

by

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BRIEF HISTORY

In 1762 and 1770, Friends meeting at Nine Partners (Millbrook, NY) allowed the Friends "over the Creek" (five men and three women, heads of families) to hold worship meetings in Jonathan Hoag's house just north of the present building. These events began the history of the Creek Meeting House.

The Friends on the "other side" of the Wappingers continued to press for approval to hold weekly meetings for worship. In 1775 a committee was appointed "to pitch upon a place" for a meeting house. The land was obtained from Abel Peters and stones were placed, and finally on the "sixth month, 21st, 1776 such a grant was given as a part of the Nine Partners Monthly Meeting. George Harris, Isaac Hallock and Paul Upton, first among the "other siders", began to build their own meeting house. While they built, their meeting was moved to a small log house belonging to Paul and Phebe Upton. Their numbers increased rapidly and the meeting was removed to Elijah Hoag's, being held in his barn in the summer and in his dwelling during the winter.

Henry Hull, 12 years old and living in Stanford at that time, wrote in his memoirs, "This country then presented a wild and uncultivated appearance, only a small part of the land in the neighborhood being cleared and many of the fields enclosed with the logs which had been cut off them. There were two families of Friends near us, viz., Benjamin Hoag and Paul Upton from New England, and most of the other inhabitants were of the rougher sort. A small meeting of Friends was held about four miles from us in a log house belonging to Paul Upton, who with his wife Phebe Upton, have been valuable members of our society from their first settlement here and were truly a nursing father and nursing mother to many who have been brought forth in religious service." Prior to the day's service these "raw, rustic looking people" engaged in lively disputes about the war.

Tiddeman Hull, Elijah Hoag and Phebe Upton were frequent speakers. While Friends/Quakers recognized some men and women as Ministers for their speaking and spiritual gifts there was no clergy.

It was related, that on account of the troublesome times caused by the war, many interruptions came to the building of the stone house, several of the members being arrested and fined and one, Elijah Hoag, imprisoned in unsanitary quarters and afterward banished to Esopus Island.

Having lost a previous place of worship to fire(Nine Partners) seems to explain their use of stone for a building material.

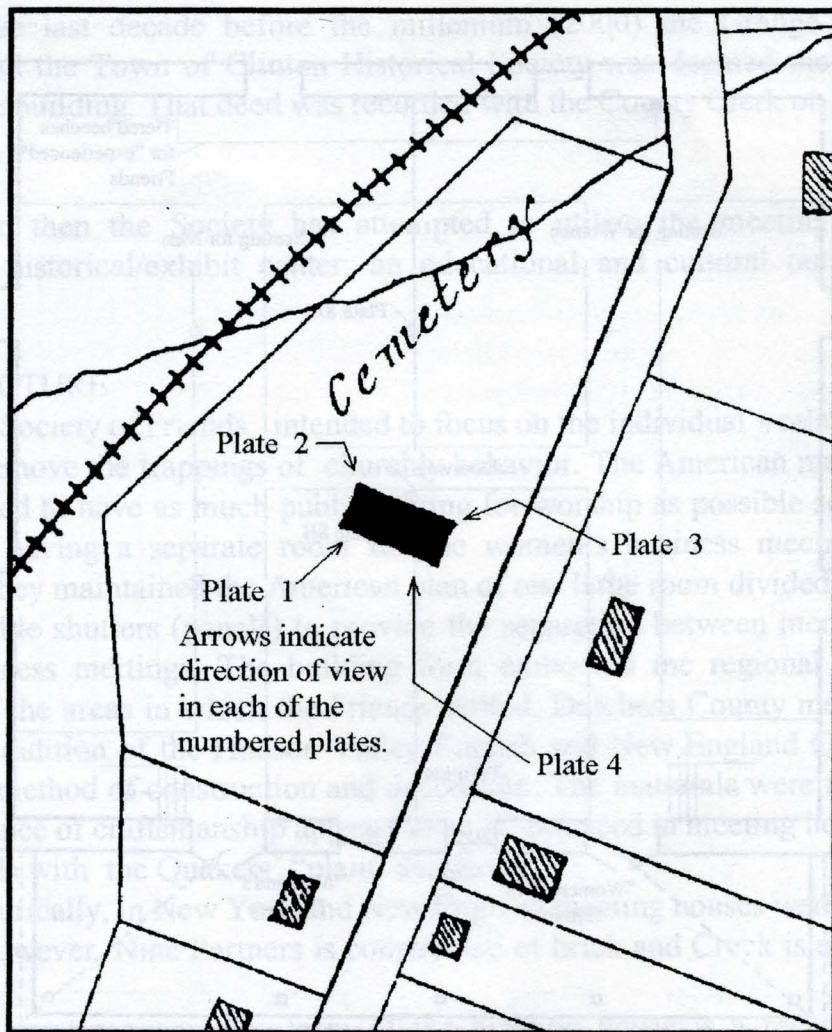
Because of the War and the misunderstanding of the "world" (a Quaker term used to denote those who were non-Quaker) concerning the non-violent Quaker beliefs it took five years to complete the building. It is one of the oldest meeting houses in Dutchess County.

Completion of the building, in 1782, brought approval to hold monthly meetings for business and they continued to grow until 1828 when the Separation occurred. Disssension had been increasing within the Society for a number of years regarding theology and power of the Elders. Elias Hicks, a brilliant preacher from Long Island, was a leader of one faction that came to be called Hicksite. The other group came to be called Orthodox, possibly because their beliefs more closely resembled those of other Protestant denominations. The "Hicksites" were in the majority and kept the meeting house while the Orthodox moved further out on Salt Point Turnpike, to Cornelius Austin's house and eventually built a new meeting house. The total membership at that time was 256; 168 remained at the stone house and 88 removed.

