LONGWOOD MEETING HOUSE 1865
Courtesy of the Chester County Historical Society
LONGWOOD MEETING: PUBLIC FORUM FOR THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH

By Albert J. Wahl

WHEN this meeting of our association has finished its deliberations, some of you may want to visit the beautiful Longwood Gardens, only a few miles from West Chester. As you turn off Route 1 to enter the gardens, you will notice to your left a little white-painted frame building—a building dedicated in 1855 by a remarkable group of reformers to the religion of humanity, to the service of God through service to man. Here this group, calling itself the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, maintained a widely known center for liberalism until 1940, making every meeting a public forum for the promotion of what Ralph Henry Gabriel has called the American democratic faith. It is fairly safe to say that in the eighty-eight years of its service this Longwood meetinghouse sheltered more reformers of national renown than any other building in Pennsylvania.

These Progressive Friends were born out of the tensions developing in that period of general reform running from 1830 through 1860, when thousands of people met in countless conventions to preach, protest, and plead for a multitude of related causes. These causes, called the "Sisterhood," ran the gamut of human aspiration—from antislavery, woman's rights, temperance, and peace down to the lunatic fringe of spiritualism, hydropathy, and phrenology. While the established churches supported some of these causes, notably temperance, on other issues they became battlegrounds between those seeking to lift the world to higher things and those basking in the warm comfort of the status quo. Wealthy

---

*This is an expanded version of a paper read at the luncheon meeting of the PHA, West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 20, 1972. The author is Professor of History emeritus, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

conservatives ruled the churches, and, according to Samuel J. May, turned them into bastions of slavery. Stephen S. Foster really nailed the conservatives to the cross when he published *Brotherhood of Thieves, a True Picture of the American Church and Clergy.*

Not even the Hicksite branch of the Society of Friends was safe from such charges. By the 1840s these Quakers had become institutionalized, seemingly more concerned with outward forms and practices than with the Inner Light. They had settled into a rigid conservatism, enforcing a strict code of discipline through a hierarchy of “weighty” members. Preaching a doctrine of exclusiveness, the ruling powers disowned those who dared marry outside the church and threatened to excommunicate those who tried to mix with non-Quakers in reform activities. Women were separated from men in business meetings by sliding partitions, with messengers running back and forth to keep the separate bodies informed of each other’s activities.

Walter Edgerton, clerk of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Friends, charged that ruling Quakers opposed immediate abolition of slavery because of the threat to their profits. No doubt Edgerton had heard the aphorism that “Quakers had come to America to do good, and they had done well”; now he charged that some of the most wealthy and influential in the Society of Friends were affected by the same avaricious spirit common to manufacturers and merchants in other sects.

---

2 *Some Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston, 1869), 329.
3 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Contemporaries* (Boston, 1899), 252.
5 Indiana Yearly Meeting (H), *Minutes* (1846), 7, in Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College (FHL). See also Anna Davis Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters* (New York, 1884), 122, 274-275. On disownments, see Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (H), Minutes, October 19, 1846, Miscellaneous MSS, FHL; Disownments from Kennett Monthly Meeting, 1851-58, Longwood Records, Miscellaneous Papers, FHL.
6 *A History of the Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Cincinnati, 1856), 77, FHL.
It is not certain whether Edgerton’s accusations can be applied to the Hicksite hierarchy in Chester County. It is a fact that when Lucretia Mott made a series of antislavery speeches in Quaker areas of Chester County, she was followed by George F. White, a Quaker from New York, with warnings that to join the abolitionists would be to associate with “infidels, free-thinkers, and those who regard active opposition to slavery as a religion in itself.” This was the point exactly; it was the point, among other considerations, which caused a group of liberals in the Fallowfield Meeting near Coatesville to break away from their regular affiliation and pursue their own way of worship in the spring of 1845. Led by J. Williams Thorne, former clerk of the meeting, this group erected Free Hall in which to “discuss any . . . subject in Religion[,] Morals[,] physics[,] politics or any other subject of interest to the family of man[,]Irrespective of . . . class[,] casts[,] sex[,] sect[,] or party.”

The trustees for the group received a most peculiar title to the property: “The right and Title . . . shall descend to our heirs[,] . . . successors[,] or the occupants of the soil in its vicinity through all time.” Free Hall was soon to receive other names—“Abolition Hall,” “People’s Hall”—and it greeted William Lloyd Garrison and Henry Ward Beecher with a sign over its doorway: “Here Let Truth and Error Grapple.” It certainly lived up to its ideal of barring no one when it housed a local Democratic convention in 1852.

Its main importance to the present study lies in the fact that this building, and the activities carried on within it, served as prototypes for the Longwood Meeting of the future.

