

OLD QUAKER MEETING HOUSE MOVED TO MEET CHANGED FARM NEEDS

Originally Built in 1817 at Cost
of \$2,250, Has Housed Many
Famous Preachers.

MACEDON, N. Y., May 9 (P).—The 110-year-old Friends' meeting house at Farmington, near here, landmark of a once-flourishing Quaker community, has been moved from its site to an adjacent farm and changed to meet the needs of farm storage.

In 11 years ago some of the most famous Quaker preachers of the country delivered sermons rich in oratory and exhortations which attracted large congregations. A rift in the society caused by dissention over the leadership of Elias Hicks marked the beginning of the end, and of late years meetings in the old church have been few.

The church was finished in 1817 at a cost of approximately \$2,250. For years it was carefully cared for and furnished. The shades at the windows would delight many collectors. They were evidently hung before the Civil War, for labels show they were patented in 1851. The fixtures are entirely of wood.

The history of Farmington, its Quakers and its churches, dates back to 1752, when a company of Friends living in Adams, Berkshire county, Massachusetts, heard of the advantages of the new Genesee country and sent their leaders to explore it. A deed was issued to Nathan Comstock and Benjamin Russell as representatives of the company, and these two men, with their sons, and Robert Hathaway came from Adams to settle the community.

As the settlement grew, religious meetings at first held in the homes were transferred to a log cabin, built in 1796. This structure also used as a schoolhouse, is believed to have been the first house of worship to be erected west of Clinton county. It was destroyed by fire in 1801 and was replaced by the larger building. As the community grew this proved inadequate and in 1816 construction of the present structure was begun.

Both the community and Society of Friends increased in size. At many meetings, it is recalled, the seats of the lower floor and balcony were filled and the worshippers occupied the aisles and stairways. But just prior to 1828 Elias Hicks, then one of the most gifted and influential members of the Society of Friends, expounded doctrines not acceptable to the entire membership and in June, 1828, some members responded to a call by Caleb McCumber and followed him to the older church. They were known thereafter as the "Orthodox Friends," while the followers of Hicks came to be called "Hicksites."

A number of the Friends still live in Farmington, cherishing memories of the past. Many of them use the quaint "the" and "thou" address of their ancestors, especially when conversing among themselves. Oldest among them, perhaps is Henry Greene, for 60 years a member of the society and one of the committee which negotiated the sale of the old church and its five acres of ground. The church of the "Orthodox Friends" still is in use.