

The Great Schism: A Divide Among Quakers
and Its Impact on the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting in Pennsylvania

by

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Abstract

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This thesis analyzes the Middletown Preparative Meeting in Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, during the Quaker schism of 1827. The religious separation spurred the formation of two Quaker branches known as the Orthodox and the Hicksites. The project was completed through a detailed examination of letters, diaries, and meeting records housed at Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library. My purpose is to investigate how the religious separation impacted the friends and families who lived in the community during the schism.

I approached this project by uncovering primary source documents produced between 1810 and 1830 related to the community of Middletown Township and the Quaker separation. Then I reviewed each document to construct an understanding of how residents reacted to the religious separation, how communication between meeting members was affected, and who were the primary community leaders during that time period. Then I extended my research to secondary sources related to the Quaker schism to compare the events of the Middletown Preparative Meeting with other Quaker meetings in the United States. Together, they reveal the stories, emotions, and difficulties that emerged as a result of the actions taken by the Quaker religion.

The study concluded that harsh and damaging rhetoric was expressed both verbally and in writing between meeting members during the Quaker separation. Members of the Hicksite branch of Quakerism expressed their opinions in public more often than Orthodox Quakers. Due to the sudden impact of the separation, many meeting members did not know how to react to the religious changes. The hierarchical decision shocked older meeting members who were not prepared to take a side on the argument. Two key leaders, Sarah Emlen and Minshall Painter, emerged as community leaders during the religious separation. Although the community leaders represented opposing sides of the argument, they both maintained a strong stance on their positions. After the Quaker separation was formally incorporated into the religion, members of the Orthodox and Hicksite branches eventually learned to live amongst one another.

Keywords: Quaker, Orthodox, Hicksite, Elias Hicks, Sarah Emlen, Minshall Painter

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Although this project has come to an end, there is still more fascinating history to explore, research, and decipher. The journey continues...

INTRODUCTION

During the early nineteenth century, the community of Middletown Township, Delaware, County Pennsylvania, was home to many Quaker families. Residents of the area were employed in a wide range of occupations. Some of the Friends¹ busied themselves with the operation of dairy and agricultural farms, while other Friends devoted their lives to the study of law, literature, and science. In 1827, a schism within Quakerism occurred that began in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The end result was that two major branches, Orthodox and Hicksite, emerged which divided the preparative meeting members. Many scholars have focused on large-scale events and religious proclamations. Researching the schism broadly offers readers an opportunity to learn about the monumental event, but it does not address its impact on small communities. This thesis is focused on the stories, experiences, and conversations of individual Quakers in the Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania area who were personally affected by the schism. Primary source documents, including letters, journals, and notebooks of the community members have been analyzed to understand the significance of the schism. The first-hand accounts of life within Middletown Township provides an opportunity to capture the emotions that emerged from the schism. Although every Quaker meeting experienced the schism differently, they were all affected by the religious separation. In order to gain an understanding of how this proclamation had an impact upon Quaker communities, my thesis research centers on the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting.

¹ Members of the Quaker religion are referred to as Friends.

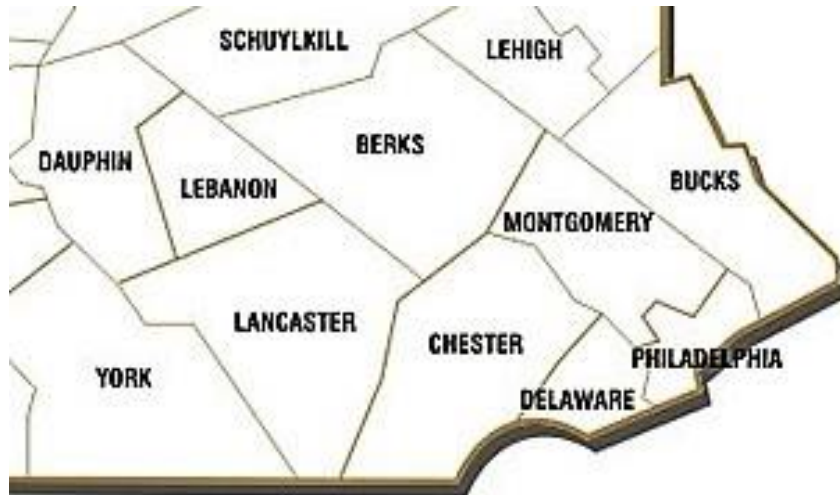


Figure 1: Map of Southeastern Pennsylvania Counties After 1789²

This thesis will also provide a glimpse into the lives of the Emlen family. Three generations of Emlen family members lived within Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. They witnessed their community evolve and change during the Quaker schism. Analyzing the Emlen family letters and first-hand accounts of their actions by fellow community members will reveal the triumphs and sorrows that they experienced as residents of Middletown Township in the early nineteenth century. The primary source documents related to the Emlen family will be analyzed to discover how their experiences before the Quaker schism influenced their leadership roles during the religious separation.

Throughout this thesis, several influential events will be discussed that were involved in the Quaker separation. The project will begin by offering a history of the Quaker religion as it emerged in England during the seventeenth century. The religion eventually migrated to America during the eighteenth century. Quakerism was founded by Englishman George Fox who believed that everyone held within themselves a light from God. This Inward Light was a personal, vertical

² Lawrence County Government Center, "Pennsylvania County Website Links," *Lawrence County*, <http://co.lawrence.pa.us/pennsylvania-county-websites/> (accessed April 10, 2017).

connection to a strong and powerful spirit.³ The history of Quakerism will be discussed in further detail in Chapter One.

A Quaker woman minister, Sarah Emlen (1787-1849), was an active member of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. She instilled in herself a desire to educate fellow Quakers along with her husband, James (1792-1866). When the trauma of the Quaker Separation of 1827 to 1828 divided the members into the Orthodox⁴ and Hicksite branches, the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting and its members transformed the community. The distress and arguments that resulted from the Quaker Separation encouraged Sarah Emlen to continue her missionary work by leading her fellow Orthodox Friends and providing them with guidance through the teaching of the Scripture.⁵ The triumphs and struggles that Sarah Emlen and her family experienced will be discussed in Chapter Two.

As a Quaker minister, Elias Hicks (1748-1830) believed that God placed man on Earth to labor on the land. During Hicks' tireless devotion to farming, he gained a greater connection to Quakerism and began to preach his messages. Although Hicks was a member of the Quaker faith, he viewed the religion as drifting away from its original values and beliefs. Hicks saw Quakerism as shifting towards other Christian religions. He believed that the only way Friends were able to seek divinity was by diligently obeying and following their Inward Light.⁶ The teachings and beliefs of Elias Hicks will be discussed in further detail in chapter three.

³ Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988), 62.

⁴ Orthodox Quakers was one of two branches that emerged from the schism. They followed the same beliefs as evangelicals: belief in the deity Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ is the source of the Inward Light; the Bible is the highest authority.

⁵ Edward G. Smedley, April 1881, "Article Written by Edward G. Smedley for a Gathering of the Meeting Members in 1881," Middletown Preparative Meeting Papers: PG1, Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 3

⁶ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 15-16.

Several members of the Middletown community were involved in the study of science, astronomy, and botany, including Minshall Painter (1801-1873). He was a young, active member of the community who participated in many civic activities. Painter viewed himself as a leader within the Middletown community. He educated the public about the field of science through the creation of the Delaware County Institute of Science. During the Quaker schism, Painter was a member of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. He believed in several opposing views of the religion compared to the Emlen family. Although the Quaker sect treats every member as an equal participant, Painter informally appointed himself a leader of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. Placing himself into this new role caused Painter to gain unwarranted power over his fellow Friends.⁷ Painter's involvement in and experiences during the Quaker schism will be expanded upon in chapter four.



*Figure 2: Middletown Meeting House, Date Unknown*⁸

⁷ Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1980), 250-4

⁸ Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, "Middletown Meeting House," Triptych, http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/SC_Houses/id/6047/rec/5 (accessed April 10, 2017).

The Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting, located in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, constructed between 1701 and 1702, is among the oldest Friends Meetings in the Country. Quaker meetings were held in the home of John Bowater beginning in 1686. Members of the Middletown Meeting purchased a plot of land in 1700 for the construction of a fieldstone meeting house and burial ground. The structure began as a single room building with a central entry door that was common among rural meeting houses in Southeastern Pennsylvania. At the time of the building's expansion between 1793 and 1797, the meeting house gained a second, equally sized room. The new trend of that time period in American meeting houses was to offer both men and women separate rooms to hold business meetings.⁹

The County of Delaware was originally occupied by Native Americans, including the Lenni-Lenape and Minques. One of the first encounters between Native Americans and European settlers occurred during the seventh century when Dutch and Swedish explorers sailed along the Delaware River. Native Americans became consistent trading partners with European explorers who often traded valuable beaver furs. European travelers to this region of America were often searching for a Northwest passageway that would lead them to Asia.¹⁰

One of the first settlements in Delaware County occurred in 1643. Governor Johan Printz (1592-1663) arrived from Sweden to establish the colony of New Sweden along the Delaware River. Once a government system was created, families began immigrating to this new territory. Although people continued to settle on the land, the area was involved in constant disputes between the Swedes, Dutch, and Finns. Between 1681 and 1683, the land that encompassed Pennsylvania

⁹ Catherine C. Lavoie, Middletown Preparative Friends Meeting House HABS No. PA-6655, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey, Summer 1999), 1-10.

¹⁰ Charles Palmer, Esq., ed. *A History of Delaware County Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (Harrisburg: National Historical Association, Inc., 1932), 8-15.

was granted to William Penn (1644-1718). King Charles II of England offered the grant to William Penn in exchange for his financial support of the monarchy. Over the next three years, the colony of Pennsylvania was mapped, a government established, and the counties of Chester, Bucks, and Philadelphia were commissioned.¹¹

During the eighteenth century, the County of Chester experienced a rapid increase in population, which caused people to migrate away from the County seat of Chester situated along the Delaware River. Residents of the county who needed to engage in government business were forced to travel many miles on poorly constructed roads to the county seat of Chester. In 1784, people began demanding that the county seat should be moved to a more central location. The conflict caused residents to divide themselves into two parties known as the Removalists and the Anti-Removalists. The Removalists Party petitioned to establish the new county seat at Turk's Head, which is presently located in the town of West Chester. Although the opposing parties encountered several confrontations related to the county seat, the Removalists Party won their battle. On September 26, 1789, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed an act to divide Chester County. The new county, Delaware, included the southern region of Chester County with the county seat located in Chester.¹²

Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania was established between 1686 and 1687. The township name was originally designated, because it was thought that the location was situated at the center of Chester County. The community was home to an abundance of mills that supplied the area with cotton and wool materials. One of the earliest hotels, The Black Horse Hotel,

¹¹ Ibid., 27-32, 53-55.