In the Kennett Square area, the situation was much the same. Here, in the Marlborough Meeting, Isaac Meredith and Vincent Bernard were accused by the conservatives of acting as clerk and

---

7West Chester Daily Local News, March 17, 1881; Hallowell, James and Lucretia Mott, 206-209.
8Emma Lippincott Higgins and J. Williams Thorne, Papers about Longwood, Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends at Longwood, FHL.
10Higgins and Thorne, Papers, FHL; interview with Warren L. Webster, descendant of a founder and proprietor of a store across the street from the hall, July 10, 1950.
11West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, October 30, 1852.
doorkeeper for those holding irregular sessions "in opposition to the meeting itself." Indeed, Vincent Bernard had not only taken the keys to the meetinghouse but was said to have "affixed Padlocks to the doors of the outbuildings with the apparent design to exercise exclusive control over their use." 12

The most exciting event at Marlborough Meeting occurred in June, 1852, when Oliver Johnson, agent provocateur for the American Anti-Slavery Society, rose to remind the Friends of their reformist tradition. 13 Flanked by Joseph A. Dugdale, a disowned Hicksite from Ohio, 14 and four other liberals, Johnson had barely begun his speech when one of the elders called for his forcible removal from the premises. Johnson was arrested and paid his five-dollar fine without protest. But those arrested with him—Vincent Barnard, Dr. Bartholomew Fussell, Eusebius Barnard, and William Barnard—refused to pay their fines for reasons of conscience. The latter two had recently been disowned by Kennett Monthly Meeting; 15 now they expected to go to jail as martyrs. But even this pleasure was denied them—the prosecutors (the regular Hicksites) paid their fines for them. 16

And so the pressure mounted. Indeed, even before the incident at Marlborough, a committee of liberals had been authorized to take their case to the highest court of appeal, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. 17 In October, 1852, they reported to an irregular quarterly meeting.

12Kennett M.M. (H) Minutes, June 8, 1852, FHL.
13Pennsylvania Freeman, July 3, 1852. West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, June 8, 1852, reported that he spoke on woman's rights. On Johnson's role as provocateur see the Pennsylvania Freeman, July 3, 1852; see also the letter of Isaac T. Hopper, New York, to Joseph A. Dugdale (Cortsville, Ohio), September 3, 1841, Dugdale MSS, FHL.
14Indiana Y.M.(H) Minutes (1843), 1, 2, (1844), 1, (1847), 5, 7, FHL. The Green Plain (Ohio) Quarterly Meeting to which Dugdale had belonged was subsidiary to Indiana Yearly Meeting. Ibid.
15By May 1, 1852, William Barnard, Jonathan Lamborn, and Eusebius Barnard had been disowned; by 1858 a total of thirty-four persons had suffered the same fate. Disownments from Kennett Monthly Meeting, 1851-1858, Longwood Record, Miscellaneous Papers, FHL.
16West Chester American Republican, June 15, 22, 1852. The first of these issues giving Johnson's own account of the affair came from the Pennsylvania Freeman [n.d.]. Cf. West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, June 22, 1852, and West Chester Village Record, June 22, 1852.
17Western (Pa.) Q.M.(H) Minutes, May 1, 1852, FHL.
meeting held in Kennett Square how they had trouble getting into the house where the hierarchy met and how the dominant party refused to consider their arguments. The committee now recommended radical action: "we are united in believing that the ... preservation of our religious liberties, the advancement of our [C]hristian testimonies, and the prosperity of truth, ... depends upon instituting a Yearly Meeting for ourselves ...." 18

This recommendation threw the assembled reformers into such "lively exercises" that much routine business went undone. But the recommendation was accepted, and a committee was appointed to issue "a call for a general religious conference ... to consider the propriety" of establishing an independent society. 19

The call that was sent out by way of general newspapers, reform sheets, and circulars did not bother with "propriety"; 20 the emphasis instead was on devising a plan which might seem practicable to those attending the conference. Signed by fifty-eight of the "most ... intelligent among the Society of Friends and others," the call reminded the liberals that they had support for their rebellion in other places. In New York, Ohio, and Michigan similar groups had been formed, two of which had taken the name of Congregational Friends, with two others calling themselves Progressive Friends. Not only Quakers were invited to the proposed conference, but all those who felt the need for cooperation in divorcing "Religion from Technical Theology" and in pursuing "other subjects pertaining to Human Duty and Welfare..." All such people were invited to gather in the Old Kennett Meeting House on May 22, 1853. 21

The day designated for the opening of the conference was a Sunday. The choice of the Sabbath as the day on which to organize the new society was symbolic of the ideas of these reformers. All days were equally holy, and it was practical to meet on a day when people

---

18 Ibid., October 30, 1852; cf. Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, Proceedings (1853), 40-41, FHL (Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings). Copies of these Proceedings are also in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester (CCHS).

