

Uwchlan Organ. Paton Hill
Uwchlan Grange

PAPER READ BY ELLIS SMEDLEY AT UWCHLAN GRANGE

The Society of Friends, "called Quakers in derision", was founded in England by Geo. Fox about 1650 and largely because of persecution emigrated to America where the society grew rapidly.

Uwchlan was settled by Welch and named "Youchland" which means "higher than or above the valley" By 1712, the Friends got tired of going to Goshen to meeting and asked that they be allowed to hold meetings in the house of John Cadwalader, Uwchlan which was granted. Then a log meeting house was built by the King's Road, now Route #100 on one acre of Cadwalader's land, which he sold them in 1737 for five shillings "for a burial ground and to set a meeting house thereon".

The preaching was mostly in Welsh. The first preachers were Samuel and Griffith John, (brothers). Among the early attenders were Cadwalladers, Lloyd, Phipps, Reese, Evans, Lewis, Meredith, Hawley, Thomas, Moores and others.

In 1756 the first meeting house was built. A picture of it shows one door in the middle of the front with a little portico over it and a chimney at each south corner. The building was $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories high with an outside stairway leading to the second story and one or two horse blocks in the yard. The gateway was not stone as now, but wood or iron.

I could find no record of when the sheds were built, but they were shown in the early picture.

Isaac Lewis and David Owen each left legacies in 1771 to build a wall around the graveyard, other gifts of land and money followed and the wall was started in 1772 and finished in 1775.

Jan. 8, 1778, some doctors asked for the key to the building to use it for a hospital for soldiers, it being refused they took forcible possession and the meeting moved to Geo. Thomases in the Great Valley and returned in September 1778.

In 1827 Elias Hicks created a dissension and divided the Friends into Hicksite and Orthodox.

At one time there was a small museum on the second floor and one of the Lutheran ministers gave lectures on geology there. Rebecca Maris, sister of Geo. Maris, principal of the West Chester State Normal School held school in the second story, those able to pay were charged, those unable were taught free.

In 1875 the building was remodeled, the ceiling raised and partitions put in that could be raised or lowered with the aid of weights attached to divide it into four rooms, or the partitions could be raised and make it all one room.

The Orthodox took the Eastern end and the Hicksites the west end. In 1879 a First School was organized by the Hicksites, which flourished for many years. A similar one by the Orthodox was attended by many young people in the community.

The Orthodox ceased to meet, and rented their room to the Uwchlan School Board for a high school in 1904.

The Hicksites continued for a few years more when they becoming so few quit holding meetings and rented it to the Grange. In 1920, the Grange bought the building and yard, but not the grave yard. They too made some changes to the building.

When this building was built there was no architect to draw costly plans; many of the mechanics probably could not read or write for there was no "Little Red School House", and there was no shoddy material put into its building as its sturdiness will testify to now after nearly 200 years.

During the many changes in the nation it has stood as staunch as ever, and with proper care I see no reason why it should not stand for many centuries more.

April 20, 1939

Donat. George W. Taylor