adults.*

**2008** 300th anniversary, recognizing those who have worshiped within these walls during of these generations.