19 Ibid.


21 Ibid.
could attend without doing injury to their regular occupations. The
meeting had been well advertised, the weather was fair, and at-
tendants from distant places were assured of Chester County hospi-
tality. Small wonder that the dusty roads leading to Old Kennett
were crowded with buggies and carriages, and that the house was
filled to overflowing when William Barnard, the temporary
chairman, rapped for order.\footnote{Pennsylvania Freeman, May 19, 1853; Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1853), 3-5; West Chester American Republican, May 31, 1853.}

After a vocal prayer, and a testimony in favor of practical holiness
by Thomas McClintock of the Waterloo (New York) Congregational
Friends, the meeting settled down to the business of organization.
Joseph A. Dugdale was elected presiding clerk or chairman. Hannah
M. Darlington, perhaps out of loyalty to her own sex, proposed
Sidney Peirce for the post of recording clerk, a proposal which was
accepted. After much discussion it was decided to form a new society
and call it "The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive
Friends." An "Exposition of Sentiments," written by a committee
headed by Oliver Johnson, was adopted as the official statement of
the group's principles, purposes, and methods of work.\footnote{Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1853), 4-6, 12.}

According to this exposition, there were to be no set doctrines,
forms, or ceremonies, and the Yearly Meeting would exercise no dis-
ciplinary authority over individual members or related associations,
if such should be established. The group would not be responsible
for the acts of individuals, and individuals could avoid responsibility
for majority decisions by voting against them. The door to
membership was to be wide open—open to "all who recognize the
Equal Brotherhood of the Human Family, without regard to sex,
color or condition, and who acknowledge the duty of defining and
illustrating their faith in God, . . . by lives of personal purity, and
works of beneficence and charity to mankind . . . ." Such indi-
viduals, in assembled meeting, would seek to intensify in each other
a feeling of responsibility to "labor for the redemption of mankind
from every form of error and sin." The Progressive platform was to
be as "broad as Humanity, and as comprehensive as Truth . . . ."
The exposition closed with some questions—and a ringing answer:
"Are these the ideas of a Church Utopian? Are we dreamers and en-
thusiasts? . . . Let us . . . not falter, or hesitate. What if our num-
bers are few, and the hosts of superstition and sin stand before us in
menacing array? . . .” The answer was clear: the people at Old Kennett were assured that “the truth we promulgate is a part of the celestial machinery of God,” and that “whoso puts that machinery in gear for mankind hath the Almighty to turn his wheel.” 24

Fortified by this deep sense of right, the Progressive Friends adjourned their Sunday meeting to reconvene for three more exciting days of applied Christianity, helped along by ideas drawn from the Enlightenment and Utilitarianism. Leaders in these activities included Lucretia Mott, that well-known bundle of reformist energy; Ernestine L. Rose, zealous feminist and abolitionist; and Robert Purvis, a well-educated mulatto now devoting his talents to the uplift of American Negroes. 25 Even “General” Sidney Jones and his consort Fannie Lee Townshend were allowed their day in court, although their free-love doctrine threatened to disrupt the meeting. 26

The general body of Progressives rose above such distractions. Through speeches, testimonies, and discussions they attacked chattel slavery, the slavery of women to men, Demon Rum, the use of tobacco, capital punishment, and threats to peace. Being “impressed by the awful calamities of War,” the meeting approved a petition to be presented to Congress by Senator Charles Sumner, urging that all disputes with foreign powers be settled through “an Arbitration of Nations.” Further, the reformers called for the “abandonment of all fortifications” and military schools, and for the “abolition of the army and navy . . . .” They also addressed a letter to the Pennsylvania Assembly asking for the abolition of capital punishment for murder, claiming that “all history [had] demonstrated the . . . ruinous policy, and the entire inefficiency of the death-penalty as a preventive of crime.” A substitute means of prevention was called for, “more in accordance with . . . Christian precepts and the advancing spirit of the age.” Strangely enough, it was not the slavery question which provoked the longest and most interesting

24Ibid., 12-26.
25Ibid., 6-10.
26The West Chester American Republican, May 31, 1853, thought that “amongst any other than a non-resistant body they would have been kicked out of the building . . . .” See the same paper, May 10, 1856, for a notice of “Gen. John Sidney Jones and his wife!—Gen. Fannie Lee Townshend . . . .”; and also “Samuel Pennock’s Story,” West Chester Daily Local News, June 5, 1896.
discussion but "the many evils resulting from the use of Tobacco. . . ." In fact, the tobacco discussion proved so interesting that it had to be carried over into the fourth and final day of the conference.27

Since both sides to the dispute among Hicksites claimed a legal and moral right to use the Old Kennett house, a joint-use arrangement was tried during the summer months of 1853, the Progressives entering the house about the time the conservatives were retiring from service.28 But the fall, winter, and spring months were marked by increasing friction.29 When in May, 1854, the Progressives attempted to hold their second annual convention, their deliberations were disturbed by the entrance of a group of the more orthodox, who commanded the reformers to disperse. Some physical violence resulted when an attempt was made to eject certain rebel leaders, but the conservatives were forced to retreat without accomplishing their purpose.30 The rebels were shaken by this encounter, however, and they debated what to do. It was finally decided to avoid further unpleasantness by holding their Monday and Tuesday sessions in a hall in the nearby village of Hamorton.31

This building was obviously too small to accommodate the crowds drawn to yearly meetings. Indeed, preliminary steps for a larger building under full Progressive ownership had been taken even before the incident at Old Kennett, and some hundreds of dollars subscribed for this purpose.32 This incident, however, stimulated the growth of the subscription list, and the public was soon informed that a suitable building lot had been purchased from John and Hannah Cox, owners of Longwood Farm, for $107.11. Joseph A. Dugdale and fifty-six of his co-workers were named trustees of the building fund and charged with the responsibility of erecting a hall in which "Religious, moral, scientific and literary" activities might be carried on.33