¹² Ibid., 77-78.

was established in the township in 1739. This hotel offered a resting stop for travelers who were traveling from the town of Chester located on the Delaware River towards the western frontier.¹³

Before William Penn arrived in America, only a few Quakers occupied the area that would become the colony of Pennsylvania. Within three years after Penn established Pennsylvania as a colony, nearly seven thousand Quakers resided in the territory. This swift population increase came about through migration from the British Isles. The first Pennsylvania Quaker meeting occurred in 1675 at the house of Robert Wade in the town of Upland, which is now known as Chester. Quakers who worshiped and resided in the townships of Middletown, Edgmont, Springfield, Marple, Upper Providence, and Nether Providence donated funds in 1694 to construct the Chester Meeting House. Penn often attended the Chester Meeting House and frequently spoke during the meetings. In 1686, the residents of Middletown Township began holding meetings in the homes of Friends. Residents felt that they were no longer able to travel on the poorly managed roads to attend the Chester Meeting House.¹⁴ During that time, Middletown Township was referred to as a westerly community situated in the woods. In 1699, a committee consisting of Philip Roman, Robert Pyle, Nathaniel Newlin, George Robinson, John Hood, and John Wood were appointed to oversee the construction of a permanent meeting house in Middletown. After raising a sufficient amount of funds and selecting a plot of land for the building, the Middletown Meeting House was constructed in 1701. The Middletown Preparative Meeting House became the site of community disagreements concerning the future of the Quakers and the backdrop of the religious schism of 1827.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 111.

¹⁴ Ibid., 261-263.

¹⁵ John Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with Genealogical and Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881) 233.

CHAPTER 1: THE QUAKER RELIGION

THE POWER OF QUAKERISM

The origin of Quakerism emerged from the belief articulated by English founder George Fox that everyone held within themselves a light from God – a personal, vertical connection to a strong and powerful spirit. Religious devotion, resulting from awareness of the Inward Light, could not be forced upon its followers. It had to be discovered through their own contemplation of thoughts and seclusion from negative judgements. Members of the Society of Friends could be saved by this Inward Light without relying on assistance from religious leaders. Focusing on an Inward Light, found within every Friend, removed the need for religious intermediaries – a clergy mediating between congregants and God – from the sect. People no longer needed to rely on priests, offerings, and sacraments to experience a connection with God. Each member was considered his or her own leader and preacher. Their inner drive would pull them closer to God. Quakers had the power to capture this inner spirit regardless of their familiarity with the Scripture or possessing a collection of knowledge about Jesus Christ. They felt a personal desire to seek a connection to God, which was placed upon them through their own devotion. Following this Inward Light would lead them to salvation.¹⁶

Historically, the Quaker belief system was threatening to other Christian groups, because it placed the Divine relationship in the hands of the individual without the need for clerics.¹⁷ Followers of Quakerism held within themselves the power to foster a relationship with God through their own devotions to the religion. The religion was an opposition against the dominant, mainstream religions as early as the seventeenth century. Opposing other religions caused the members to become isolated as they retreated from the surrounding world. Their doctrinal belief

¹⁶ Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers*, 62.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

that everyone held within themselves an Inward Light from God added to their separation from other religious followers.

Quakers followed a set of their own laws, which was formally distributed as the Book of Discipline. The first emergence of this unified document detailing the religious laws occurred in 1704 at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The document was revised several times throughout the eighteenth century. After the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting published the Book of Discipline, other yearly meetings including New York and New England published their own set of rules. Before the publication of the religious law book, Quaker guidance to the followers of the religion were shared through speeches and informal conversations. They also distributed short pamphlets discussing the procedures of Quakerism, which included the proper methods of living a Quaker lifestyle. These procedures and rules of the religion were distributed in short segments as new views on Quakerism emerged. This formal book, the Book of Discipline, was the first compilation of Quaker thoughts concerning the religion. It was distributed to meetinghouses to strengthen and unify the religion.¹⁸

Although the Book of Discipline detailed the procedures and thoughts concerning the Quaker faith, it primarily focused on non-religious rules. It emphasized what Quakers were permitted and not permitted to do as members of the sect. Focusing on the promotion of daily practices of life caused the document to push aside theology and religious beliefs. The formal book of laws provided Quakers with answers and guidance to a wide range of topics, including education, marriage, meetings for worship, slavery, trade, and war. When the Book of Discipline was formally distributed to the meetinghouses, it provided Quakers with a universal set of

¹⁸ Ibid., 62.

procedures that must be followed. Obliging by the rules would ensure that Quakers engaged in a religiously acceptable lifestyle and did not inhibit their connection to God.¹⁹

The Book of Discipline, which was reissued regularly from London, England, emphasized following a plain style of life within and outside of the home. It also discussed the need to remove themselves from engaging in unnecessary activities and products, such as limiting the size of their houses and purchasing only the most necessary pieces of furniture. These were measures to preclude overemphasis on progressive styles and to prevent undue attention to differences in material circumstances. The Book of Discipline also instructed Quakers to wear plain-style clothes, which did not include extravagant buttons, elaborate ribbons on their hats, and floral patterned cloth. Members of the Quaker religion were advised to engage in a plain style of language through speaking and writing. This form of plain speech replaced the singular “you” with “thee” and thou.” The calendar was also altered to accommodate the plain style of speech. Rather than stating the day of the week, such as Sunday, The Book of Discipline instructed Quakers to refer to that day as the “first day.” Replacing the months of the year with numerical values was also customary among Quakers. As an example, the month of January was referred to as the “first month.” Quakers deemed the universal language of weekdays and months as corrupt, because they were named by Heathens. Following a plain form of language early in the origins of the religion aided in distinguishing themselves from other community members.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 107-110.

²⁰ Susan Garfinkel, “Quakers and High Chests: The Plainness Problem Reconsidered,” in *Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption*, ed. Emma Jones Lapsansky and Anne A. Verplanck (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 62-65.

SACRIFICES OF QUAKERISM

During the late seventeenth century, within the forefront of Quakerism, followers of the religion encountered great oppression. Achieving human perfection was the culmination of a lifetime of devotion to purity and religious excellence. As a comparison, Puritans disavowed the belief in human perfection. They referred to perfection as an unattainable achievement regardless of a person's devotion to their religion. Perfection was an unreachable feat that should be looked upon as a guide to a Puritan life even though it would only be an illusion. Quakerism steadfastly denied this notion of unattainable perfection by publicizing that human perfection could be achieved by everyone who devotes their lives to the Inward Light. God shines upon all of the Quaker followers with the strength needed to live a truthful life.²¹

Early Quaker traveling ministers in England were selected to share the religious teachings with Friends from every meeting house. Their role within the religion focused on spreading the Quaker messages. Each meeting house was encouraged to donate funds to the traveling ministers so they may have the manuscripts printed for use by the members. As the ministers traveled from one meeting house to the next, they were often in fear of the Church of England congregations. Many Quakers were imprisoned by the English government for practicing their religion and renouncing their connection to the Church of England.²² As a result, Quakers were persecuted in the Old World as well as the New World in Massachusetts.

Local, monthly, and quarterly Quaker meetings were held to ensure that all of the Friends were receiving enough guidance and assistance within the religious society. Offering continuous support to every meeting house was in response to their persecution as Quakers and helped the members plan their future agendas. The hierarchy of leadership within the religion was enacted by

²¹ Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 62-63.

²² *Ibid.*, 66-67.

George Fox in England during the late seventeenth century. He believed that implementing a chain of communication among the meeting houses would ensure the survival of Quakerism. Documenting the members of each meetinghouse was not performed regularly until the eighteenth century. Quakers who devoted their lives to the religion and their local meeting house would be cared for by the other members. If members encountered difficulties in their lives, they could be reassured that their community of Friends would help them recover.²³

After contemplating their persecuted lives in England, Ireland, and Wales, some Quakers decided that they could achieve a better quality of life in America. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Quakers began to immigrate to America where they established their new lives in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania's Delaware Valley. Most of the Quaker immigrants traveled to the new world to seek, according to historians Barbour and Frost, ". . . economic opportunities, religious freedom, wanderlust, quest for adventure, desire to help create a Christian Commonwealth, escape from unhappy political or domestic situations."²⁴ The London Yearly Meeting urged Friends not to leave their communities and travel to America just to seek religious freedom or economic opportunities. They were instructed to emigrate only if they received a message from God through their Inward Light.

By the nineteenth century, the religious government that directed Quakerism grew into a large organization. Although they did not have a central governance system, several regional meetings maintained control of the religion. The lowest level of authority within the religion focused on small communities. Preparative meetings were located within towns and villages throughout the eastern portion of the United States. Friends would become a member of their local preparative meeting, which would become their home meeting.

²³ Ibid., 66-68.

²⁴ Ibid., 76.

The next level of governance within the Quaker organization was the monthly meetings. Several preparative meetings would travel to one meeting house each month to settle matters related to the religion. The monthly meeting leadership had the authority to accept new members, disown former members, hold property, and approve marriages. The third level of governance, the quarterly meeting, consisted of at least two monthly meetings. One of the primary tasks assigned to the quarterly meetings was to discuss controversies related to doctrine and the organization. Since they were important decisions that would have an impact upon all of the members, it was customary to allow a majority of the members to become involved with the decisions.

As Quakers evolved from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the organizational structure of the religion expanded. Preparative, monthly, and quarterly meetings became governed by region-wide meetings known as the yearly meetings. Yearly meetings began to emerge in populated regions of the United States as well as in Europe. During the early portion of the nineteenth century, the United States had eight yearly meetings known as New England, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Indiana. The yearly meetings made decisions on matters of high importance. They conducted meetings on matters of religious doctrine, discipline of members, and acted as the court of final appeal for cases of disownment.²⁵

²⁵ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*, xvi.

Chapter 2. THE EMLLEN FAMILY OF MIDDLETOWN

The Emlen family settled in Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in 1784. James Emlen, Sr. (1760-1798) and his wife, Phebe Peirce (1758-1793), purchased 102 acres of land. They raised six children on their property. The Emlen family farm was home to several livestock, including cows and sheep. A grist mill, which was purchased with the land, was used to convert locally grown grains into flour. James Emlen, Sr. and his wife, Phebe, were lifelong members of the Quaker religion. The Middletown Preparative Meeting appointed James, Sr. and Phebe representatives to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1793 and 1798. The Emlen family's devotion to Quakerism was instilled in each of their children. James, Sr. and Phebe sacrificed everything, including their lives, to continue the Quaker religion.²⁶



Figure 3: Map of Middletown Township, 1875²⁷

²⁶ John Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, 537.

²⁷ Keith Lockhart, "1875 Atlas," *Delaware County PA History*
http://delawarecountyhistory.com/middletowntownship/images/middletown_000.jpg (accessed April 10, 2017).