During the first half of the 19th century the Hicksite membership dropped off and meetings were held less and less frequently.

The local Grange, Upton Lake Grange, Patrons of Husbandry No. 802 began to rent the building and on October 3, 1927 recorded the deed received from The Friends Cemetary Association, Inc.(Liber 480 Page 175, County Clerks Office).

In 1989 the building was listed on the National Historic Register.



In the last decade before the millenium (2000) the Grange membership dwindled and the Town of Clinton Historical Society was deemed the logical next owner of the building. That deed was recorded with the County Clerk on December 4, 1995.

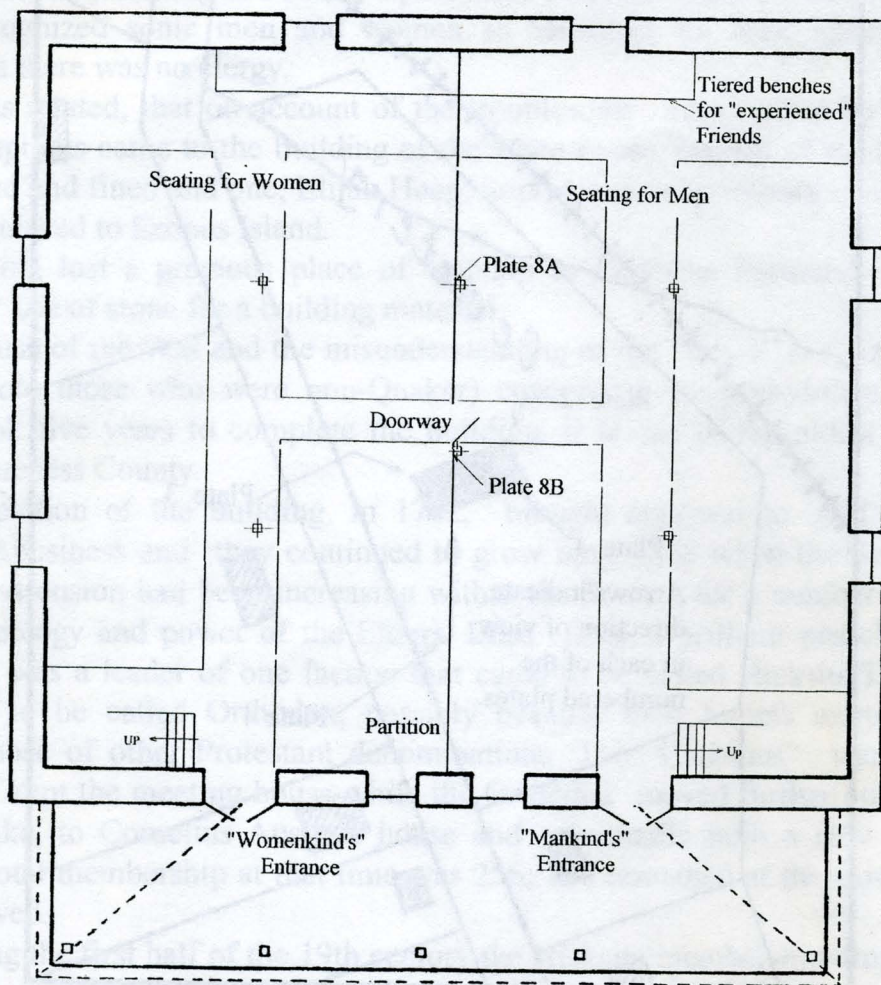
Since then the Society has attempted to utilize the meeting house as a community historical/exhibit center; an educational and cultural outreach to the "world."

THE STRUCTURE

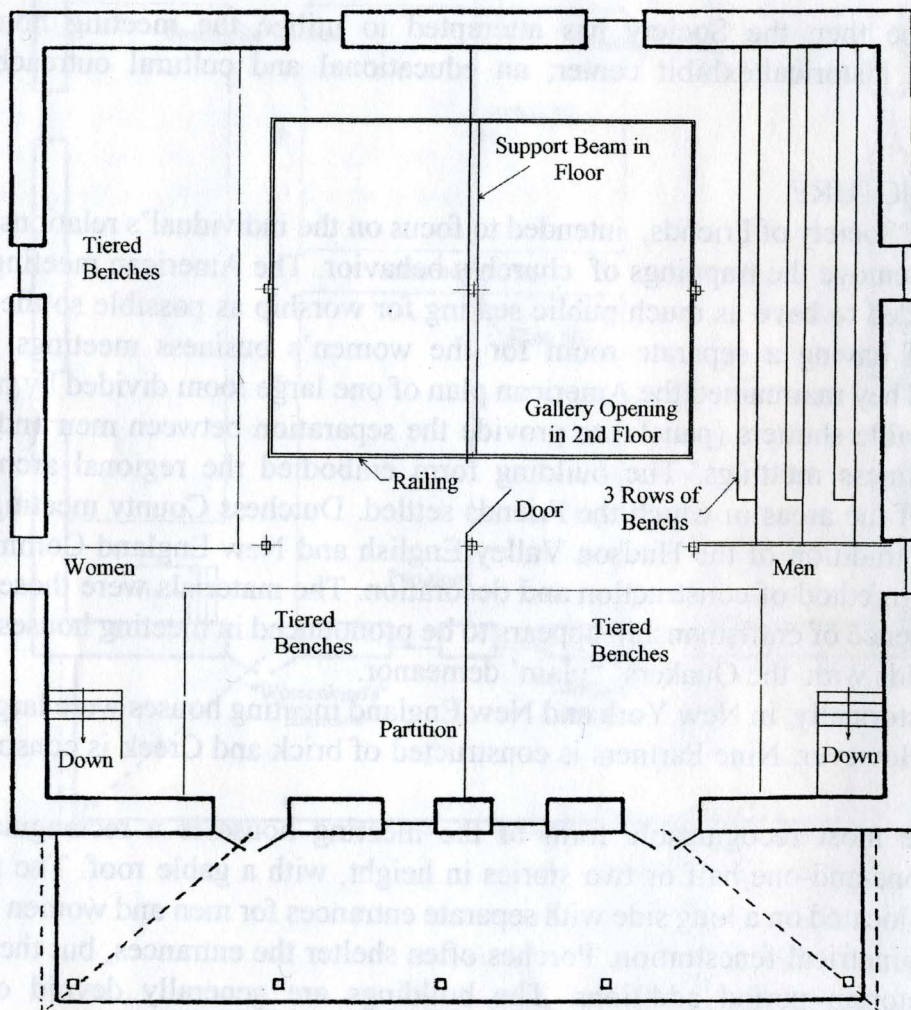
The Society of Friends, intended to focus on the individual's relationship with Jesus and remove the trappings of churchly behavior. The American meeting houses were intended to have as much public seating for worship as possible so the English practice of having a separate room for the women's business meetings was not followed. They maintained the American plan of one large room divided by partitions with moveable shutters (panels) to provide the separation between men and women during business meetings. The building form embodied the regional architectural practices of the areas in which the Friends settled. Dutchess County meeting houses reflect the tradition of the Hudson Valley English and New England Community in their form, method of construction and decoration. The materials were those close at hand. Evidence of craftsmanship appears to be pronounced in meeting houses and this is not at odds with the Quakers' "plain" demeanor.