28West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, July 30, 1853.
29Kennett M.M. (H) Minutes, September 6, October 4, 1853; West Chester Independent Herald, February 9, 1854.
30West Chester American Republican, May 23, 30, 1854.
31Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1854), 4; Pennsylvania Freeman, June 1, 1854.
32West Chester American Republican, May 23, 30, 1854.
33West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, August 19, 1854; Chester County Deed Book X-5, Vol. 120, 264-266.
Little time was lost in constructing this hall of freedom. On September 3, 1854, Joseph A. Dugdale, Oliver Johnson, and Thomas Curtis officiated at the laying of the cornerstone, the latter individual holding up the mason's trowel as a symbol of sympathy with the working classes. A sealed jar containing various documents issued by typical reform groups was deposited under the cornerstone. The Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Progressive Friends for 1853 and 1854 went into the jar, as well as the account of the woman's rights convention held in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1852. Chandler Darlington and Sidney Peirce actually deposited the jar, and Mary Jackson, a visitor from England, made a little speech to express her delight to see women take part in such ceremonies.34

Although the story is probably apocryphal, it is told that when the cornerstone had been laid, Oliver Johnson stepped forward to lay a curse upon any violators of the projected building. "If at any future time," Johnson said, "the owners of this temple of reform and Christian progress shall pervert it to uses of bigotry, intolerance and despotism, and shut its doors against the messengers of unpopular truths, a voice will come forth from this cornerstone to rebuke them and cry 'shame! ... ."35

The new hall was ready for use by the time of the third annual meeting, and May 19, the day before the opening session, was chosen for its dedication.36 The crowd assembled to find a neat little temple of frame construction, approximately forty by eighty feet. With two galleries, it probably held four or five hundred people.37


37Photographs of the Longwood Meetinghouse in FHL and CCHS, dated 1865, presumably show it as it was at the time of dedication. These photographs, plus measurements of the building by the author, reinforce the estimate given in the West Chester Daily Local News, July 14, 1900, that the building probably held about four hundred people.
These people were now treated to a dedication service featuring Theodore Parker, well-known Unitarian reformer, and Professor Ellwood Harvey, prominent feminist and faculty member of the Philadelphia Female Medical College. Professor Harvey assured his audience that "progress is God's law in the development of the human race as well as in the material creation, and that Science and Religion are in harmony with each other." The Hutchinson family, a band of stalwart brothers often heard at reform conventions, then stirred the proceedings with a hymn, "Bright Things Can Never Die." Parker, now introduced as the main speaker, had come down from Boston well-armed with righteous indignation because of his recent arrest and trial for antislavery activity. He launched into a two-hour discourse which held the "close and unwearied attention of the assembly." He urged his listeners to develop the "Religious Faculty with the same freedom as the Intellectual in science, literature and business." This was to be done individually, "each one . . . seeking inspiration from the Soul of the world, the Infinite Father, infinite Mother; and socially not less—men [and women] coming together to quicken each other as iron sharpeneth iron. . . ." True religion, he asserted, was service to God "by the normal use, discipline, and development of every limb of the body, every faculty of the Spirit, and all power which we possess. We may make a Paradise of peaceful industry, and find an immortal Eden too." This was exciting stuff indeed, with something of a camp-meeting flavor in its fervent exhortations to be good and to do good, in its outpouring of bright hope. This feeling was brought to a climax when the Hutchinsons closed the ceremonies with "Coming Right Along; or Right over Wrong." 38

With the dedication of their house the Progressive Friends were indeed "coming right along." The evangelistic enthusiasm that they felt then lasted a long time, invigorating what was really an early form of that social gospel which Walter Rauschenbusch brought to maturity about 1915. 39 Parker's speech, plus Oliver Johnson's earlier

38 Pa. Y. M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1855), 55-57, 92-95; letter of Theodore Parker, Boston, March 15, 1855, to the Progressive Friends, in the West Chester Independent Herald, April 21, 1855; West Chester Jeffersonian May 5, 1855.

"Exposition of Sentiments," gave evidence that the Longwood group also felt an intense devotion to the American Democratic Faith—a faith which had been developing almost from the time of the first settlements.

This faith was a composite of three interactive tenets or articles of belief.\(^4\) The first was the belief that the universe was governed in all its natural, physical, and moral aspects by a divinely ordained fundamental (or higher) law. Individuals among the Progressive Friends invoked this higher law when they risked their freedoms, fortunes, and reputations in underground-railroad work. Their yearly meetings issued many testimonies against slavery based on the same principle; and they used this concept to claim that women had natural rights and should therefore be free from man-made laws and customs.\(^4\)

The second tenet was that of the free and responsible individual, who became more free and responsible as he learned more about the natural and moral law through study, reflection, and discussion—and perhaps through that flash of intuition held so dear by Emerson. Individuals attending Longwood meetings came well-armed with facts and figures, they listened to speeches by visiting experts, and they sought truth through the exercise of freedom of speech in many a long discussion. The truth they sought did not consist of historical fact but was to come "in the continuous revelation to man of principles of creative life," by which a nobler humanity might be developed, and a nobler society. Indeed, the pursuit of this kind of truth under freedom of investigation was so much on their minds that they featured a slogan by Lucretia Mott on the cover pages of their annual reports or Proceedings. "Truth for Authority," the slogan read, "not Authority for Truth."\(^4\)