Only one of James, Sr. and Phebe's children, James, Jr., (1792-1866) chose to remain on the family farm. James, Jr. and his wife, Sarah (1787-1849), settled on the family farm in 1818. They occupied their Middletown Township residence in Delaware County, Pennsylvania with their seven children. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Sarah traveled across the United States as a minister of the Philadelphia Society of Friends. They later moved to the Westtown Boarding School located in Westtown, Pennsylvania to become teachers.²⁸ The Westtown Boarding School was a private Quaker grammar school that educated students based on the principles of the Quaker religion.²⁹ During the Emlens' ownership of their home in Middletown Township, they sold off a grist mill and farm land in order to concentrate on their careers as teachers. As educators, they were able to pass on their knowledge to the next generation of students and instill a moral foundation based on their Quaker religion. As a minister for the Society of Friends, Sarah was often required to visit meeting houses outside of Delaware County, Pennsylvania to ensure that the members were staying true to the religion. Sarah's assignment required her to leave her family for several days to several weeks at a time. When Sarah departed the family home to attend the religious meetings, her husband, James, was left to care for their seven children. During her leaves of absence, Sarah wrote long, detailed letters to her husband and children. She always tried to keep up to date with all of her children's events and milestones. Sarah was forced to balance taking care of her husband, children, and home with her desire to travel across the country to broaden her religious teachings.³⁰

Throughout her life, Sarah was a caring and compassionate person. She devoted her life to educating students and fellow Quakers. As a traveling minister, Sarah was required to visit meeting

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 303.

³⁰ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 27, 1837, Emlen Family Papers: RG5/038, Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 3

houses that were located great distances from her home in Middletown Township. It is noteworthy that Quakerism's lack of formal organization and stress upon individual access to the divine removed barriers found in other faiths that precluded female leadership of this type. This was an early example of how Quaker principles led to a strong civil rights tradition. Sarah's extended departures caused her to feel an emotional loss when she was away from her family. A trend among Sarah's letters was her yearning to return home to her husband and their children by expressing her love for the family: "[I]t was evident I have been so uneasy and anxious about you that yesterday I had almost concluded to return today – but they seem not willing to give me up here – my poor nerves!"³¹ Sarah wanted to return to her family, but she felt obligated to stay with her fellow Friends and inspire the members within the meeting houses. After each meeting, Sarah would return to her empty, temporary living quarters and ponder the events that may have occurred at her home. She always hoped that one day they would reunite as a family and live harmoniously. As a Quaker woman minister, Sarah Emlen was faced with the challenge of devoting her time to the Society of Friends while also offering sufficient time to her own family. When Sarah thought about the idea of ending her trips early to return home, she questioned whether becoming a traveling minister was the best course in life for her at that time.³²

³¹ Ibid., 1-3.

³² Ibid., 2-3



*Figure 4: Sarah Emlen of Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, Date Unknown*³³

During the early nineteenth century, women were viewed as caretakers of their children, husbands, and home.³⁴ As Sarah diverted from this traditional path, she needed to gain strength to move forward by thinking ahead to when she would be able to reunite with her family. Sarah wrote to her husband and children, “. . . longings of my very heart, that we may be so preserved from the

³³ Watson W. Dewees and Sarah B. Dewees, *History of Westtown Boarding School: 1799-1899* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 1899), 118.

³⁴ Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (Hartford: Yale University, 1986), 20-21.

evils which are in the world, as to become a Little Band of Love not to be broken.”³⁵ Even though Sarah was physically separated from her family, she believed they would always stay united in their hearts. Sarah used her inner spiritual strength to gain the courage to continue on her journeys away from her home.

Sarah exemplified the nineteenth century Romantic form of writing, which allowed her to compose eloquent, poetic letters. During a visit to a Washington, D.C., meeting house, Sarah became ill and explained her emotions to James through her letter. Sarah expressed to her husband, “and as I sat, concealing my exercised mind, walking as in the garden, so grieved that I could not find my Lord, that I was nearly concluding, surely I have grieved his Holy Spirit & He is angry with me when very suddenly, it seemed that the stone was removed from the door of the Sepulcher and the angel of his presence spoke peace with my troubled soul.”³⁶ Even though Sarah was writing a simple letter about her experiences in Washington D.C., she wrote using a spiritual voice. Writing about her thoughts gave Sarah an opportunity to contemplate all of the activities that she experienced throughout her day. It was a peaceful way of relaxing after Sarah’s stressful and energetic daily experiences which focused on expressing her devotion to the Society of Friends.

The spiritual experiences that Sarah documented in her letters to her husband, James, occurred with other Quakers. The spiritual awakenings were perceived as personal signs that intensified their religious connection. When George Fox preached to his followers, he rejected the idea of water baptism. Rather than participating in a water baptism, Quakers believed that they would experience an inner spiritual baptism. Removing the public baptism ceremony from the Christian religion allowed Quakers to gain a deeper relationship with God without the use of a

³⁵ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 2, 1836, Emlen Family Papers: RG5/038, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 1.

³⁶ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 29, 1831, Emlen Family Papers: RG5/038, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 2.

spiritual leader. A Quaker baptism occurred at a different time in the lives of each member. The baptism would originate from a feeling of personal suffering and a painful illness that was not inflicted by their visible surroundings. This experience produced a sense of personal grief that led to a period of depression and agony. Although many Quakers experienced a painful, negative experience of suffering, some Friends experienced a sense of unlimited joy and delight. These baptismal experiences would occur throughout their lives as a way to purify themselves.³⁷

Analyzing the letters of Sarah Emlen reveal similarities between Sarah in the nineteenth century and mothers of the present. Quaker women ministers in nineteenth century America were faced with similar issues modern career women must still tackle. They take on the challenge of managing their complex households while also living a public life as a traveling minister. Quaker women ministers who chose to raise a family were faced with the decision of either staying at home to take care of their children or following their religious calling. They agonized over the realization that they were unable to leave home because of their children and were also required to leave home for their public responsibilities.³⁸

Receiving letters on their journeys from family members produced a brief connection to the home life that they had left behind. In a letter to James on August 3, 1828, Sarah wrote, “I hope my precious dear James thou wilt continue to write often, for at times it seems to be the only comfort I have – especially when poor, & naked, & blinde. We do not know what is before us, we must hope for the best.”³⁹ Agonizing over the inability to know when they would receive another letter only instilled fear into the Quaker women ministers. Every day they were separated from their husbands and children caused them to worry about the stability of their home life. Even if the

³⁷ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*, 4-5.

³⁸ Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 157-58

³⁹ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, August 3, 1828, Emlen Family Papers: RG5/038, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 3.

women ministers received a joyful letter from their children, a terrible catastrophe may have occurred which would not be known until receiving the next letter. Choosing to live the public life of a Quaker minister forced women to follow their intellectual desires and trust that their families would be well cared for during their absence.⁴⁰

While Sarah was on a trip to Philadelphia in 1837, she detailed the responsibilities that James was required to complete while he was in charge of the children. Sarah requested that he have the girls measured for the purchase of bonnets and cloaks. In her meticulous instructions to James, Sarah directed her daughter Phebe "...to send the measure of Anne's & Susann's head (round a little above the ears) to Susann McCollians for their bonnets."⁴¹ Bonnets and cloaks were popular fashion necessities that a majority of Philadelphians were wearing during that time period. Sarah also asked James if the children were behaving and doing well at home. Within a communication between Sarah and her husband, James, she discovered that one of her young children had been unaccounted for temporarily. Sarah was shocked to learn of this upsetting occurrence that took place during her extended absence. Sarah wrote, "I have written to Sally poor little girl! how badly she must have felt when she was lost, - was she long wandering about, - ? or how did she manage."⁴² During Sarah's extended absences away from home, she wished that she had the ability to see her children grow up, accompany them during all of their daily activities, and to keep them safe.

Leaving James to take care of their seven children was unorthodox behavior for a mother during the early nineteenth century. The father of the family was often viewed as the director of the household rather than the physical caretaker of the children. Sarah continuously faced sorrow

⁴⁰ Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 157-158.

⁴¹ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 27, 1837, 3.

⁴² Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 29, 1831, 1.

and regret when she left her family to visit meetinghouses across the country. She successfully used her devotion to Quakerism to encourage other Friends to continue their connection with the religion. Yet Sarah's tenacity towards advancing her religion was often overshadowed by her need to care for her family. In her letters, Sarah occasionally micro-managed James' parenting by specifying how the bonnets and cloaks should be measured. The content of Sarah's letter to Sally subliminally chastised James after she discovered that one of their daughters experienced the trauma of becoming lost. These were motherly substitutes for not being able to directly supervise her children. Sarah's letters offer great insight into the nineteenth-century family life of a unique Quaker household.

THE PERILS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY PARENTING

James and Sarah suffered many tragedies, which caused them to fight even harder for the causes in which they believed. The suffering that they experienced strengthened their inner determination to ensure that their community was cared for and prospered. As a child, James was orphaned at the young age of six. His parents were elders within the Middletown Friends Preparative meeting. Their strong devotion to their religion pushed them to attend the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during a period of yellow fever epidemic. On two separate occasions, the physically debilitating yellow fever took the lives of James' parents. As he lived with his assigned caretakers, James undertook the realization that his parents had given their lives for the cause in which they truly believed.

As James ventured out on his own and eventually married Sarah, he wanted to ensure that other people were encouraged to follow their own beliefs and causes. James was a staunch supporter of Sarah's devotion to Quakerism and her desire to spread the religion across the United

States and across the globe. James became a strong support structure for Sarah, which gave her the opportunity to help her fellow friends. As Sarah traveled across the country and across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe, James cared for their seven children. James allowed Sarah to step outside of the home and allowed her to devote her life not only to her children, but also to countless numbers of Quaker communities.

Although Sarah did not have as tragic and painful a childhood as James, she suffered from her own loss later in life. Throughout her life as a mother, Sarah continuously struggled between the heart wrenching decision of staying at home to care for her children or venturing outside of the home to pursue a career. Sarah's desire to devote her life to Quakerism overpowered the belief that she would only be considered a mother and caretaker. On a crisp winter day, tragedy struck the Emlen family. During his free time, James and Sarah's son, James, Jr., enjoyed climbing trees. Minshall Painter, a prominent Quaker resident of Middletown, documented the community events between 1826 and 1828 in his daily journal entries. Although Minshall Painter and the Emlen family were perceived as religious adversaries during the contentious Quaker schism, Painter felt compelled to document their child's tragic incident in his day book. Painter documented, "January 25, 1827 / Clear – James Emlen, Jr. was killed to day by falling out of persimmon tree."⁴³ Although Sarah would not have been able to prevent the fall, as a mother, she no doubt blamed herself for the unfortunate accident. Her desire to care for the Quaker community pulled her away for a brief moment when death was inflicted upon one of her children. This became a horrendous episode within the Emlen family and throughout the local community. Taking a leave of absence from her ministry and letter writing, Sarah remained at home for nearly two years. This painful moment pulled her back to the family as they comforted each other through this unfortunate event.

⁴³ Minshall Painter, "Day Book 1826 - 1828." Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 - Box 8. Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

While the tragedy forced upon Sarah could have caused her to retreat from social life, she used this traumatic event as strength towards other causes. The sudden loss of her son triggered the realization that she needed to fight for the causes that truly affected her life. This strength helped Sarah fight back against the Hicksite Quakers and their desire to overthrow the Quaker religion. The loss of her son caused Sarah to view her fellow Orthodox Quakers as her own children. She wanted to provide them with guidance, support, and protection against this newly formed religious branch of Quakerism. Sarah did not want the religious oppressors from the Hicksite branch to disturb the peaceful lives of her fellow community members. The loss of her child was a calling that pulled her back to her close-knit community which was sorely in need of guidance and support. Sarah led her community through a turbulent period within Quakerism.⁴⁴

As a conscientious mother, Sarah's physical and emotional ability to work outside of her home was a conflict-ridden decision, because she also desired to care for her children on a daily basis. Since Sarah was away from her home for extended periods of time, her husband, James, was assigned the role of parental caretaker. During a period of American history when men often left the home to support the family, James' decision to care for their children produced an unorthodox home life, particularly for that time. His desire to raise their children began before he married Sarah. The traumas that James suffered as a child continued to motivate him throughout his adulthood. He wanted to sustain a life-long bond with his seven children. Orphaned at six years old, James did not have the opportunity to form a strong relationship with his parents. James wanted to give his children the experience of an involved parent that he was never able to achieve.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Edward G. Smedley, April 1881, "Article Written by Edward G. Smedley," Swarthmore, 3

⁴⁵ "Memoir of James Emlen, Late of Delaware Co., Pennsylvania," *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* 54 (1881): 161-62

Such a decision might not seem shocking in today's world compared to early America where it was unprecedented.