Historically, in New York and New England meeting houses were largely built of wood. However, Nine Partners is constructed of brick and Creek is constructed of stone.

The most recognizable form of the meeting house is a rectangular frame building, one-and-one half or two stories in height, with a gable roof. The facade is invariably located on a long side with separate entrances for men and women arranged within symmetrical fenestration. Porches often shelter the entrances, but they are apt to be Victorian period additions. The buildings are generally devoid of detail,



overhangs and ornamentation. The balanced pairing of features on the exterior reflects the equal division of meeting space on the interior.



Despite variation in size, the arrangement of interior space generally remained constant. The building was divided down the middle by some form of partition, frequently a waist-high wooden wall with counter-balanced panels that could be raised or lowered to divide the space into two separate areas.

On the walls opposite the entrances were two or three rows of wooden benches raised on tiered platforms.

These faced a main body of benches separated by an aisle. Known as facing benches, these seats were reserved for recognized ministers and more experienced Friends. The interior and exterior were originally unpainted.

Larger meeting houses (such as Creek) were often raised to a second story to allow for a gallery.

See floor plan on opposite page.

Stone Walls;
1st Floor = 22" thk
2nd Floor = 17" thk

13' - 8" 45'-2" 34"x3'-7" 12' - 2" 34"x3'-7"

11'-10" 11'-9" 33" x 6'-4" 33" x 6'-4" 12'-2" 11'-10"

Furnace Room Kitchen Area Columns

1' - 10" 4'-7" 12" step 24'-4" 4'-0" 2' Sq. 8'-2" Concrete Slab 9'-6" 11'-10" 3'-9" 4'-10" 2'-10" 32"x5'-6" 3'-10" 10'-3" 8'-2" 8'-2" 12'-0" 10'-10" 12'-8" 8'-6" 41'-4"

Men's Ladies' Up Up Double Doors

Hip Roof on Porch

The first floor plan as the building now stands.

MAJOR ALTERATIONS & DATES

c-1875; Slate roof with date worked in the slate (removed c 1980 and 1985)
c-1927; new stairways to second floor, still in the south-east and south-west corners of the building.

New floors over original floors on first and second stories.

Dropped ceilings installed.

Stage added on second floor.

Kitchen facilities added on first floor.

Heating plant and bathroom facilities added. New chimney added.

Window lengthened to floor level to provide access to western addition enclosing heating plant.

Gutters added.

ca1930; Steel fire escape erected on west wall for second floor.

ca1948; Heating plant and bathroom facilities added. New chimney added.

Window lengthened to floor level to provide access to western addition enclosing heating plant.

1995; Exhibit track lighting grid installed in ceiling of the first floor.

New 200 amp electric service installed in western addition to first floor.

1996; New furnace installed.

Additional storage space constructed under east wall stairwell.

Phone service reinstalled.

New 100 amp electric service installed in western addition to first floor.

1997; Disabled bathroom installed.

Second floor and attic electric wiring upgraded.

Smoke detectors added to first and second floors.

Office space for the Historical Society's use constructed on the

second floor. Stage area revamped to accomodate storage facility.

ANECDOTAL STUFF

Dorothy Burkowske, a long time Grange member and Master, remembers being in the building, as a child, and seeing the fixed portion of the first floor screen, between the men and the women, still in place. It was a wooden partition, about waist high, that some time later in the Grange's ownership was removed and after decades of storage in the attic, a portion of it was offered to the owners of the old Musical Mutual Protective Union's Retirement building, just to the north across the old railroad rightway and there it resides today. Two of the panels are installed in the ceiling of the stairwells of the Meeting House (see Plate 9). Plate 8 shows examples of partition construction in the Nine Partners Meeting House, in Millbrook, and the Oblong, at Quaker Hill. Simple pulley systems from overhead beams or counter balancing weights facilitated the raising and lowering of the panels/shutters.

Dorothy also recalls her mother speaking of the original stairways to the second floor as being very narrow (perhaps 30 inches wide) and with a steep rise and narrow tread. Plate 10 shows the stairs as built in the Oblong and it seems reasonable to speculate that the stairs in the Creek were much the same.