The third ingredient in the faith was the belief that Americans had a mission—that, working as free and responsible individuals under the higher law, they were obligated to make democracy in all its aspects work at home and to make it serve as an example to the rest of the world. The defenders of the faith, at Longwood and in many other places, were vehement in their assertions that this mission should be and could be accomplished; only the impediments of ignorance, superstition, traditional practice, and selfish greed needed to be cleared away to reach the Golden Day. Even Emerson, casting his cool eye on the hot American scene, was convinced: “What is a man born for,” he asked, “but to be a Reformer, a Remaker of what man has made? . . .”

These were challenging words and carried with them the idea that reformers were in a never-ending business, that constant efforts were needed to keep the ball of reform rolling along. The Progressive Friends realized this and knew that if they were to extend that “Christian Democracy,” that “Church of Humanity” envisioned by Joseph A. Dugdale and his colleagues, they had to send missionaries into the hinterland, into those areas as yet unrefreshed by Longwood doctrines. Individuals and groups thus carried the good word; Dugdale held a meeting in the chapel of the Millersville State Normal School and meetings were held in Wilmington and Philadelphia. At other times, in wooded groves in Bucks and Chester counties, speakers exhorted, professional singers swayed the crowds in camp-meeting style, and tracts on reform topics were distributed.

43 Ibid.
44 “Man the Reformer,” in Mark Van Doren, ed., The Portable Emerson (New York, 1946), 83.
46 West Chester Jeffersonian, September 11, 1859, February 5, 1859; West Chester American Republican, June 30, 1857; Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1859), 44. In the interval between the annual sessions of 1857 and 1858 twenty-six missionary meetings were held in twelve different places; in 1858 the Yearly Meeting appointed a committee of sixty-four people to proselytize for reform in Ohio, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Indiana, and Iowa through personal visits, letters, or through any means that came to hand. Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1858), 11-17.
Returning to Longwood, these missionaries started a Sunday school for their children, and held regular Sunday church services for many years so that their movement would maintain continuity between the yearly conventions. Holding true to their convictions that Sunday was as good a day as any for reform and that no topic that promised relief for mankind was taboo in a church, they invited speakers and conducted services that scandalized their conservative neighbors. In 1855 “one of the Salt Lake Saints held forth . . . .”; in 1857 Sidney H. Gay, of New York, delivered a lecture on “Landscape Gardening as an Art.” This sort of thing went on apace, with Elizabeth K. Churchill of Providence, Rhode Island, speaking on the abuses of the press in 1876; and with the Reverend Parmalee of Wilmington, Delaware, starting a series of lectures on “Evolution, Natural and Spiritual,” in October, 1886. While Frederick A. Hinckley, veteran Unitarian reformer, stabbed at Chester County conservatives with a Sunday service on the labor question in July, 1888, a broader, deeper thrust came in 1920, when the Reverend Norman Thomas spoke on “The Realization of Christianity in Everyday Life.” He claimed business in general “is organized upon the principle of how much you can get,” and that men were suspicious of Christian ideals because they had been sentimentalized and not applied to actual things—in politics, in business, or in social relations. “We must put faith to the test,” he said. “If business conflicts with Christianity[,] . . . the forces of light and love must rule.”

The people attending these Sunday services were the Progressive regulars. Well-educated members of the middle class, living within

---

48Kennett Square Free Press, September 11, 1855; West Chester American Republican, July 21, 28, 1857.
49Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1876), 22; West Chester Daily Local News, October 1, 1886.
50West Chester Daily Local News, August 2, 1888, June 7, 1920. It should be noted that in 1892 the Yearly Meeting, alarmed at the report that the Columbian Exposition would be closed on Sundays, delegated Jenkin Lloyd Jones to register a protest against this idea with the exposition’s directors on the grounds that the “toiling multitudes” of American industry, held to a six-day week, would not be able to enjoy the cultural advantages offered at Chicago. Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1892), 49-50, 54.
thirty miles of Longwood, they paid the bills, served on countless committees, and gave the dominant tone and color to the meeting. Those who lived close to the meetinghouse—the Coxes, Darlings, Mendenhalls, and Pennocks—opened their stately old homes to visiting speakers. They and their wives kept the building in repair, scrubbed the floors, dusted the furniture, and saw to it that flowers were on the speakers' platform.31 Prominent regulars included Thomas Garrett, iron merchant and toolmaker of Wilmington, Delaware. His underground-railroad work was interrupted as early as 1848, when Chief Justice Taney, sitting in the United States Circuit Court in Delaware, wiped him out financially for violation of fugitive-slave laws. Regarding the heavy penalty as a license to continue his work, he was able to help a total of 2,072 slaves to freedom by 1857.32 Garrett's friend, Isaac Meredith, made his prosperous farm at Indian Deep along the Brandywine another leading station for fugitives.