In 1793, James parents, James and Phebe Emlen, were appointed representatives by the Middletown Preparative Meeting to attend the Quaker Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia. As the event grew closer, members of the meeting house insisted that they not attend this annual meeting due to the outbreak of yellow fever. Against their good advice, the Emlens decided to attend the meeting. Shortly after returning from their trip to Philadelphia, Phebe Emlen became ill with yellow fever and died several days later on October 25, 1793. Five years later, in 1798, James Emlen Sr. was again appointed the representative for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Once again, fellow members warned him of the yellow fever epidemic that continued to spread throughout the area. Emlen declared that it was his duty to represent his meeting house, and he attended the yearly meeting. Knowing that there would be a high probability that he would contract yellow fever, James Emlen, Sr., wrote his will before he left home. He felt that this would ensure that his minor aged children would be cared for and someone would look after his farm.⁴⁶

Many members of the Middletown Friends Preparative meeting were concerned about James Emlen, Sr.'s decision to attend the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In 1881, a memorial of James Emlen was published in *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* detailing the accounts of the event. The recount of the epidemic explained, “a pestilential fever prevailing again in Philadelphia in the year 1798, he believed himself bound in duty to attend with his friends at the usual time and place for holding the Yearly Meeting, (which was the third time he attended under such circumstances). As many of his friends in that solemn season of great mortality, partook of the common lot, in being suddenly removed from the field of probation, and considering himself

⁴⁶ James Emlen, “Last Will and Testament of James Emlen of Middletown Township, Pennsylvania,” Wills: Number 138, Delaware County Archives, Lima.

as equally liable, he was engaged, before leaving his family, to make due provision for the careful guardianship of his seven children, all in their early minority.”⁴⁷ When James Emlen, Sr., returned from the Quaker Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia, he was afflicted with yellow fever. He suffered for eight days and died on October 3, 1798.⁴⁸ Emlen chose to leave all his children an equal share of his estate, rather than allocating a majority to the oldest son which was the custom of the time. This addition to his will illustrated that he cared for all of his children equally. The Quaker religion was based on the notion that everyone was treated as equals within the society, which may have greatly influenced the terms of Emlen’s will.⁴⁹

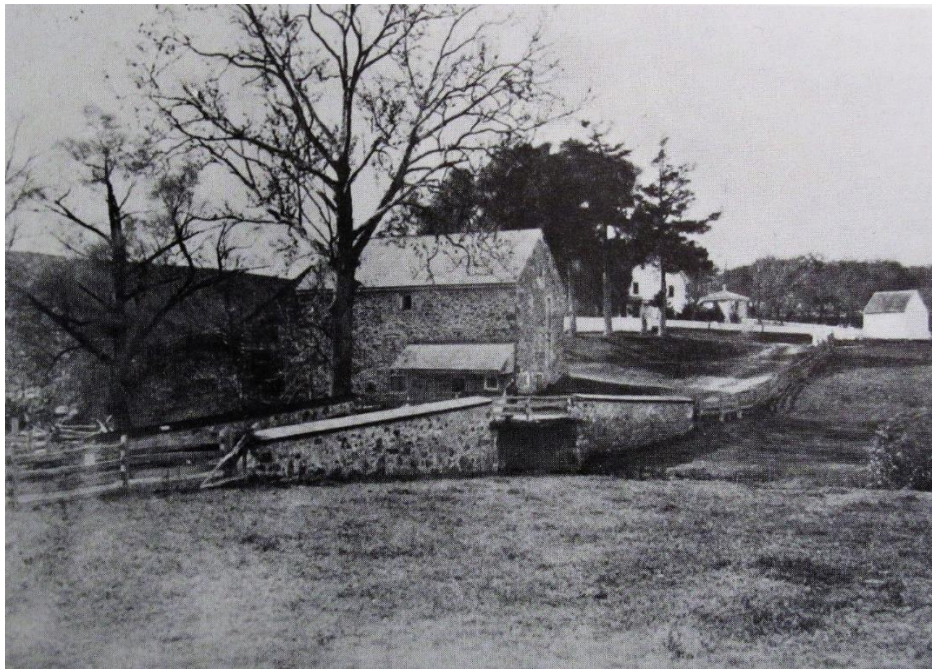


Figure 5: Emlen Historic District, 1865 ⁵⁰

During the late nineteenth century, yellow fever ravished the newly declared United States. It was a tragic epidemic that swept quickly through major metropolitan areas. Philadelphia,

⁴⁷ “Memoir of James Emlen, Late of Delaware Co., Pennsylvania,” 161-62.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 161-62.

⁴⁹ James Emlen, “Last Will and Testament of James Emlen of Middletown Township, Pennsylvania.”

⁵⁰ Henry S. Pearson, *Middletown Township, Delaware County, PA.* (Media: Baker Printing, 1985), 114.

Pennsylvania, which was at that time the temporary capital of the country, was one of the hardest hit cities affected by yellow fever. When the outbreak of yellow fever entered Philadelphia, government officials including George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton as well as wealthy residents left the city to escape the deadly disease. Many traveled to their private country estates and farms, while others stayed with relatives until the fear of yellow fever passed.⁵¹

Doctors during the late eighteenth century used a combination of medieval and modern medicine to treat patients. They kept detailed records of their patient's ailments and diseases. Several doctors throughout that period of time recorded their descriptions of yellow fever and its effect on patients. A description of yellow fever stated, "it begins with chills and pains in the head, back, and limbs; temperature rises rapidly to a great height, bowels and costive, urine scanty and albuminous. This lasts a few days. Then the fever declines, and sometimes the patient appears to have recovered. But a remission follows, after which temperature rises again, the victim turns yellow, throws up a stale blood, black in color; hemorrhages occur in the intestinal mucous membrane. Last comes a typhoid state, marked by stupor and hebetude, dry brown tongue, rapid feeble pulse, incontinent feces and urine, rapid wasting."⁵² Yellow fever was a painful disease that lasted several days. Doctors did not know what caused the illness to spread so rapidly until years later when it was discovered that mosquitoes transmitted the disease. Since Philadelphia was surrounded by marshlands and stagnant water, mosquitoes invaded the city and broadened the deadly disease.⁵³ During the nineteenth century, the field of science did not have any knowledge about germ theory or vectors of infection. In the year nineteen-hundred, it was finally discovered

⁵¹ J. H. Powell, *Bring Out your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), xviii.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xx

⁵³ *Ibid.*

that mosquitos were the transmitters of yellow fever. United States Army physicians James Carroll and Walter Reed confirmed the discovery as leaders of the yellow fever commission.⁵⁴

Simple injuries and illnesses during the period became deadly afflictions. Limited medical advancements hindered doctor's abilities to treat infections and minor lesions. Massive outbreaks of diseases, such as yellow fever, caused widespread concerns among communities. As Sarah traveled away from her family as a minister, she was constantly concerned about the wellbeing of her children. Since her seven children lived on a rural farmstead, they had the potential to encounter danger from untamed livestock, heavy machinery, and childhood scuffles. Although Sarah left her family for extended periods of time, she wanted to protect them from danger.

CONTINUING THE QUAKER RELIGION

As Sarah traveled to meeting houses across the United States, she noticed that the next generation of Friends was not attending the meetings consistently. The great division within the Society of Friends caused younger members to question their connection to the religion. Separating Quakerism into two branches, Orthodox and Hicksite, forced families to choose between the two sides of the religion. We could view this schism as typical of any human enterprise, which must always be subject to patterns of disagreement. Quakerism was supposed to be immune to such splits due to its individualistic nature and faith in the accessibility of truth. The schism must have had an effect, at least subconsciously, on Quaker confidence. Quaker youth in the early nineteenth century matured to adulthood surrounded by conflicting arguments focused on religion. The younger generation was drifting away from the religion, which needed the membership of the

⁵⁴ Christopher Cumo, *Science and Technology in 20th-century American Life* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 40-47.

children to sustain the organization.⁵⁵ Sarah disclosed in a letter to her husband, James, her feelings on the steady decline of Quaker children members. Sarah expressed, “it is really heart rending to see, and to hear of the Children of valuable, and highly professing friends, departing from the Light of Christ within . . .”⁵⁶ Since Sarah raised seven children, she personally experienced how difficult it must have been for other parents to persuade their children to attend the religious meetings.

Beginning at the time of the American Revolution, Quaker women took it upon themselves to instill in their children a connection to their religion. They sought the teachings of the Quaker religion as a path towards raising morally sound children. Quaker women were one of the first groups of women to take a solid stance on how their children would be raised. Women became primarily responsible for their children’s religious education. They hoped that gaining control over their sons at an early age would instill in them values that could not be learned through secular, non-familial affairs.⁵⁷ As the Quaker Separation of 1827 emerged within the religion, Quaker mothers exercised greater dominance over their children.

Quaker communities were individual clusters of members who included variations within their spiritual teachings. As Sarah visited meeting houses scattered across the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, she devoted her life to ensuring that the Quaker religion was sustained by the next generation. Sarah was overjoyed to discover that people continued to attend service at the London Grove Friends Meeting located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Sarah expressed her discovery by writing that “a ray of light seem to dawn upon them for their encouragement, to persevere in the faithful attendance of their mtgs. and not to be wary of silence . . .”⁵⁸ Even though the London Grove Friends Meeting was a small community, Sarah devoted as much passion to

⁵⁵ Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers*, 97-98, 115-116.

⁵⁶ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 2, 1836, 1.

⁵⁷ Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 162-164.

⁵⁸ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, December 2, 1836, 2.

that meeting house as she did to all of the other meeting houses. Her encouragement and desire to improve the lives of fellow Friends was truly visible in her actions.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, as Americans transitioned into the Victorian era, Quakers continued to maintain their traditional ways of life. Their plain style was evident in the wearing of predominantly black clothing and maintaining the speech customs of past generations. Quakers maintained their separation by only allowing marriage between Quakers. Friends were forbidden to engage in interfaith marriages, because their children would be confused by the adoption of two different religions within one household. Quakers were disowned for marrying out of the meeting. If a Quaker decided to marry someone who was not a member of the religion, they would not be allowed to worship in the meeting house. Maintaining this regulation produced exclusive communities based upon their Quaker religion. They constructed an invisible shield of privacy that often isolated themselves from other segments of the country.⁵⁹

Within the United States, Orthodox Quakers were perceived as wealthy members of the community. Quakers, noted for thrift by most others, had been successful for generations and thus had the chance to accumulate sufficient capital to enter the upper classes of society. Even if they did not display patterns of conspicuous consumption, their general prosperity became a cultural trope. Orthodox Quakers led the effort to start the American Bible Society in 1816. They also encouraged the establishment of Sunday Schools within Quakerism, which began in 1790. They were referred to as First Day Schools. Orthodox Quakers wanted to promote the study of the Bible within the religion. Religious societies were established to promote orderly habits and to increase the literacy rates of poor Philadelphia residents.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*, 5-10.

