



*1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse
c/o Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation
P.O. Box 603, Seneca Falls, New York 13148
315-598-4387/315-568-6917*

www.farmingtonmeetinghouse.org

1816 FARMINGTON QUAKER MEETINGHOUSE
ANNUAL REPORT
2008

The 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse is nationally important because no other site embodies so powerfully the intersection of movements for women's rights, African American rights, and Native American rights. The Farmington meetinghouse was a crucible of reform, as Quakers, like the country as a whole, debated these issues. Here in this meetinghouse, in October 1848, reform Quakers created a new yearly meeting, called the Congregational Friends (later the Progressive Friends and the Friends of Human Progress). Nationally important people who spoke at the meetinghouse include Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and many Seneca leaders. Other nationally important people who lived or spoke in Farmington include William Lloyd Garrison and freedom seekers Austin Steward, William Wells Brown, and the Edmondson sisters.

Purposes of the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse project are:

- a. To own, restore, preserve, and interpret the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse as an educational and tourism center;
- b. To promote an understanding of the importance of New York State in national reform movements relating to women's rights and women's suffrage; relations between Quakers, Haudenosaunee, and African Americans; abolition of slavery; and the Underground Railroad;
- c. To challenge the general public to explore the meaning of equality and justice for all people in their own lives; and
- d. To enhance both community development (including outreach, organizational capacity, and partnerships promoting interpretive programs and quality of life) and regional economic development through heritage tourism.

2008 has been a year of considerable progress toward these goals:

A. Physical Fabric of the Building

- a. Stabilization of the meetinghouse, done with dabbles and posts in December 2007 by contractor Richard Deys and funded by the Rochester Area Community Foundation, continues to hold firmly.
- b. With our architect, we are exploring options for making this restoration project as green as possible. We visited the American Friends Service Committee offices at Race Street Meetinghouse in Philadelphia (which incorporates a geothermal heating system in a large office building) and discussed geothermal heating options with Eagle Mountain builders of South Bristol, New York, specialists in this field.

B. Programs/Publications. We have had several interpretive outreaches this year, including:

- a. Ganondagan Field Days. An information table for the Farmington Meetinghouse—set up by Charles Lenhart, Sylvia Rose, and Helen Kirker—attracted much attention, and also brought several donations.

- b. Macedon Farmers Market. Carol Elaine Deys has an information area about Farmington each week at this new Farmer's Market, held at the former Quaker Meetinghouse (built in 1868) in Macedon Center.
- c. Ontario County Barn Tour. About thirty people visited the meetinghouse in September, as part of this tour, hosted by Helen Kirker and Charles Lenhart.
- d. Slide Talks. We gave several slide shows this year that emphasized the meetinghouse, including programs for Farmington-Scipio Spring Gathering of Friends, Syracuse Monthly Meeting of Friends, and the annual statewide meeting of New York State National Organization for Women.
- e. Teaching Workshop. As part of a bus tour for teachers from North Rose-Wolcott School District, we stopped for a program by Margaret Hartsough, Farmington Town Historian, at the 1876 Farmington Meetinghouse.
- f. Women's Rights National Historical Park is developing a wayside interpretive sign—a 2 x 3 foot sign, in color—for the Meetinghouse.
- g. *New York Archives* (Spring 2008, 7:4) published "Quiet Center of the Storm," an article on the Farmington Meetinghouse, by Stephen Lewandowski and Judith Wellman.

C. Organizational Structure

- a. **National Park Service.** At the request of Congressman Randy Kuhl, the National Park Service began a reconnaissance study, exploring the potential relationship of the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse to Women's Rights National Historical Park. At least one-quarter of the signers of the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments were affiliated with Quaker meetings at Farmington, both Hicksite and Orthodox. Many of them joined the new Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, formed at Farmington in October 1848.
- b. **New Not-for-Profit Corporation.** We initiated work on forming the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse not-for-profit incorporation, with its own 501c3 status, separate from that of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation, which now owns the building. This will allow us to have a stronger public presence and more flexibility in fund-raising.

D. Fund-raising

- a. **National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.** In July, we received a \$47,000 grant from this program, for permanent stabilization of the meetinghouse, including removal for preservation of original windows, woodwork, staircase, divider panels, and so forth. We must match this with \$49,000.
- b. **Rochester Area Community Foundation.** In December, the Rochester Area Community Foundation generously awarded us \$14,000 toward this match.
- c. **Canandaigua National Bank.** Canandaigua National Bank has pledged \$2000 toward the match for the National Park Service grant.
- d. **Rochester Gas and Electric.** Will work with us in moving power lines when we relocate the meetinghouse to its new site across the road.
- e. **Private donors.** We have received pledges for \$3500 from private donors toward this match.
- f. **Environmental Protection Fund.** We submitted a request for a matching grant from the Environmental Protection Fund of more than half a million dollars. We are still awaiting results.
- g. **Raising money for current bills.** In December, we will owe \$2600 for insurance for the building, and we still owe our contractor over \$6000 for cleanup work done last year.

E. Other

- a. **National Women's History Project Act.** Introduced into the House by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (H.R. 3114) and into the Senate by Senator Hillary Clinton (S. 1816), the National Women's History Project Act would identify and nominate to the National Register women's history sites all over the country. In New York State, it would establish a women's history trail, incorporating sites such as the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse, administered by Women's Rights National Historical Park.
- b. **National Collaborative of Women's History Sites.** The 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse is now a member of this national group, sponsored by the Organization of American Historians, and is listed in their directory, both in hard copy and online (ncwhs.oah.org/index.php?page/who).
- c. **National Trust for Historic Preservation, America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.** We nominated the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse for this list, results to be announced in May 2009.

F. Plans

- a. **Beginning Work.** With \$19,500 in matching funds for the National Park Service's Network to Freedom grant (for a total of \$37,000 in hand), we can begin work with architect John G. Waite to develop plans and bid specifications for stabilizing the meetinghouse and removing original elements for preservation work. As soon as we raise the remaining \$29,500, we can begin the work itself.
- b. **Raising Funds.** We continue to explore various private foundations and individuals for matching funds.

Submitted by:

Judith Wellman, Chair
Steering Committee, 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse

Approved by:

Steering Committee
December 9, 2008