Other regulars included James Fulton, operator of a paper mill, a member of the Presbyterian Church, a Whig, and then a Republican. James Meredith was a lawyer, while Elijah F. Pennypacker somehow found the time to be a farmer, a real-estate agent, and a Whig member of the Pennsylvania Assembly for four terms. Dr. Ann Preston, a member of the first graduating class of the Philadelphia Female Medical College, was a frequent attendant, as was Hannah Darlington, who presented to the town of West Chester the lot where the public library now stands. Vincent Barnard, that controversial keeper of the keys at Marlborough, was a botanist and ornithologist; his collection of stuffed birds eventually was given to


Swarthmore College. And no listing of Progressive regulars would be complete without the name of J. Williams Thorne, graduate of Westtown School, amateur poet, and compulsive speaker at Longwood meetings. In 1892, when he was in his seventy-sixth year, he read his long long poem, entitled "The True Republic," to the Yearly Meeting. In the poem he recalled how his youthful idealism had been battered by the realities of American life; he now charged that:

Although proud boasts be heard on every hand,
That the Slave-curse has vanished from the land.
See, in its stead, the robber 'Bulls and Bears'
The nation ruled by gambling Millionaires.

But his incurable optimism would not die; he envisioned a true republic based upon "suffrage to both sexes free":

Soon shall all the races of mankind,
Only by laws of brotherhood confined,
And freed from the monopolist's dread thrall,
Confess the earth the heritage of all.
Then shall all nations and all peoples be
United in one world-wide reciprocity.

His remains rest in Longwood Cemetery under an epitaph which reads: "Here lies one who was not afraid to speak the truth as he believed it."

While J. Williams Thorne and the other regulars pursued many interests, they counted the annual reform conventions or yearly meetings as high spots in their lives. Usually held late in May or early June, and lasting from two to four days, these were occasions when Longwood would become the Mecca for hundreds of reformers—reformers secure in their conviction that they were going to do their Christian duty as American citizens. Assured of freedom


of speech limited only by parliamentary procedure and a ten-minute rule for discussants, they journeyed to Longwood by horse and buggy, train, bus, and car.

In the early years latecomers to the scene would find something of a carnival atmosphere, with sutlers' wagons and stands doing a thriving business, and a veritable potpourri of humanity milling around the grounds. Sometimes the crowd outside the hall was so large that Progressive leaders felt impelled to mount the steps and address the throng. Earnest-faced Quakers were there, clad in plain brown coats and broad-brimmed hats, with their women in "casing" bonnets. There were also men with beards and long hair, and bob-haired women who supported Amelia Bloomer. Given the appearance of these people and the ideas they expressed, it was not surprising that in 1855 a conservative West Chester newspaper asserted that Longwood was a place where "long-haired men and short-haired women" plotted revolution, where crack-brained extremists threatened the stability of society. However, as Thomas Wentworth Higginson was to say, "without a little crack somewhere, a man could hardly do his duty to the times."

Inside the crowded hall, however, the scene was more decorous. The audience, now settled on padded Quaker benches, gazed up at the featured speakers with eager anticipation and with an equally eager desire to subject whatever was said to critical analysis and dis-

---


57 In 1863 there was so much interest in the Sunday meeting following the regular convention sessions on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 4-6, that an excursion train was scheduled to run from West Chester to the Greenwood Station near Longwood. West Chester Village Record, June 2, 1863.

58 West Chester Jeffersonian, June 16, 1860, June 19, 1869; West Chester Daily Local News, June 15, 1874, June 3, 1876.


61 West Chester American Republican, September 25, October 21, 1855.


63 See the padded bench given to the Chester County Historical Society in 1940 when the Longwood group dissolved.
discussion. Typically, the presiding clerk would step forward to the low oaken pulpit to open the meeting with a few appropriate remarks, or there might be a period of “silent waiting upon the Spirit.” Then the recording clerk would read the call for the meeting, reminding the audience of Progressive principles and purposes. Committees would be appointed to prepare testimonies on various reform topics, to prepare memorials for deceased members, to nominate officers for the ensuing year, and to audit the treasurer’s account.64 The reports of these committees would be acted upon later, the testimonies and memorials sometimes undergoing considerable amendment before being approved for publication in the Proceedings.65

At intervals the meeting was enlivened by music, perhaps by Miss Sleeper, a trained soprano from Philadelphia; or perhaps, as in 1935, by tenor solos by Everett L. Hunt, future dean of men at Swarthmore College. Sometimes a Philadelphia church choir sang a rousing hymn, or students from Cheyney might entertain with Negro spirituals. On occasion the audience attempted congregational singing accompanied by the organ.66 In 1856 it was embarrassing to find that only “several friends” were able to follow Samuel J. May’s lead in the singing of a hymn.67 This inability to sing, this neglect of one of the grace notes of life, had been remarked on earlier by an abolitionist newspaper, which thought that it was a sufficient commentary on that “Quaker education [which] had deprived them of all opportunity to cultivate the musical faculty, and even of testing the power of music over the higher feelings of the heart.”68 By 1859, however, the audience was loud in its “Hymn to Progress”, 69 and


65Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1862), 5-6, 10-14, (1876), 18-20, 27; West Chester Daily Local News, June 6, 1887.