⁶⁰ H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 13.

The creation of Bible societies within the United States provided evangelical Protestants the ability to advance the spread of print media. The first Bible society in America, the Bible Society of Philadelphia, included several Quaker members. Orthodox Quakers became strong supporters of Bible societies, which undermined the beliefs of Hicksites. Since Hicksite Quakers opposed the notion that their religion was based upon the Scripture, they sternly rejected the creation of Bible societies. Orthodox Quakers believed Hicksite opposition to the societies may have been used to cover up their disbelief in the Bible. In 1829, members of the Orthodox branch of Quakerism formed the Bible Association of Friends. The members of this organization believed that one of the primary reasons why Hicksites chose to push aside the Bible was due to their shortage of Bibles among Friends. The Bible Association of Friends began a campaign to print and distribute the Scripture to every Quaker home within the United States. After distributing the Bibles to fellow Friends, the organization initiated a plan to distribute the Scripture to non-Quakers.⁶¹

As a Quaker minister, Sarah Emlen enjoyed traveling across the United States as well as to European countries. She cherished the ability to visit meeting houses and share her beliefs of Quakerism. Joining the Orthodox branch of Quakerism was an appropriate decision for Sarah, since she enjoyed sharing her religious teachings with fellow Friends. Orthodox Quakers participated in Bible societies, because they believed it was their duty to embrace the Bible. Sarah became an extension of these organizations by ensuring all Quakers understood the Bible and followed the religion.

Religious societies were incorporated into Quakerism by evangelicals, which contributed to the divide within the region. During the 1820s, several organizations that promoted the teachings

⁶¹ Bruce Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies: Philadelphia Benevolence and the Neglected Era of American Quaker History," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 418-420.

of the Bible emerged. The American Sunday School Union in Philadelphia, the American Tract Society, and the American Home Missionary Society encouraged uniformity of religion. Quakers who agreed with the Orthodox teachings assisted in the establishment of these religious organizations. During this transformative period of religion, Hicksites began to view the Orthodox branch of Quakerism as religious slavery and aristocratic tyranny. Hicksites believed that they were being forced to conform to the Orthodox doctrines. Orthodox ministers who preached their beliefs were viewed as forcing their teachings upon other members of the religion.⁶²

As a teacher at Westtown School, located in Chester County, Sarah Emlen was shocked to discover that some of the Hicksite students began a revolt. Several days before the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1827, Hicksite students at Westtown School refused to follow their teachers' orders to read the Scriptures. They decided to declare their opposition to this order by staging a Bible burning event at the school. Although Westtown School declared its decision to join the Orthodox branch of Quakerism, some of the students still attended the school from Hicksite families. As a member of the Orthodox Quaker branch, Sarah Emlen and her family feared additional revolts that could have occurred during this tense period within the religion.⁶³

⁶² Ibid., 411-414.

⁶³ Ibid., 419-420.

Chapter 3. EMERGENCE OF A NEW QUAKER BELIEF

Quakerism, from its emergence in the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, avoided encountering significant changes to the religion. Minor improvements to the Quaker religion were implemented, but they did not change the basic principles of the faith. During the turn of the nineteenth century, representatives within the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting began to incorporate evangelical thoughts into Quakerism. Transformation of the religion was also influenced by changing economic and political sentiments. During this time period, the Industrial Revolution was emerging in America. As people continued to increase communication and travel between countries, the manufacture of goods was taken over by large-scale factories. Some Quakers opposed the expansion of travel and trade throughout the world. They wanted the United States to maintain their independence and focus on the preservation of small, local communities. Quakers who opposed incorporating evangelical thoughts into Quakerism also resisted the American Industrial Revolution. They felt that their religion and economy was compromised.

Elias Hicks (1748-1830) was a Quaker minister who resided in Long Island, New York. After struggling for several years deciding on a meaningful profession, he chose farming. Hicks believed that God placed man on Earth to labor on the land. People were not supposed to live easy lives contemplating their surroundings. During Hicks' tireless devotion to farming, he gained a greater connection to Quakerism and began to preach his messages as a young man during the Revolutionary War. Although Hicks was a member of the Quaker faith, he viewed the religion as drifting away from its original values and beliefs. As he preached, Hicks spoke to his followers by stating that Christ was the son of God, and so was every Quaker. The only way that Friends were able to seek divinity was by diligently obeying and following their Inward Light. Hicks saw Quakerism as shifting towards other Christian religions through the inclusion of atonements, the

original sin, and the belief of the devil. Once the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting representatives declared that Quakerism could not survive as one cohesive society, the religion split into the Orthodox and Hicksite branches. Members who chose to stay with the Orthodox branch of Quakerism were predominantly successful merchants who lived in Philadelphia and commercial farmers residing in the surrounding towns. Orthodox members believed that their wealth and success was a result of their faith and devotion to their religion. Their business successes were spiritual signs affirming their perfect religious connection.⁶⁴

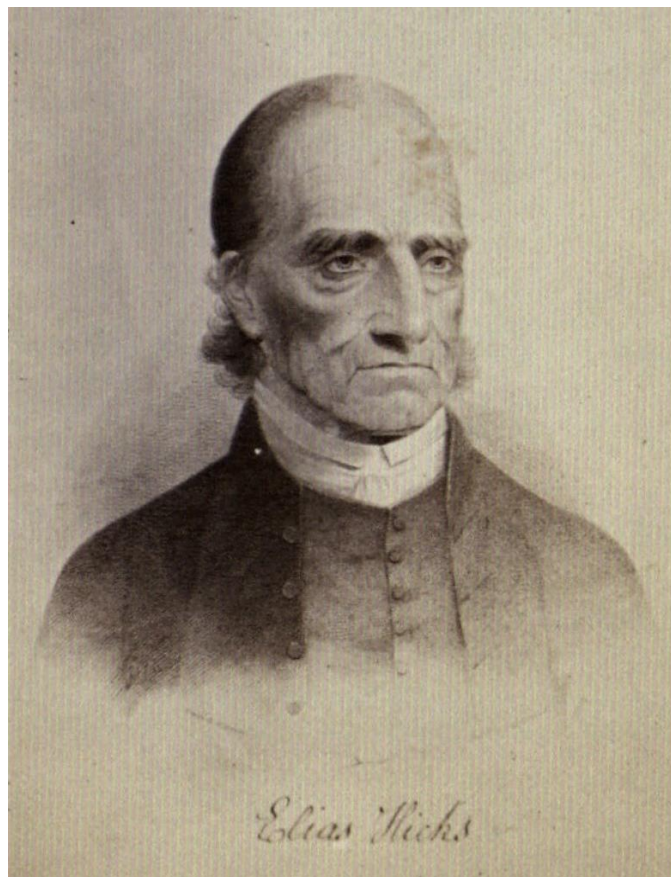


Figure 6: Elias Hicks Portrait, 1830⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*, 15-16.

⁶⁵ Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, "Elias Hicks," Triptych, http://trptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/SC_Truman/id/564/rec/19 (accessed April 10, 2017).

Quakers who opposed the expansion of large-scale farming operations and modern industrialization chose to join the Hicksite branch of Quakerism. Followers of Elias Hicks were considered extreme conservatives who were fearful of modern innovations. They wanted to maintain their current lifestyles and opposed the American industrial revolution. They were often artisans who were displaced by the emerging industrial economy and small-scale farmers who were in debt to banks. As his crowds of followers grew larger, Hicks turned all of his attention to becoming a Quaker minister. His teachings emphasized the belief of quietism, which concentrated on an individual's Inward Light that was sufficient for salvation. Hicks also believed that Quakers should shun themselves from the world and concentrate on their own mind and spirit. Following the Inward Light pushed all of the outer connections, including the Scripture, into a secondary role.⁶⁶

In 1813, Boston merchant Francis Cabot Lowell (1775-1817), leader of a foremost Boston Brahmin family, began the Boston Manufacturing Company. After returning to the United States from a trip to England, Lowell discovered modern manufacturing techniques utilized abroad. Based on his discoveries, Lowell constructed the first hydro powered factory in the United States that converted raw cotton into fabric within one building. The Boston Manufacturing Company revolutionized the way goods could be manufactured within the United States. Small communities no longer had to rely on artisans and craftsmen to provide necessary household goods. The corporate structure and management system utilized in the factory was copied throughout the country. By the 1820s, the top ten manufacturing corporations were designed based on the Boston Manufacturing Company's business structure. As cities throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic region began to construct large scale factories, community mills and craftsmen were being

⁶⁶ Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 5-27.

replaced. Between 1790 and 1830, the population of the United States expanded from four million to over thirteen million inhabitants. The rapid expansion of the American population forced factories to take over production of necessary household goods. Since the country was accustomed to relying on community craftsmen to supply products, rural residents became overwhelmed by the rapid changes brought on by the American Industrial Revolution. The former methods of manufacturing were replaced by large-scale manufacturing corporations that dominated the industries.⁶⁷

As this newly formed country settled into its place within the world, Americans wanted to prosper as citizens of this revolutionary country. Elias Hicks did not follow modern progress and innovation. He felt that Quaker Americans should separate themselves from the rest of the world. Hicks believed that Quakers should adopt an isolationist philosophy by only focusing on their individual communities. He viewed public education as a negative advancement for the citizens of the country. Hicks also resisted the construction of the Erie Canal as well as the implementation of a national railroad system. The American Industrial Revolution was a monumental achievement for the continued success of the country. Rejecting these new technologies and innovations would have limited America's ability to compete with other leading countries of the time.⁶⁸

Nineteenth century advancements in technology were tremendous achievements for the United States. The Industrial Revolution changed the United States, while Jacksonian politics changed the shape of American democracy. This was a period of massive change. New inventions improved lives and increased the country's productivity. One of the most sternly opposed Americans to the advancement of technology was Elias Hicks. He believed that modern

⁶⁷ Jeff Horn, *The Industrial Revolution: Milestones in Business History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 96-99.

