

A HISTORY OF JAMESTOWN FRIENDS MEETING

For Jamestown Friends Meeting's 40th Anniversary Margaret Harris compiled, wrote and presented a full history of our Meeting. Below are excerpts from this piece presented July 2004.

In the 1750s James Mendenhall, a Pennsylvania Quaker, made his way to North Carolina and became the founding father of Jamestown. His sawmill, gristmill and house were built along Deep River. They had to give way to the High Point City Lake. The summer of 2000 when it was so dry, the lake was down enough that you could see the stone foundation of the house. It was located just below the present bridge on Penny Road. The mills were on the other side of the road.

As the town grew, James Mendenhall decided to move on. His son, George Mendenhall, stayed and as the town was laid out with named streets, he named it for his father, James' Town.

Early Quakers in Jamestown were members of Deep River Monthly Meeting. It was reported that as many as 40 buggies and wagons were counted on Sabbath morning as they drove from Jamestown to Deep River. However, there were times when a local meeting place was needed, and at times the weather prevented crossing the river and it was not possible to travel the trails. Therefore, in 1818, the Mendenhalls built on their own property a small brick meetinghouse (now in the High Point City Lake Park) and asked Deep River Monthly Meeting to allow Jamestown Friends to worship in the building when it was necessary. Deep River Meeting agreed to indulge them in this request. Jamestown Meeting never moved beyond being an Indulged Meeting.

Later as Quakers dealt with issues of slavery and the Civil War, many Jamestown Friends joined the migration westward. Consequently there ceased to be a Friends Meeting in Jamestown.

Then in the fall of 1963, interest in establishing a Meeting in Jamestown was revived. Three couples, living in the Jamestown area (Troy and Mildred Gibson, Binford and Jewell Farlow and Bill and Margaret Harris) gathered for supper at the Harris home. Afterward these Friends separated to visit other Friends living in the area. John Robert Lawrence was principal of Jamestown Elementary School and he gathered names of Quaker families represented in his school.

Bob Medford was chairperson of the Church Extension Committee of North Carolina Yearly Meeting. He met with us and was helpful in getting Jamestown Meeting established. The first two public meetings were held in the Methodist Church as we tested possibilities. Then arrangements were made for us to meet in the Jamestown Elementary School. At first we gathered Sunday afternoons because we all had duties at our home Meetings on Sunday mornings. The Church Extension Committee and the Pastor-Meeting Relations Committee gave financial aid and many individuals made financial contributions. Very early in our development Floyd "Pete" Moore gave us a check and said, "I want to make the first contribution to a building fund."

As we became more established, we moved to Sunday mornings, purchased a parsonage on Knollwood Drive in Forestdale and called Donald Osborne to be our minister. Since Jamestown Meeting was not yet a legal organization, some participants signed the note to purchase the house. This was our meeting place as well as the home for the minister and family. Monthly Meeting, Ministry and Counsel, and Young Friends met at the parsonage.

Deep River Quarterly Meeting in session July 4, 1964 recognized Jamestown Monthly Meeting and appointed a committee to carry through this decision. July 8th J. Wade Russell of Oak Hill Meeting called the group to order. He recognized the following member of the committee: Byron Haworth, Springfield and Clerk of NC Yearly Meeting; Faye English, Archdale and Agnes Parsons, High Point. Seth Hinshaw, the Yearly Meeting Executive Secretary (the position we now call superintendent) and his wife, Mary Edith, participated.

Byron Haworth, on behalf of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings recognized the Jamestown Monthly Meeting and presided as the 36 charter members were listed. He then turned the meeting over to the appointed clerk, Binford farlow. By the end of the year there were 47 members.

For more than eight years Friends gathered in the elementary school. In 1966 through a loan from Friends Extension Corporation of Friends United Meeting, we were able to purchase approximately six acres of land at the corner of East Fork and Guilford Road in Jamestown. The picnic shelter was built so we could have gatherings on the grounds. Our first Barbecue Chicken Dinner was served in the picnic shelter.

The first time we sought a loan from the Friends Extension Corporation, the group requesting the loan was required to secure an amount of new investments equal to half of the request. Friends from across the Yearly Meeting invested in FEC to assist Jamestown Friends. Even children of the Meeting were able to make a small investment. Some gave those shares to the Meeting and they are in our investments today.

Since the Folgers or Haworths did not need a parsonage, the decision was made to sell the parsonage and put that money toward a meetinghouse. Again we turned to the Friends Extension Corporation for another loan to build the first unit of our building. We moved into the building in December of 1972.

On December 10, 1972 Friends gathered at the elementary school where we had been meeting. From there we traveled together to Deep River Meeting as Jamestown Friends did many years ago. At Deep River the group gathered near the graves of the Mendenhall founders of the town of Jamestown while Dorothy Miller gave a brief history of the town. The group then proceeded to the old meetinghouse in the High Point City Lake Park and on to the new meetinghouse to complete the circle.

With this move the minister lost one task – setting out the red sign designating the school building as a Friends Meetinghouse for the day. No longer did the Sunday School teachers have to put up pictures every Sunday morning nor carry all their materials out each Sunday. The nursery keeper gave up the task of rolling out the carpet and putting the “wall units” in place to confine the toddlers.

In 1990 for the third time we turned to the Friends Extension Corporation for a loan. The principal need was to build a meetinghouse for worship. This was added to the south side of the existing structure. The dedication of this section was September 16, 1990.

The following persons have provided pastoral care: Donald and Virginia Osborne, 1964-68; Buford and Anne Frye, 1968-70; O. Herschel and Beatrice Folger, 1970-71; Cecil and Esta Haworth, 1971-86; Wallace L. Sills, Jr. 1986-98, R. Kenneth Bradstock 1998-2000; Thomas R. Butt (interim) 2000; William W. Carter, 2001-2002; Kathleen M. Coe, 2002-2006, Frank C. Massey 2007-.