

# Little Falls Friends Meeting

## *Historical Time Line*



### **1738 Little Falls Meeting Founded**

Legend holds that William Amos, while exercising through the woodlands of Harford County, sat down on a log to rest. Here his meditations were such that he regarded them as a form of worship. The following Sabbath he invited two of his friends to join him on the log and they felt similar spiritual emotions. On subsequent Sabbaths, he invited more of his friends to join him until the log was fully occupied. Upon inquiring around they discovered that their mode of worship was like that of the Society of Friends. They visited Gunpowder Monthly Meeting and later formed a Meeting under the care of Gunpowder and erected a log building on the spot of their original log meditations.

### **1748 Thomas Bond conveys land for Little Falls Meeting**

Little Falls member Thomas Bond passed to the Meeting a deed for land which included the log building and another small building, which was used as a schoolhouse. This land is still the location of Little Falls Meeting.

### **1753 Little Falls becomes Preparative Meeting**

In 1753 Little Falls officially became a Preparative Meeting under the care of Gunpowder Monthly Meeting.

### **1773 Little Falls fieldstone Meeting House built**

By 1773, the Meeting community had grown and a small fieldstone Meeting House was erected on the site of the original log building.

### **1800 Slaveholding Quakers are disowned by the Meeting**

Initially some Quakers at Little Falls owned slaves. The Meeting elders, however were adamant in their concern that "no man shall own another" and asked those who owned slaves to rescind their memberships. Anti-slavery sentiment grew among Quakers in the area. Quakers in Harford County played an important role in the Underground Railroad providing a safe way-station for enslaved persons seeking freedom across the Mason Dixon Line.

### **1815 Little Falls becomes a Monthly Meeting**

By 1815, the Meeting had grown to include 193 members and officially became a Monthly Meeting as part of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Also about this time the Forest Meeting was established under the care of Little Falls at the location of what is now called *Friends Community Park* in nearby Forest Hill, Maryland.

### **1820's – 1830's The Meeting grows as Quakers move to the area**

Prominent Quakers from other Meetings moved to the area and became influential members of both the Little Falls community and the Forest Meeting. Some families moved from Old Town Meeting in Baltimore and West River Meeting near Annapolis, but many came from much further away including from Meetings in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. The timing of these moves and the connection of many from New York to abolitionist Lucretia Mott suggest that the anti-slavery cause may have served at least in part to bringing them to Maryland.

### **1841 Three Quaker Schools established**

In 1841, Nathan Tyson and Benjamin Ferris presented large collections of books to Little Falls. These gifts helped to spur the founding of three schools: Centrick District of Little Falls, Eastern District in Wilna, and Western District at Reeses Corner. When Harford County embraced public education in 1867, the latter two were turned over to the County.

**1843 Present Little Falls Meeting House built**

Growing membership at Little Falls resulted in the need for a larger building and thus the first stone meeting house was taken down and replaced by the present stone structure, which was designed by Benjamin Ferris, an active supporter of Elias Hicks and a close friend of the painter Edward Hicks. The cornerstones of the earlier building, dated 1773, were placed high in each end wall directly over the date stone of the present building dated 1843. The meeting house is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

**1850 Schoolhouse built at Little Falls**

The early records of Little Falls show that the original Thomas Bond deed included "... a school house already built." Little is known about that building except that by 1850, it was no longer in existence. By 1850, membership at Little Falls had grown to 325. With many children among the membership, Little Falls recognized the need and built a schoolhouse. An interesting architectural feature of this school house is the arched ceiling, originally insisted upon by one of the teachers so that he could properly teach astronomy.

**Forest Friends Meeting becomes a preparative meeting**

**1899 Men's and Women's Meetings for Business held jointly**

The interior of Little Falls Meeting House, as in most Meetings, is separated into two sides. This arrangement was to accommodate separate Meetings for Business for men and women. Even though this separate arrangement is credited with providing the opportunity for Quaker women to develop their leadership skills, many considered it an inequality that could not be reconciled with the social drive for women's suffrage. In 1899, Little Falls began holding its Meeting for Business jointly.

**1904 Wooden fence surrounding the cemetery replaced by current Iron fence**

**1943 Forest Friends Meeting House torn down**

After the Forest Friends Meeting House was torn down, Forest Meeting members were absorbed into the surrounding Meetings. The site is currently marked by the burial grounds and is leased to Harford county for Friends Community Park in Forest Hill, Maryland.

**1950 Wood Stoves in both sides of Meeting House replaced with a furnace**

**1960's Adelaide Noyes receives accolades**

Adelaide Noyes, a member of Little Falls, received a certificate from Martin Luther King, Jr. in appreciation for her work as a civil rights activist. Adelaide was one of several area Quakers active in the both the civil rights and anti-war movements.

**1974 Additions to Schoolhouse**

Substantial additions to the Meeting's schoolhouse were made in 1974 which included the addition of bathrooms and a fully functioning kitchen.

**1996 Library added to Schoolhouse**

**1999 Friends School exploratory committee formed**

In 1999 an exploratory committee composed of members of both Little Falls and Deer Creek Meetings was formed to consider the establishment of a Quaker school.

**2005 Friends School of Harford**

Members of Little Falls and Deer Creek Meetings founded Friends School of Harford in 2005. The school opened as a middle school in the fall of that year and was located in the Deer Creek Meeting House. In 2009 the school expanded to include K-5 students as well. In 2014 the school moved to larger facilities in Forest Hill. The school suspended operations in 2018.

**2013 Little Falls observes 275th Anniversary**