The first floor stove pipes, she remembers, went out through the east and west walls and there is evidence of that in the west wall even today.

The stones used in the construction of the walls (see Plate 9) are a combination of common field stone and what appears to be shale, grey and red in color. According to the Dutchess County Extension Service's Soil maps the shale is not prevalent in the fields nearby the center of the hamlet so there was a question as to its origin. The builders would have used stone that was readily available so an investigation of outcroppings within a 2 mile distance on the roads that existed in

the 1770s was begun. At the early fording place of the Wappingers, south of the hamlet and adjacent to the bridge on Clinton Corners Road, there was some of that type of stone but at Hibernia Mills both the grey and the red stone appeared along the west bank of the Creek. Also the soil maps show an outcropping on the west side of Jamison Hill Road soon after the road takes its first, Northward, bend ascending from Clinton Corners Road. The transport for the stone would almost certainly have been the stone boat. The west bank of the Creek from the Mills to the fording place is relatively flat and it seemed likely that this route could have been taken in both summer and winter. But the trip to the Mills would have been about a mile and one half in length while, although uphill, the Jameson Hill site seemed even more appropriate. On the uphill portion the oxen would have been dragging an unloaded stone boat, while on the downward trip the stones would be loaded in such a manner that the front of the boat would contain the heaviest load and therefore act as a brake, by digging into the dirt of the road surface. And the stone site was about three-quarters of a mile from the building site. Half the distance of the mill trip. This sort of work would have most likely been done while inbetween more pressing farm jobs so it must have taken some time for them to amass all the stone they required.

The second floor posts were removed when the Grange began sponsoring square dances and such during the 1930s. Mr. Tom Parker did the removal and the reinforcing of the truss that was necessary as a result. He was an innovative man. When his single story house became too small for his family, he raised the entire building and built a new first floor structure below it. The Meeting House posts were offered to Grange members and found new homes as the columns on the front of Clinton Corners store (since replaced). One was found in an Agway shed, on what had been the Sitzer farm, that Paul Schwarze contracted to demolish around 1973. Tom Parker was Mrs. Sitzer's father and he had evidently stored the post there years before. In any event, the post now supports Paul's barn floor.

Following is a reminiscence of a "first day" at the Creek meeting (about 1870) by a twig on the Southern branch of the Hathaway family. A young girl who had a lengthy visit with her Aunt Sally, Sarah M. Hathaway, who lived south of the Clinton Corners on the Clinton Corners Road (see map on inside of front cover).

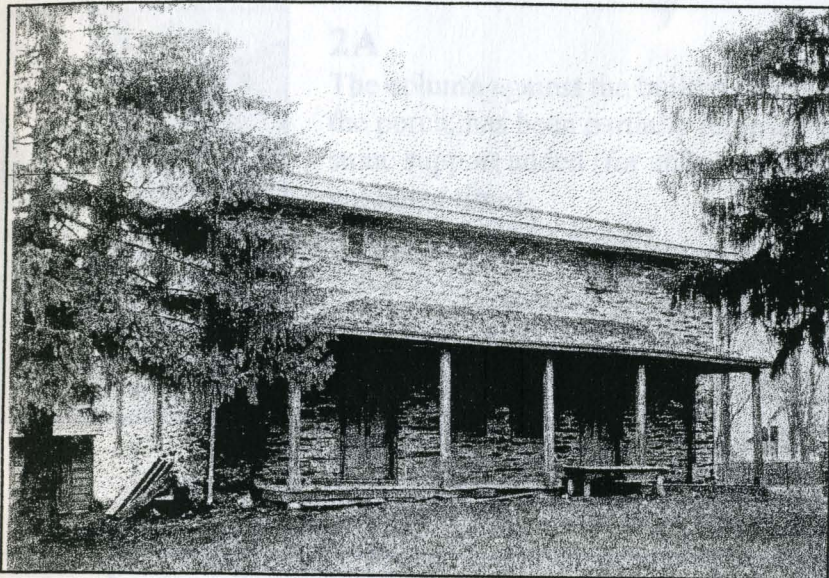
"Most of the villagers were Quakers, and she (Aunt Sally) affiliated with them, calling them by their first names in the Friends' fashion, and being known to all the inhabitants as Sally.

The Friends' Stone Meeting-house, then more than a century old, was the only church The Corners boasted; and seldom was her seat in the ancient edifice vacant unless the wintry weather was absolutely prohibitory.

Thither we would wend every "first Day" morning at eleven, and sit with folded hands through a long silent hour waiting till two old men in the "Amen corner" furtively exchanged inquiring and assenting glances, whereupon they would shake hands, which was a signal that Meeting was "out"; and there ensued a spontaneous rising, a general hand-shaking and exchange of civilities among the small assembly, which would gradually disperse amid as much friendly chatter as occurs in the breaking up of any other religious gathering.

I once asked Aunt Sally what good there could be in going to church when there was no service. She answered, "Thee can just sit still and think good thoughts."

I had always heard that Quakers never spoke until the Spirit moved them, and kept on hoping this miracle might take place. But the Spirit never moved any one to speech, during all the Sundays I used to "sit still and think....." in the old Friends Meeting house in Clinton Corners."



1A

A late 1800's
photo.