⁶⁸Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 25-28.

technology was pulling people away from their religion and interfering with their ability to generate a meaningful connection with God. As international trade began to rapidly advance in the nineteenth century, new forms of transportation were needed to ship materials. The Erie Canal provided cargo ships access to the inner areas of the United States. This advanced the construction of factories, since it provided a more efficient method of transportation to ship the products. Hicks believed that constructing the Erie Canal was in direct opposition to his world view. If God wanted the country to have internal waterways, Hicks proclaimed, he would have installed them himself. Hicks isolationist views caused him to oppose and reject trading with East India. Hicks was also opposed to several necessary components of a modern society, including the banking system, civil government, agricultural societies, and chemistry which he referred to as black art. Rejecting the advancement of mechanical technology, innovations, and international trade isolated Hicks from other communities.⁶⁹

Although Hicks did not agree with modern technology and innovation, he was a strong supporter of abolitionism. As early as the year 1811, Hicks preached about his disgust of slavery. He did not tolerate Quaker slave owners and included his strong opposition to slavery within his speeches. Hicks was a man of mixed philosophies, because he could simultaneously shun modern advancements as well as become passionate about ensuring that everyone was treated equally. He began a movement, known as “Free Produce,” which advocated for the purchasing of goods produced without the use of slave labor. The Free Produce Society emerged within Philadelphia during the same year as the Quaker religious separation. Within Hicks pamphlets, which he distributed during his sermons, he encouraged his followers to purchase blankets and other fabric goods made from wool rather than cotton sourced from southern plantations. Throughout the

⁶⁹ H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation*, 46.

Philadelphia area in the early nineteenth century, abolitionist societies were composed of nearly sixty to seventy percent Hicksite followers.⁷⁰

Orthodox Quaker elders in Philadelphia felt that the religion must gain a greater connection to Evangelism and sourced their teachings directly from the Scriptures. This practice, they believed, would help the Friends restore their faith in the religion. Quaker Orthodox beliefs were in sharp contrast to Elias Hicks and his followers, who focused their faith solely on the Inward Light found within every Friend. Emphasizing the Inward Light reverted, they believed, Quakerism back to the original beliefs of the religion. Hicksites rejected the idea that they must study the Scriptures in order to attain a spiritual connection.⁷¹

The Quaker Schism officially took place in 1827, but several events occurred before this year that led to the eventual separation. The arrival of Elias Hicks in Philadelphia on December 12, 1822, was one of the events that culminated in the religious separation in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Hicks visit to Philadelphia included an opportunity to share his beliefs with Quakers at the Arch Street Meeting. After an unsuccessful meeting between Hicks and Quaker elders, Hicks directed that his followers begin a movement of change within the religion. The Quaker Elders viewed Hicks teachings as assimilating with the teachings of a Deist, who only believe in a supreme being that does not interfere with the universe, or a Unitarian, a Christian who does not believe in the Trinity.⁷²

As the debate over how involved the Bible should be within the Quaker religion, a new opinion on the subject emerged. In 1825, Elisha Bates completed her book, “The Doctrine of Friends,” on the value of the Bible. Bates revealed that the Scriptures should not be regarded as

⁷⁰ Bruce Dorsey, “Friends Becoming Enemies,” 424-425.

⁷¹ Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 152.

⁷² H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation*, 109-12.

superior to the spirit that can be captured by everyone. It was widely believed that reading the Bible or listening to someone preach the Scriptures was required for people to attain salvation. Bates did not agree with this idea, because it restricted salvation only to people who were literate. The idea that people could only receive salvation through reading the Bible directly affected slaves who rarely had the ability to read. Quakers believed that everyone should have the right to religious freedom. Since abolitionism was one of the primary objectives within the Quaker community, indirectly barring illiterate slaves from the religion was a controversial act.⁷³

Evangelical Orthodox Quakers published a pamphlet in 1825 expressing their concerns about the spread of the Hicksite philosophy within Quakerism. Orthodox followers alleged that the Hicksites opposed the Bible, refused the belief of atonement, would not obey the Sabbath, and possessed loose morals. Followers of Elias Hicks charged the Orthodox with the notion that they were wealthy Quakers who were only concerned with gaining popularity. The Orthodox were also accused of following the latest fashion trends of the time period, which contradicted the Quaker plain style of dress. Some Orthodox Quakers allowed their children to engage in popular cultural activities, including dancing, fencing, boxing, theater, and attending fashionable parties. Hicksites believed that these distractions pulled Orthodox members away from their connection with the Quaker religion.⁷⁴

PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting oversaw all of the meetings situated within the communities surrounding the city. A selected number of members within this meeting were chosen to oversee the business matters. A group of fifty-six men, known as the Meeting of Sufferings,

⁷³ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 146-150.

oversaw the decisions of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The advisory board consisted of twelve men selected from the greater Philadelphia area as well as four members from each of the eleven quarterly meetings. Although some Quakers advocated for equality among men and women, the Meeting of Sufferings was an advisory board exclusive to Quaker men. Based on the guidelines of Quakerism published in the *Rules of Discipline*, the twelve members selected from the Philadelphia area should live within a short distance of the meeting house. A meeting quorum only consisted of twelve members, which allowed the city residents to discuss and vote on matters related to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. A large portion of Quakers who resided within the city of Philadelphia agreed with the evangelical thoughts on religion, while Quakers who lived in rural areas opposed modern additions to Quakerism. Evangelical Quakers lived in close proximity to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, which gave them the ability to dominated the discussions and had control over the religion's regulations. Since the evangelicals held a majority of the leadership roles, they granted control and power of the religion to themselves.⁷⁵

During times of social, economic or political concerns, chaos emerges within communities. People begin to question their beliefs and views on important topics in their lives. Quakers produced a strong bond with each other through their religious teachings, rules, and culture. They sustained traditional Quaker appearances of dress and societal interaction, which distanced themselves from the general public. Friends who followed the Quaker religion often interacted with each other rather than people from other religious backgrounds. It produced a secure environment and maintained a stable community. Social anxieties and conflicts caused small

⁷⁵ Ibid., 66, 103.

disagreements to become exaggerated. People who once shared common interests and beliefs revolted against each other as a result of an unstable social environment.⁷⁶

The emergence of the Democratic Party in the early nineteenth century was expanded through the election of Andrew Jackson as President of the United States in 1828. This began the Jacksonian era of government, which emphasized the idea of equitable distribution of goods and power. During the nineteenth century, large corporations gained greater control over manufacturing and agricultural production. As the American industrial revolution and international trade expanded, small communities could not maintain their previous way of life. They became overrun by the expansion of large corporations. Small-scale laborers and farmers were dominated by the rapid expansion of the industrial revolution. The opposing political organization, the Whig Party, advocated for the expansion of corporate control and for removing the limit on the number of hours an employee could work per week. They favored the corporate leaders who sought opportunities to gain wealth through the American Industrial Revolution.⁷⁷

The Democratic Party, led by President Jackson, wanted to slow the progression of modern manufacturing and international trade. They promoted the idea of equal distribution of power and limiting corporate control over the production of goods. The primary target of corporate reform was aimed towards the monopoly of the banking industry. The Jacksonian Democrats encouraged the creation of labor unions, which gave more power to the laborers. Expanding government oversight through new legislations placed restrictions on corporations. New federal regulations reduced the emergence of monopolies and advocated for the labor class of Americans.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Verna M. Cavey, "Fighting among Friends: The Quaker Separation of 1827," in *Social Conflicts and Collective Identities*, ed. Patrick G. Coy and Lynne M. Woehrle (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 135-38.

⁷⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 334-345.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 341-345.

During the Jacksonian period of America, Quakers were also divided based upon political platforms. A majority of Quakers who ultimately declared themselves members of the Orthodox branch also considered themselves members of the Whig Party. Americans who favored the Whig Party of the nineteenth century supported the national temperance movement as well as equal and fair treatment of Native Americans and African Americans. The Whig Party was also considered associated with evangelism. As people began to have different opinions and definitions about their religious teachings, an increase in conflicting arguments emerged. Religions must have a defined purpose that is agreed upon by the members. When the foundational principles of Quakerism were argued, members questioned every aspect of their religion.⁷⁹

Organizations and community groups that included a strict belief in conformity had increased conflicts. Strictness within a group reduced the ability of members to express their opinions that are in opposition to other members. Questioning regulations and long standing ideas were ignored due to the fear that they could radically change the principles of the organization. Religious groups that included strong, isolated leaders limited the influx of evolutionary thoughts on the future of the religion. This form of leadership resulted in large and sudden splits among members when the authority was challenged. People who had similar ideas joined together and isolated themselves from the opposing group. Separating into conflicting groups increased tension and resulted in long standing disagreements. Isolationist thinking between groups was eliminated when members were permitted and encouraged to express new ideas. The acceptance of discussions about religious principles and beliefs formed a trusting environment. Quakers were encouraged to express their opinions without the fear of being ostracized or disowned from the group.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*, 26.

⁸⁰ Verna M. Cavey, "Fighting among Friends: The Quaker Separation of 1827," 138-40.

In April 1827, members of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting convened. During the previous year's meeting, a majority of the discussion concerned the abolition of slavery in the United States. Once again, the topic of abolitionism became a key issue during the annual meeting. Focusing on slavery offered members a topic that everyone agreed that slavery should be abolished. This pushed aside discussions related to the Hicksite and Orthodox leadership struggle within the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Elders of the yearly meeting did not oppose the inclusion of new ideas and implementing changes to the religion. They wanted to ensure that they were in charge of selecting and implementing the new religious changes. The Quaker Elders wanted to control changes within the Society of Friends so that they maintained a stable and quiet religion that was absent of controversies.⁸¹

As Quakers convened for the yearly meeting in 1827, members were unable to shift the meeting agenda away from leadership within the religion. Quaker reformers who supported Elias Hicks wanted the regulations of leadership to be updated and more inclusive to all the yearly meeting members. The Hicksites also advocated for the implementation of term limits for Quaker elders and representatives appointed to the Meeting of Sufferings. Imposing term limits would allow other members to engage in the decision-making process of the entire religion. A select few would not gain lifetime power over the decisions and future visions of Quakerism. In addition, the Hicksites wanted to double the number of quarterly meeting representatives who attended the yearly meeting in Philadelphia. They emphasized this proposal, because it would offer a diverse range of ideas to be discussed at the yearly meeting. The meetings would not be limited to the leadership of a few Quakers who had the ability to impose decisions within the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

⁸¹ H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation*, 16-18.

At the conclusion of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827, a committee was formed that had the power to visit meeting houses and disown members who did not agree with the adoption of the new religious epistles. The committee members had the power to disown members who did not accept the new religious epistles of believing in the divinity of Christ as well as the divine authority of the Scripture. Implementing these new regulations led to the formal split of the Quaker religion into two factions. Leaders of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting agreed with the Orthodox followers that the religion should impose divine authority on the Scriptures. This was in sharp contrast to the Hicksites who viewed the Inward Light as their religious connection. Hicksites felt that teaching the Bible was not a path towards salvation based on the Hicksite reformers' view of Quakerism.⁸²

After the decision was announced that the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was separating into two branches, other yearly meetings engaged in the controversy. The Baltimore and New York Yearly Meetings were influenced by the decisions of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Several months later, they decided to also split into two branches. The events that occurred in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827 had a significant impact on other yearly meetings throughout the country. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was a leader within the Quaker religion throughout the United States. Other yearly meetings followed the decisions made in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁸³

⁸² Ibid., 179-85.

⁸³ Ibid., 226-27.