68National Anti-Slavery Standard, June 9, 1855.

following the Civil War, with the meeting led by Unitarians, they sang "Songs of Natural Religion," which included a hymn expressing Longwood’s "open-door" policy:

Come hither all, the great, the least,
The Heathen, Buddhist, Jew:
Come Christian, Moslem, Layman, Priest,
There’s room enough for you.70

Hymn-singing, of course, was not the main concern of these annual conventions; music served mainly to sweeten the congregation for the more serious business of tackling the social, economic, religious, and political issues of the day.

While the reform activities that the Progressive Friends undertook at Longwood could be made the basis of many long articles, we can touch only on a few high spots. Year after year they issued testimonies against slavery and listened to impassioned denunciations of the "peculiar institution" by such abolitionists as William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, and Charles C. Burleigh.71 In June, 1862, the yearly meeting sent a delegation to present Abraham Lincoln with a demand for immediate abolition by presidential decree. He received them courteously, remarking that he was glad the Progressives were not applicants for office, since that class of persons gave him more trouble than slaveholders. He indicated that a decree of emancipation would be no more binding upon the South than the Constitution—"and that cannot be enforced in that part of the country now."72 After emancipation was a fact, the Progressives were concerned with the condition and rights of the freedmen, upholding Radical reconstruction and passing the collection plate to help support the daughter of Frances D. Gage in her teaching among the Negroes of Parris Island, South Carolina.73 They sent out petitions and resolutions to uphold the political and civil rights of

72Ibid. (1862), 8, 15-19. The Liberator, however, reported that Lincoln received the Progressive delegation with "puerile, absurd, illogical, impertinent, and untimely remarks . . . ." Russell B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (Boston, 1955), 175.
Northern blacks,\textsuperscript{74} listened to a disciple of Booker T. Washington explain the Tuskegee program, and stirred uneasily when W. E. B. DuBois told them in 1920 that slaves had not been freed through reform idealism but through the clash of economic and military forces.\textsuperscript{75} In 1940 the Progressives combined their long interest in Negro uplift with their support of labor by listening to a speech on “Industrial Slavery and Industrial Freedom” by A. Philip Randolph, national chairman of the Union of Sleeping Car Porters.\textsuperscript{76}

A similar long interest in the woman’s-rights movement produced many a testimony, petition, and speech—rendered more vehement, no doubt, by Horace Bushnell’s claim in 1869 that this was a reform against nature, an effort “to make trumpets out of flutes, and sunflowers out of violets.”\textsuperscript{77} In 1874 two ladies from New Jersey appeared at Longwood to trumpet dress reform for women; one was clad “from top to toe in man’s clothes, and the other in the full Bloomer costume.” Their argument and appearance provoked considerable discussion, both playful and serious, but the audience was really aroused by Nicholas E. Boyd’s speech on “Sexual Holiness,” which was said to contain “some passages . . . which . . . made the hearers hold their breath.” After much soul-searching the meeting decided to neither approve nor reject this speech but to print it in the \textit{Proceedings} for “information and serious consideration.”\textsuperscript{78}

However interesting questions of sex and dress might be, there was a need to keep one’s eye on the main target. In 1885 Susan B. Anthony told a crowded house that they should continue sending woman-suffrage petitions to Congress until “the work is done.”

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid. (1865), 7, 12, (1868), 7-8, (1892), 49-50. In 1907, however, Presiding Clerk F. A. Hinckley was of the opinion that it was a mistake to give the ballot to the Negro without at the same time providing for his responsible use of it through education. West Chester \textit{Daily Local News}, June 10, 1907.

\textsuperscript{75}Pa. Y. M. Prog. Frds., \textit{Proceedings} (1900), 55-60; West Chester \textit{Daily Local News}, June 7, 1920.

\textsuperscript{76}West Chester \textit{Daily Local News}, September 9, 1940.


They did carry on the work. When Gifford Pinchot appeared before them as the Progressive party candidate for Senator from Pennsylvania in 1914, he spoke from a platform ablaze with yellow streamers and with a large banner crying "Votes for Women" directly over his head.\textsuperscript{79}

If the liberation of women was important to these Progressives, in 1876 they faced up to an issue which was at least equally significant, and one with considerable bearing on present ecological concerns. The committee on testimonies, feeling the pressures of the Gilded Age, produced a statement entitled "Simplicity of Living." This testimony asserted that "Human life . . . has grown burdensome, anxious, self-clogging and self-exhausting . . .; partly, we believe, from the irrational and excessive pursuit of wealth,—as if it were the primary end of existence . . . ." Property, these Friends said, was to be honored as a means to the good life but "never to be gained nor used under conditions which impair welfare and happiness, or which demoralize or degrade mankind . . . ." Why," they asked, "in the very bower of roses, should we sit on cushions and sleep on pillows stuffed with thorns?" They asserted that the whole complex business of modern society needed simplification and reduction. Thoreau and Emerson were just offstage when the Progressives cried that "The higher objects of life are lost to sight and hearing in the dusty, noisy struggle and vulgar rivalry of what we call 'business,' and we become beasts of burden, saddled and ridden by the things which ought to carry us."\textsuperscript{80}