Note;

Shutters

Lack of paint

Downspout for
main roof

Photo Donated
by
Tobias
Ricciardelli

1B

As it was in the
Spring of 1997

Photo by
G. B. Greenwood



Plate 1



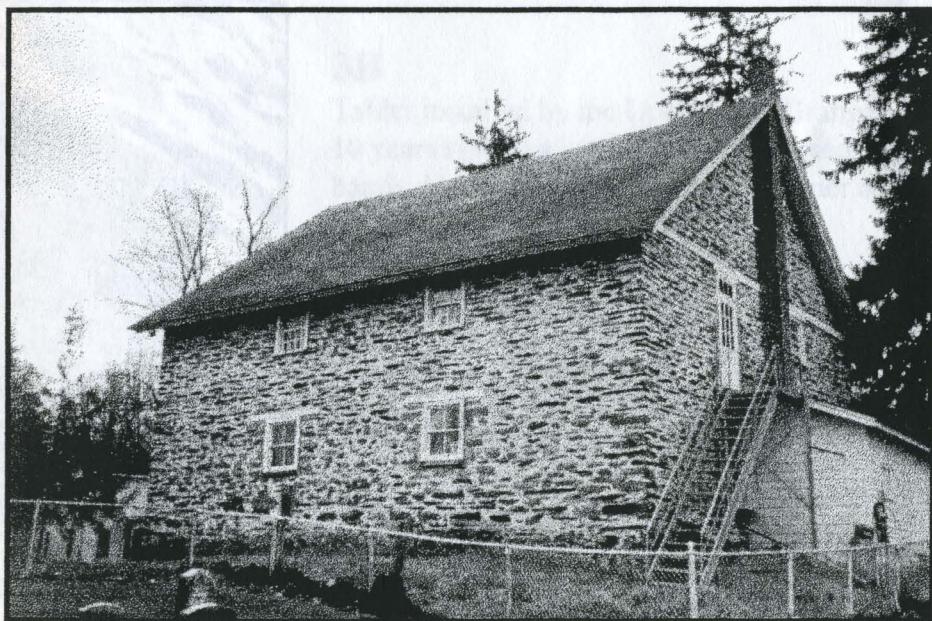
2A

The column against the building at the west side of the porch, has been partially removed and this new stone support added (for unknown reasons and at an unknown time).

Photos by
G. B. Greenwood

2B

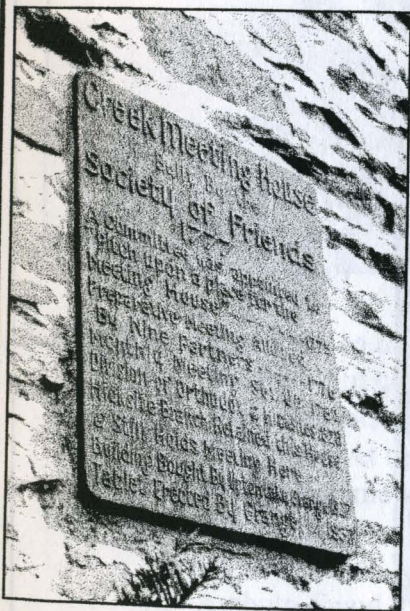
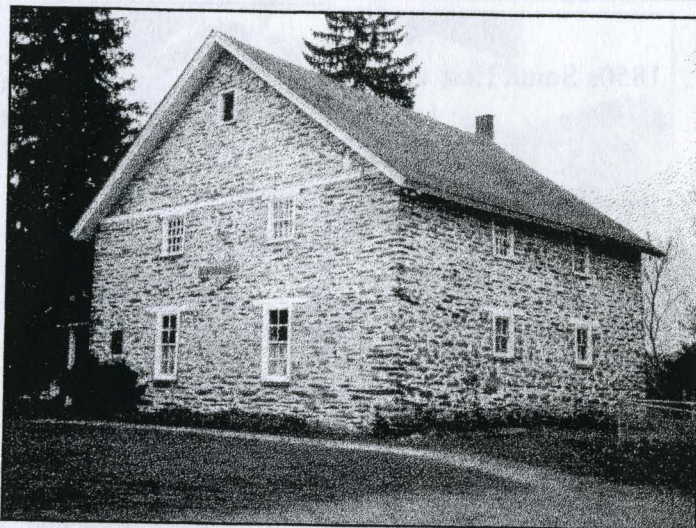
In this view the added shed, chimney and fire-escape



3A

View from the North-East

Photos by
G.B. Greenwood



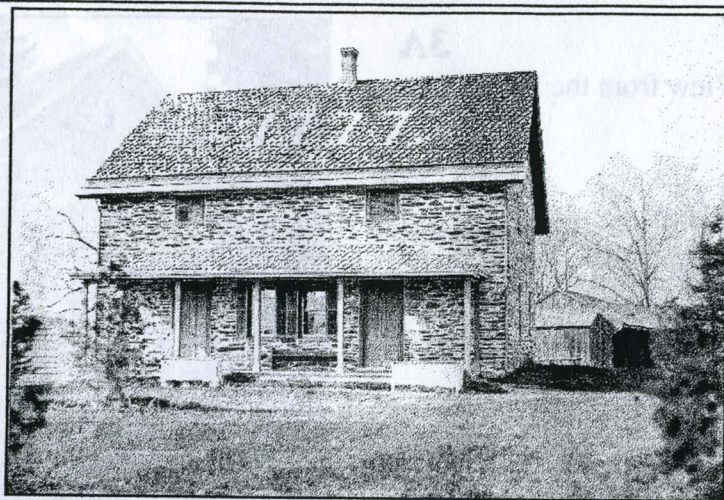
3B

Tablet installed by the Upton Lake Grange about 10 years (1937) after the building passed into their hands. Mounted on the south-east corner of the building.