Chapter 4. CONFRONTATIONS IN THE MEETING HOUSE

Tensions between Quakers continued to rise as they debated the future of the religion. Public arguments became the primary focus of discussion after the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1827. Members of the newly formed Quaker branches, Orthodox and Hicksite, joined together to plan their next courses of action. The Quaker meeting house was a sacred building that offered members a solemn place for worship. Even though Quakerism did not acknowledge religious leaders within the meeting house, some members decided to appoint themselves as leaders. During this religious transition period, some Friends were unsure of which branch they wished to join. Members were publicly forced to decide if they would join the Orthodox branch, Hicksite branch, or leave the religion. The chaos that arose during this period of Quakerism had a lasting impact on the religion.

Once the Quaker religion announced in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that it would separate, the news spread to the outlying meetings. This shocking religious decision encouraged the followers of Elias Hicks to band together. A region-wide movement, prompted by the members of the Hicksite branch, encouraged the members to take control of the meetinghouses. Throughout the region under the leadership of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Hicksite members forcefully gained control of a majority of the meetinghouses. They insisted upon locking the doors and barring non-Hicksites from entering the religious buildings. Members of the Orthodox branch of Quakerism were forbidden from worshipping within their traditional meeting places. They were forced to seek alternative establishments for their meetings. Even though the Hicksite branch was a newly formed segment of Quakerism, they successfully gained control of the well-established meetinghouses. Quakers were not sure how long they would be separated. Ownership of the meeting places was a concern, since Orthodox members were forced to seek a new place of

worship. They could not anticipate if the Quaker Schism would continue for several weeks, months, or evolve into a permanent occupancy. This sudden change in the Quaker religion caused people to panic and worry about their religious futures.⁸⁴

As Hicksites occupied the meetinghouses across the Philadelphia region, supporters of Elias Hicks also gained control of the Middletown Preparative Meeting House in Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Following the formal separation of the Quaker religion, disputes began to emerge among the Quakers. During the first meeting of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting after the schism, Orthodox Quakers were forcefully escorted out of the meeting house by a newly invited member of the Hicksite Quaker branch. Startled and shocked by the sudden removal from their meeting house, Orthodox members quickly gathered in the meeting house yard and circled around the stone horse block (used to assist in mounting and dismounting a horse or carriage). Sarah Emlen, then a minister of the Society of Friends, petitioned everyone to join together to seek a solution to the horrendous actions caused by the Hicksite members. They were shocked and startled by the sudden actions of the Hicksite Quakers. Members of the Middletown Preparative Meeting worshipped in their meetinghouse for many generations. Their sudden removal from the building was a destruction of their history as members of the meetinghouse. Upon contemplation of the situation, Sarah Emlen led all of the Orthodox Middletown Friends Meeting members to her home located down a narrow road near the meetinghouse. The supporters of the Orthodox branch of Quakerism continued to use the Emlen family home as a meeting location, while their original structure was overrun by Hicksite supporters.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ibid., 216-17.

⁸⁵ Edward G. Smedley, April 1881, "Article Written by Edward G. Smedley," 3.

Since Sarah Emlen and her family had resided in Middletown Township, Delaware County, for a majority of their lives, they had developed a close bond with the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. Before the Quaker Separation of 1827, the meeting house consisted of approximately three-hundred members. After choosing between the Orthodox and Hicksite branches of Quakerism, members began to depart from their once-cherished meeting house. Close to half of the pre-schism population renounced their association with the Middletown Friends Meeting in order to join the newly formed Hicksite branch of the religion.⁸⁶ As a resident of the rural area of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, Sarah Emlen and her family were part of a minority of Orthodox Quakers. A greater majority of rural inhabitants joined the Hicksite branch of Quakerism. Hicksite Quakers were often employed in artesian and craftsman occupations, while maintaining a simpler way of living. This was in contrast to Orthodox Quakers who enjoyed living and working in the urban areas, such as Philadelphia. They advanced their connection to the commercializing economy and motivated themselves to achieve a higher social status. Although Emlen and her family lived simple lives as teachers, they gained a greater connection to the Orthodox branch of Quakerism.⁸⁷

After many discussions between the two branches of Quakerism, Orthodox and Hicksite, they mutually agreed to share the Middletown Friends Meeting house, since construction had not been completed on the new Orthodox meeting house. Members of each branch of Quakerism intentionally avoided socializing with each other. The community experienced a tense atmosphere until the new, Orthodox, meeting house was constructed. The Quaker Separation caused Friends to transform their personalities and thoughts into unrecognizable characters. Sarah Emlen personally experienced the hatred that emerged during this monumental time period. At the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁷ Bruce Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies," 396-397.

conclusion of a meeting, Sarah discovered a horrendous message inscribed within the shared Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting house. Sarah explained her experiences in a letter to her husband, James, on August 7, 1828. “The wall behind Abrm. & my seat, was written from the height that a person could reach down, in large letters with a black lead pencil – ‘Celebration of the Hicksites day and downfall of the Orthodox – liberty by the point of the sword – orthodox women were damn bitches’ &c &c &c. I should not like to tell of the whole, for people could not give it credit.”⁸⁸ The personal interaction between the Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers included startling conversations. Although this account appears shocking, Sarah did not let it ruin her day.

Small arguments and debates between Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers was a common occurrence during this time period. People who had known each other for their entire lives began to torment one another. Sarah Emlen detailed her experiences within the meetinghouse to her husband, James, through a letter. Sarah explained, “...on the handrail before me, some one has written with a pencil ‘By me Sarah Emlen do I doil⁸⁹ at you poor misguided friends to whom the Devil his angel sends’ – what my dear dost thou think they done so at me for what have I done to merit so much of their hatred – but enough – Oh I often feel as if to depart was more desirable than life.”⁹⁰ During this chaotic time in the Quaker sect, emotions overran Sarah as she discovered more comments about herself inscribed within the meetinghouse. She devoted her life to the Quaker religion and instilled in herself a desire to share her passion with fellow Friends. When Sarah learned that members of her own religion described her as an inferior member, she could not bear to grasp the statement. The negative comments inflicted upon Sarah caused her to contemplate her worthiness of her life. She did not want to continue living in a hostile environment surrounded by

⁸⁸ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, August 7, 1828, Emlen Family Papers: RG5/038, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 2.

⁸⁹ Describing an action or statement as nonsense.

⁹⁰ Sarah Emlen to James Emlen, August 3, 1828, 2.

hatred. Although Sarah expressed her feelings about deciding between life and death, she overcame her mistreatments and continued to remain a wife, mother, and Friend.

MINSHALL PAINTER: SELF-APPOINTED COMMUNITY LEADER

Minshall Painter lived with his brother Jacob (1814-1876) in Middletown Township, Delaware County Pennsylvania. Their home, known as Lachford Hall is currently situated on 760 acres managed by the John J. Tyler Arboretum. This property entered the Painter family when it was sold to Jacob Minshall in 1721. Between 1739 and 1876 each generation of the family renovated Lachford Hall. Minshall and Jacob's mother, Hannah Mishall, married Enos Painter in 1800. Since the family property was passed down to the daughter, they wanted to pay tribute to her family. The house was designated as Lachford Hall in honor of the Minshall family home located in Lachford, Cheshire, England.⁹¹



Figure 7: Lachford Hall, 1870 ⁹²

⁹¹ Henry S. Pearson, *Middletown Township, Delaware County, PA* (Media: Baker Printing, 1985), 256-7.

⁹² "Lachford Hall," Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 – Box 48, Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

Minshall Painter, along with several other community leaders, opened the Delaware County Institute of Science in 1833. This organization emerged through informal gatherings of freethinking intellectuals who lived in Delaware County. Minshall Painter donated a plot of land in the emerging town of Media, Pennsylvania, to the Delaware County Institute of Science. The Institute was modeled after the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁹³ This new, public venue offered an extensive collection of books that provided information for both sides of every argument. One of the main objectives of the library was that it offered an unbiased view on scholarly discussions to its patrons. The Delaware County Institute of Science developed an agricultural research program to advance the efficiency of farms within the county. The program encouraged and educated farmers on crops that had a higher probability of thriving based on the soil conditions of the area. Farmers received seeds and cuttings of grains, plants, and fruits that were considered suitable for the climate of Delaware County.⁹⁴

Minshall Painter, along with his brother, Jacob, maintained formal Quaker language of “thee” and “thou.” They were also known as Deists, since they did not believe that God influenced the natural world on a regular basis. Deists acknowledged the universe having a creator, but believed that God was not active once his creation began operating. This view was popular during the Age of Enlightenment. The brothers viewed the study of science and nature as their faith. They devoted a large portion of their lives developing a botanical collection, which included imported live exotic plants. The Painters also focused on other science-based interests, including minerals, observing outer space with the use of telescopes, constructed their own printing press, and

⁹³ Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village*, 251-2

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 252-4.

experimented with photography. On their property in Middletown Township, the Minshall Painter developed an extensive collection of books on the study of science and mechanics.⁹⁵

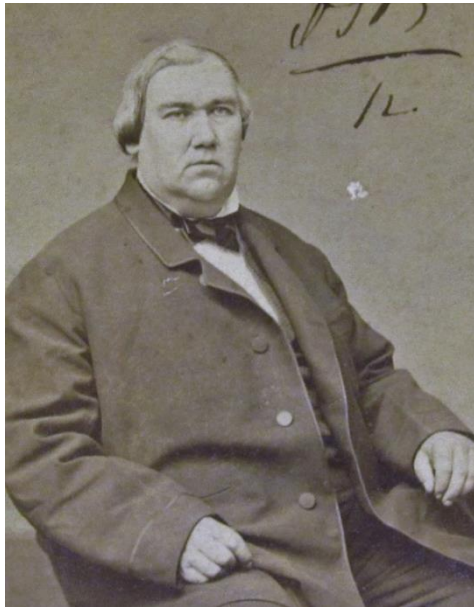


Figure 8: Jacob Painter, 1870 ⁹⁶

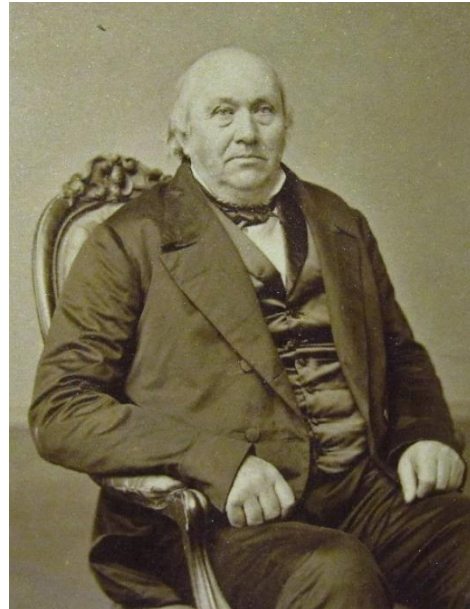


Figure 9: Minshall Painter, 1870 ⁹⁷

Minshall Painter was an influential member of Delaware County, Pennsylvania. He was involved in many aspects of the community. During the enactment of the town of Media, Pennsylvania in 1845, Painter was heavily involved in the planning process. He was looked upon as an influential person who enjoyed participating in civic activities. Through a suggestion of Painter, the newly formed town and county seat was named Media.⁹⁸

As reports regarding the Quaker separation began to seep into the rural regions of Southeastern Pennsylvania, many Friends were forced to choose between the Orthodox and the Hicksite branches of the religion. It was often difficult for Friends to receive precise information

⁹⁵ Ibid., 250-1.