Plate 3

4A

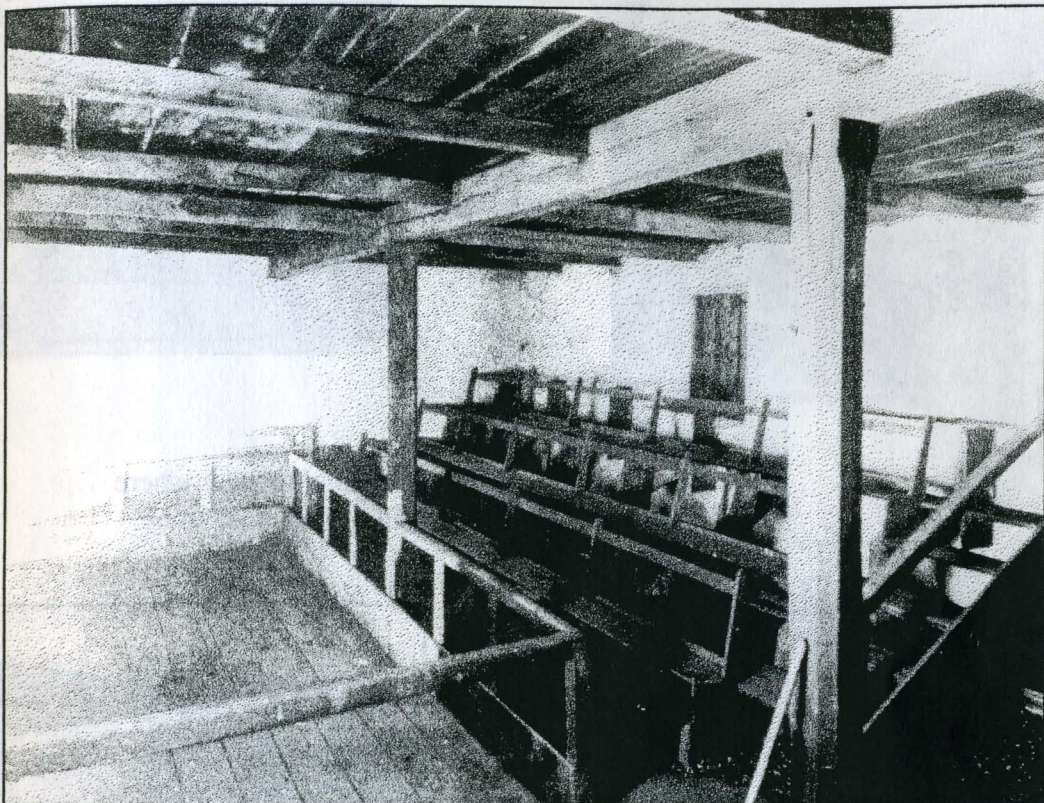
1850s South East view



4B

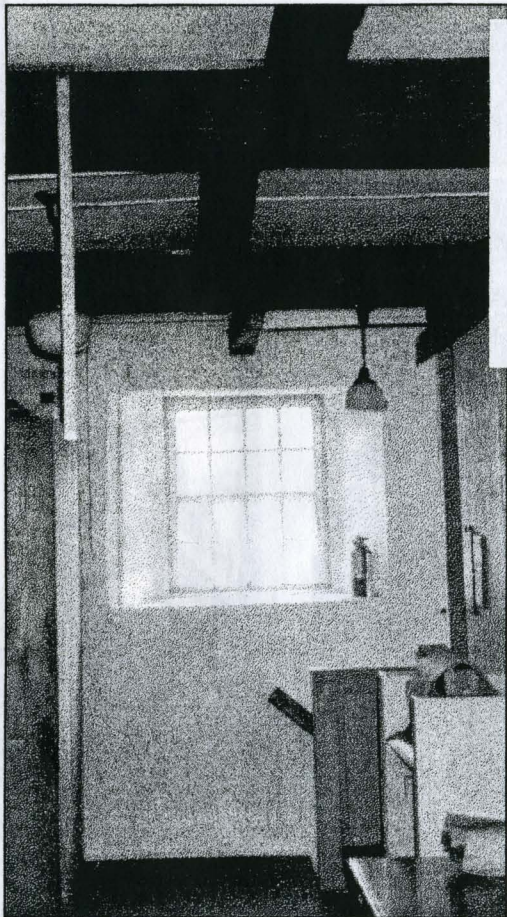
Same as above but in
1997

Photo by
G. B. Greenwood



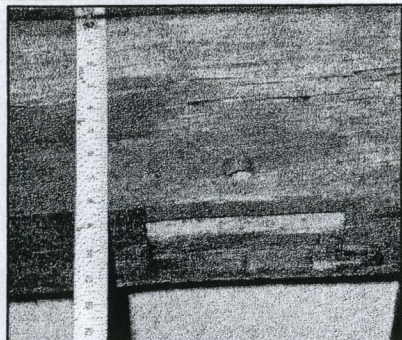
Second floor - East wall, to the right, lined with benches. Gallery opening showing in the floor but covered with planks. Note the Posts; these rested on the 2nd floor joist and were directly above the still existing posts on the first floor. At the top they were pegged into a notch in the bottom of the bottom member of the King Post Truss in the attic. See Plate 6A.

A photo found in the building and archived by the Upton Lake Grange.