⁹⁶ “Jacob Painter,” Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 – Box 48, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

⁹⁷ “Minshall Painter,” Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 – Box 48, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

⁹⁸ Henry S. Pearson, *Middletown Township, Delaware County, PA*, 39.

detailing the reasons behind the religious separation. Prominent members of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting, William P. Morgan and Minshall Painter, believed that everyone associated with the meetinghouse should declare their loyalty to the Hicksite or Orthodox branches. They were required to publicly state their decisions so that all of the Friends would be informed. Between December of 1827 and March of 1828, Morgan and Painter transcribed within a journal the Quaker separation in the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. Painter often documented his own thoughts and opinions concerning community activities. Since he was heavily involved in the separation, Painter wrote a reflection of his thoughts about the events. He believed that the separation would have a greater impact on the Quaker community than first imagined. Painter reflected, “must we become as highly charged as they are like two static balls that are highly charged with the same kind of electricity - as like the same pole of two magnetic needles before we can possibly repel each other up to a significant distance.”⁹⁹ Due to Painter’s daily involvement and study of science, he compared the religious division to two electrified magnets pushing each other away. The separation within the meeting house was as powerful as magnets. It created large divides among family members and friends.

Throughout the four-month period in the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting, members submitted short descriptions explaining their religious decisions. Painter abruptly and unexpectedly confronted the meeting house members in order to receive a definite decision. Although the Quaker meeting house did not operate under one leader, Painter appointed himself informal leader of the meeting house. As a financial and intellectual leader of the community, Painter regarded himself as superior to their fellow Friends. Many of the Friends were so startled by the religious question that they refused to provide an immediate answer and requested

⁹⁹ “Reflections and observations on the subject of Friends breaking with the Orthodox Elders, etc.,” Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 - Box 37, Swarthmore College’s Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 4.

additional time to complete the decision process. The schism, which originated during the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, began to affect the rural regions including the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting. This decision radically affected the everyday lives of the meeting house members. Choosing between the Hicksite and Orthodox branches of Quakerism was a terrifying decision, which separated lifelong friends and family members. The decision that they made regarding their Quaker beliefs would remain with them for the rest of their lives.

A CALL TO ORDER

The reasons behind the Separation of 1827 could not be understood by many Quakers, especially older Friends. The Great Schism was an unimaginable event for Quakers who devoted their lives to the religion for over sixty years. The emergence of two opposing viewpoints on the Quaker sect caused people to take sides against each other. Members of the Orthodox and Hicksite branches confronted each other about what party was breaking away. Since each side believed that they were the original Quakers, they each felt that the other party was breaking away to form a new religious sect. As a follower of Elias Hicks teachings, Painter reflected on the religious originality by stating that “it has been mentioned among us that the idea should not be given out that we are not the original meeting. I presume that idea will not be given up through all the world appears against us if we are conscious of having the greatest number on our side. Should we be right or be wrong still the principle holds good. With two repelling bodies, it would not be very philosophical to speak of the greatest body moving from the smallest. Or as the principle of chances (though it is no great depth in philosophy) there is a greater probability of the few being wrong then the many and this too is the principle on which our government is founded.”¹⁰⁰ A

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.

majority of Quakers who resided in rural portions of the United States referred to themselves as Hicksites. They believed in the teachings of Elias Hicks. Since the Middletown Preparative Meeting was located in the rural regions surrounding the city of Philadelphia, a majority of the members favored the Hicksite branch. Painter compared the idea of majority rule in the government to the high proportion of Quakers who became followers of Elias Hicks' teachings.

One of the older members of the Middletown Friends Meeting, Sarah West, was not able to determine why Friends were shunning each other. On December 12, 1827, Minshall Painter and William P. Morgan documented her opinion of the Quaker Separation. "Sarah West an aged and infirm Friend being inquired of her grand daughter Rebecca Riley in our presence whether she was Friend or Orthodox replied she did not understand the Orthodox but she said she was Friend and being inquired again she said I am a Friend and being queried of the third time again replied I am a Friend."¹⁰¹ West was not able to intellectually understand the difference between the two new branches of Quakerism. She needed more time and information about the separation in order to make an informed decision. As Painter asked West what branch of Quakerism she planned to follow, he offered two options, Friend or Orthodox. Painter believed that Hicks followers were not referred to as Hicksites, but rather Friends. This distinction caused Orthodox supporters to appear as if they were the members who chose to break away from the Quaker sect.

Quakers were never confronted with the act of voting within the meeting house. This type of decision-making process interrupted the Friends' ability to decide for themselves and contemplate their own decision. Calling for a vote during a meeting session was a foreign action to Quakers. As members of the Society of Friends, rather than casting their vote for a particular

¹⁰¹ William P. Morgan and Minshall Painter, "Notes Respecting the Middletown List of Friends," Painter Family Papers: RG5/110 – Box 37, Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, 3.

decision, the community would make their decision based upon the “sense” of the meeting.¹⁰² Forcing Friends to declare their religious identity in front of their entire meeting house assembly would be as horrendous as casting a vote. Dividing Quakers against each other, due to opposing viewpoints of the religion, shocked many Friends. They were not accustomed to being called upon within the meeting house. Traditionally, Quakers discussed their beliefs in public only when they gained within themselves the desire to speak.

During the Middletown Friends Meeting held on December 17, 1827, Frances Carr was called upon to state her decision regarding the Quaker Separation: "We this day called on Frances Carr and inquired of her whether she considered herself a member of the Monthly Meeting that is held at Providence she wished to know if that meeting was in unity with Elias Hicks we informed her it was – She wished to know if that man believed in the father, son and Holy-Ghost – to this question we gave no answer but wished to know which of the Monthly Meetings she considered she belonged and she finally concluded she belonged to that meeting which is held at Middletown but she wished to read some of that man's sermons."¹⁰³ Reading the sermons of Elias Hicks provided Frances Carr with a glimpse into the Hicksite branch of Quakerism. She wanted to understand the teachings of Hicks to make a constructive decision. Carr's name was inscribed within the notebook of Morgan and Painter among the list of Orthodox members who were ostracized from the meeting house.

Some members of the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting needed more time to contemplate their decisions before choosing to join the Orthodox or Hicksite branches of Quakerism. Since this was a monumental decision in the lives of Quakers, they wanted to educate themselves on the separate branches. This life decision also affected the relationships between

¹⁰² Bruce Dorsey, “Friends Becoming Enemies,” 405.

¹⁰³ William P. Morgan and Minshall Painter, “Notes Respecting the Middletown List of Friends,” 6.

family members. Everyone had their own opinions regarding the Orthodox and Hicksite branches. On December 29, 1827, the Griffith family was called to declare their decision in front of their fellow Friends. Painter documented that "Sarah Griffith subscribed her own name with her son assisting her – Sarah T. Griffith subscribed her own name her mother Sarah Griffith consenting – Jeffery Griffith said he was not yet prepared and wished to have longer to consider of it."¹⁰⁴ Since Jeffery Griffith did not quickly decide what branch to join, his name was placed on a third list of Quakers who were deemed to have removed themselves from the religion. Painter wanted every member of the Middletown Preparative Meeting to express a defiant stance on their future position as a member of the Quaker sect. If they could not decide their religious faith, they were viewed as opposing both branches of Quakerism.

After thinking about his religious standing for several months, Jeffrey Griffith eventually decided on the future of his Quaker faith. On May 4, 1828, Jeffery Griffith decided that he had absorbed a sufficient amount of knowledge about the Orthodox and Hicksite branches in order to make an intelligent decision. During the meeting, Minshall Painter and William P. Morgan documented Griffith's decision to join the Hicksite branch. Painter documented that "Jeffery Griffith subscribed his own name he came on purpose to do it to where the book was kept appearing very well satisfied."¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey's name was crossed out under the heading of members who chose to not join either branch within the Notes Respecting the Middletown List of Friends. His name was then added to the list of Friends. After learning more about the separation over an extended period of time, Jeffery became a member of the Hicksite branch of Quakerism. Deciding which branch of the religion to join was a lasting decision that affected the member both religiously and secularly.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 17, 22, 26.

William P. Morgan and Minshall Painter included in their notebook several lists of names, which categorized the Friends based upon their gender, age, and new Quaker affiliation. The lists of names were considered an official declaration of the member's decision regarding the Quaker Separation of 1827. After the completion of the lists of names, more members of the Middletown Friends Meeting decided to join the Hicksite branch of Quakerism. Morgan and Painter's "Notes Respecting the Middletown List of Friends" also contained the signatures of Sarah Emlen and her husband James. They stated their decision by placing their names among their fellow Orthodox members. Sarah and James did not desire to submit a written statement regarding their decision. Completing their decision without publicly advertising their choice revealed that they believed it did not warrant public scrutiny. The Emlens were defiant in their decision to join the Orthodox branch of Quakerism. They wanted to abruptly separate themselves from the followers of Hicksite Quakerism and return to their peaceful lives.

CONCLUSION

The schism of 1827 was a monumental disruption within Quakerism. Since its inception in the seventeenth century, Quakerism successfully avoided conflicts and disturbances. The Quaker religion, founded by George Fox, offered followers the ability to gain a personal connection to God without the assistance of a spiritual leader. Capturing this religious connection could not be forced upon its followers. It had to be discovered through their own contemplation of thoughts and seclusion from negative judgements. Members of the Society of Friends could be saved by the Inward Light found within everyone. As members of the religion began to question the direction of Quakerism, debates eventually escalated into worldwide changes. The strength of individual members had the ability to revolutionize the century old religion.

Members of the Emlen family of Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania were influential to their community. Their ability to educate, inform, and lead their fellow Friends through this religious separation was a courageous determination. As a Quaker woman minister, Sarah Emlen became a spiritual guide not just for her community, but also for Quaker meetings across the United States and Europe. Throughout her time as a traveling minister, Sarah ensured that Quakers had the guidance and strength to needed to seek a connection with God. As Sarah offered guidance, she needed to gain her own strength to continue her religious mission. The support and encouragement received from her family allowed Sarah to fuel her passion as a traveling Quaker minister. Sarah's husband, James, was a strong, supportive partner who encouraged his wife to pursue her passions. While Sarah traveled away from her home as a Public Friend, she entrusted the care of her children to James.

When the trauma of the Quaker separation divided the religious meetings into the Orthodox and Hicksite branches, the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting faced many challenges.

Family members and community friends shunned each other due to their opposing views on Quakerism. Lifelong friendships were torn apart over religious disagreements. Quakers who supported the Orthodox branch teachings involved placing their faith into the teachings of the Scripture. They believed the Bible was an essential component of achieving a connection to God. Quakers who followed the teachings of the Hicksite branch viewed the Bible as a secondary source of religious spirituality. They revitalized the idea of the Inward Light found within all Quakers. This spiritual connection was the foundation of the original beliefs of Quakerism taught by George Fox. The Quaker separation of 1827 continued to divide Friends and produce hostility throughout the United States and within the Middletown Friends Preparative Meeting for many decades.

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