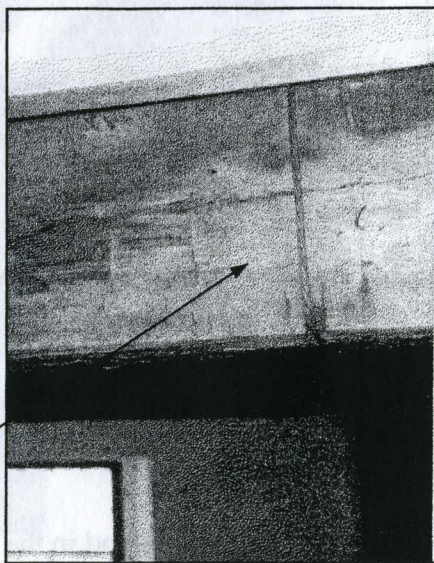
6A

The floor
post notch
in the
bottom of
the truss



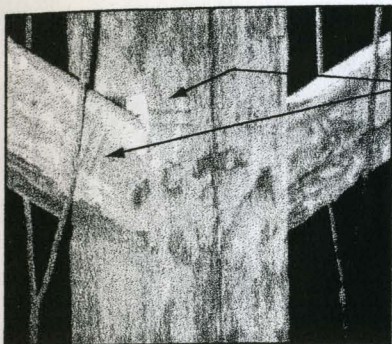
6B

Yardstick hanging near where
the 2nd floor post used to be.



6C

The lower member of the truss, notched
and wrapped with cable that reinforced
the truss when the 2nd floor posts
were removed.

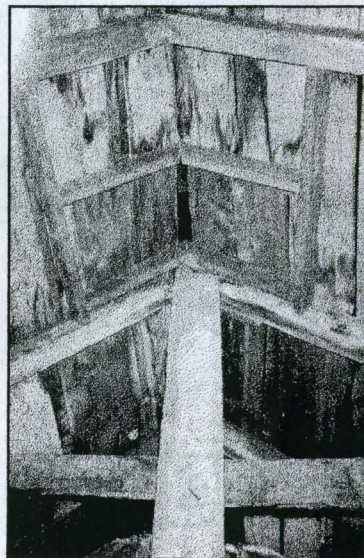


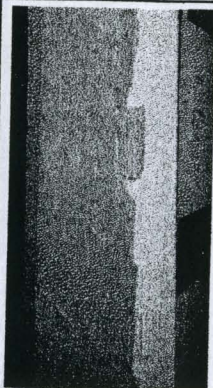
7A

Match marking on the King's Post truss.
Note also the cable reinforcement to the structure to help support the second floor ceiling beam when the second floor columns were removed.

7B

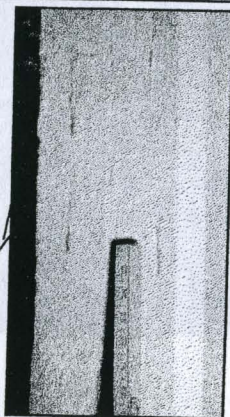
Showing the newer framing around the hole where the chimney originally penetrated the roof.





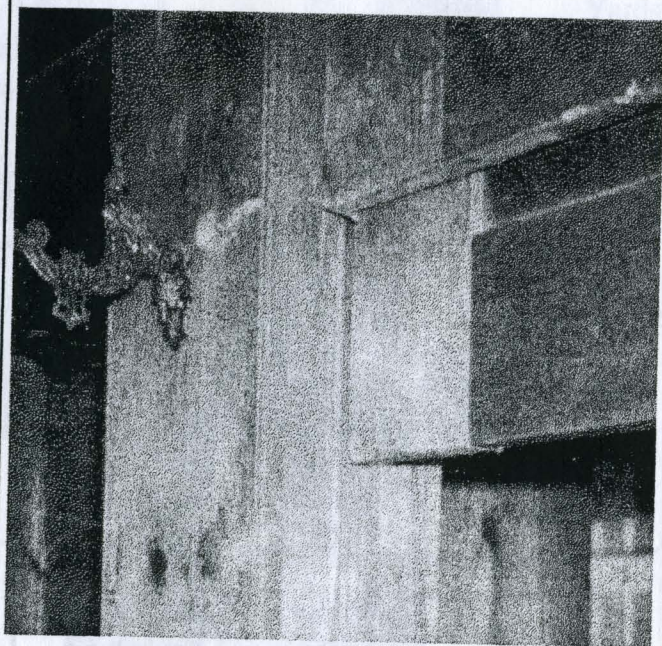
8A

This board was part of the partition structure on the 1st floor at the facing benches. See floor plan on page 6.



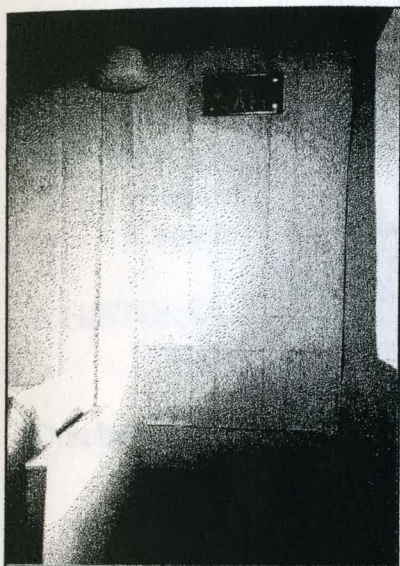
8B

These two boards were part of the partition structure in the middle and South end of the first floor. See floor plan on page 6.



8C

The "shutter" arrangement shown here is at Nine Partners. Note that the two panels shown, slide in grooves in a board attached to the first floor post. Below these moveable panels is a fixed partition from about waist level to the floor. This is an example that could have been followed at Creek, seeing that these two houses were more or less contemporary; but it's not certain.



9A

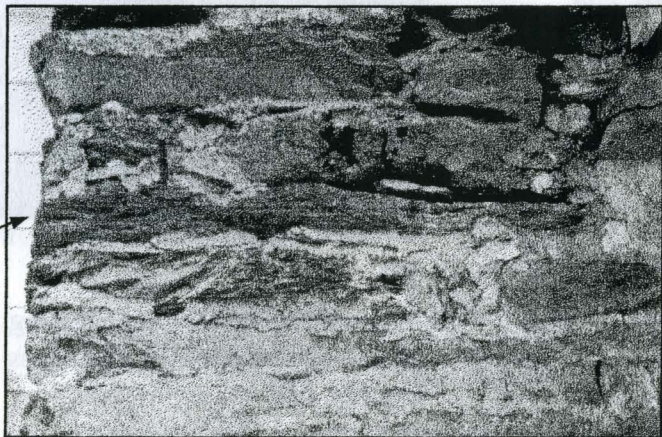
The paneling shown here, on the ceiling of the stairwells, is a portion of the partition and/or "shutters" that were originally installed on the first and second floors to separate the sexes. During their business meetings the "shutters" were closed.

Some of this paneling is now installed in the former Musicians Union retirement home just to the North of the Meeting House.

9B

A detail of the South-West corner showing the types of stone used in the walls.

The shale, not found in local fields, perhaps came from Jamison Hill (see text) or the Hibernia Mills area.





10

Stairwell at the Oblong Meeting
House on Quaker Hill, Dutchess
County, NY

RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY-

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History Of Dutchess County - Frank Hasbrouck; page 274

Reminiscences of the Hathaway Family - Generation II pg 12;

Clinton Historical Society archives

Acknowledgements:

I want to thank the following;

Carmine DiArpino for briefing me on Nine Partners Meeting House

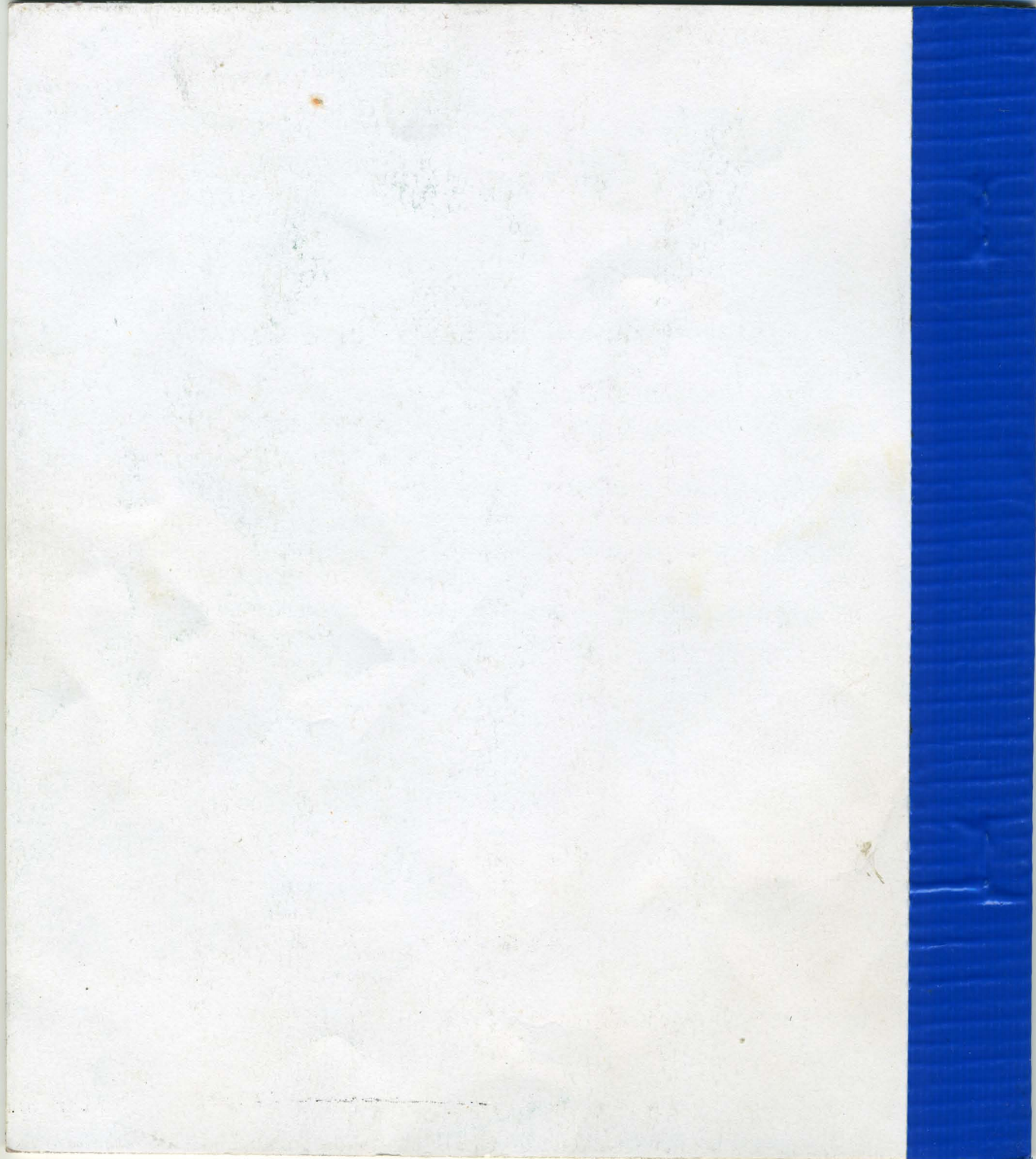
Betty Smith for doing the same at the Oblong on Quaker Hill.

Alson Van Wagner for expert advice on Quakers/Friends and suggesting possible arrangements of partitions and benches at Creek.

William McDermott for guidance on research material and being a sounding board and contributor of ideas about the possible partition, stairwell and gallery locations and other particulars.

Tobias Ricciardelli for asking "where did the stone come from?"

William Benson for stone boat expertise.



The Creek Meeting House

A Quaker Historical Site