Such concern for moderation as a way of life permeated many a yearly meeting. Before the Civil War a committee had been appointed to study the question of "Limiting the Acquisition of Property." Their report asked people to consider whether mankind would not be happier in the long run under agricultural conditions rather than under those produced by industry, whether graduated income taxes and heavy inheritance taxes were not desirable, and


whether all children, rich and poor, should not be given an equal education.\textsuperscript{81}

This regard for children, coupled with the Progressive horror of living conditions for the poor in the great industrial cities, led them to support most generously the "Children's Country Week." This was a very successful program, led by Eliza Sproat Turner in the 1870s and 1880s, through which hundreds of children were taken from city streets and alleys to spend a week or two with country families in Chester County, in Roxborough, Germantown, and Ridley Park.\textsuperscript{82}

A similar concern for the conditions under which the parents of these children worked was seen in the invitation extended to Terence V. Powderly, who explained most eloquently the aims and methods of the labor movement in 1890. It is an interesting commentary on the nature of Progressive-Friend meetings, and on the tenacity of the woman's-rights advocates, to note that, in the "spirited discussion" following Powderly's speech, a feminist found a way to tie labor into her own pet project. Miss Elizabeth Yates had come down from Maine to speak on equal rights; now she rose to say that, having heard so many fine ideas, "she felt . . . baptized with a wave of human progress . . . ." She liked the eight-hour day proposed by Powderly; after such brief work it was good for men to go home and help their wives. "I never liked the idea of woman's sphere being confined to the home," she cried, "while the man has all outdoors. Have not the men the lion's share of everything, and also the lamb's? We are coming to recognize that we need more father in the home and more mother in the government."\textsuperscript{83}

After a long morning spent in listening to such strongly held opinions or participating in the discussions that followed almost every speech, even the most ardent reformer found it pleasant to call a halt for lunch and relaxation on the shaded grounds outside the

\textsuperscript{81}\textit{Ibid.} (1856), 5-6, 10-11. Actually, the committee report took the form of fourteen "Interrogatories"; the committee's final (and partially affirmative) report was not returned until 1859, when regret was expressed that the yearly meeting had not "carefully discussed and scrutinized" it before adopting it for publication. \textit{Ibid.} (1859), 8, 35-36.

\textsuperscript{82}West Chester \textit{Daily Local News}, June 17, 1878, June 7, 1880, March 12, June 9, 1881; Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., \textit{Proceedings} (1880), 14-17, (1881), 8-9.

\textsuperscript{83}Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., \textit{Proceedings} (1890), 55-63.
building. People would spill out of the meetinghouse, some rushing to the sutlers' wagons, others to the refreshment stands provided by the Progressive Friends. Many people had brought their own picnic baskets, and luncheon groups would form on the lawn and under the trees, sometimes continuing the discussions they had started inside the hall. After lunch some people sought the beauties of nature by strolling through Peirce's Park, now the DuPont or Longwood Gardens. Others found pleasure in walking through the Longwood Cemetery directly across the street—a cemetery started as a private enterprise by Joseph A. Dugdale and some friends in 1855. While Dugdale was not to find his peace in this beautiful spot, the names of Oliver Johnson and many other Progressive Friends are inscribed on the weathered headstones. It is perhaps indicative of American values that the cemetery derives its greatest fame from the fact that Bayard Taylor, poet, novelist, and world traveler, now rests there under an imposing Greek altar of the Doric order.

The people reassembling in the Longwood temple after the luncheon recess were called to order by a long line of distinguished presiding clerks. Joseph A. Dugdale was the first of these. He was known for "his gentle face, his complete suit of Quaker drab, his earnest . . . preaching, [and] his love for children . . . ." Ever busy in Progressive-Friend activities, he was particularly proud of the series of children's conventions he sponsored in connection with Longwood Meeting. By May, 1856, however, he was feeling the ef-

---

84 Ibid. (1853-1905), passim; West Chester Daily Local News, June 15, 1874, June 3, 1876, June 10, 1888, June 15, 1900, June 3, 1921.
85 Chester County Deed Book X-5, Vol. 120, 263-264; West Chester Independent Herald, June 2, 1855; West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, April 21, 1855.
87 Philadelphia Times, November 1, 1896; Philadelphia Press, May 3, 1903; Wilmington Every Evening, June 8, 1929; West Chester Daily Local News, August 29, 1936.
88 Emma Worrell, "Memories of Longwood Meeting," Friends Intelligencer, XXV (August 31, 1918), 547; West Chester Independent Herald, August 18, 1855; West Chester Jeffersonian, September 4, 25, 1858; West Chester American Republican, July 30, 1861.
fects of incessant reform activity; he asked that Oliver Johnson might be permitted to help the clerk due to the "unusual amount of business upon the table and his own feeble health . . . ." No doubt the state of Dugdale's health, coupled with the outbreak of the Civil War, caused the cancellation of the annual convention for 1861.  

Yearly meetings were resumed in 1862, with Oliver Johnson serving as leader from 1862 to 1873. Johnson came to Longwood as a professional reformer and skilled journalist, with long years of experience as Garrison's right-hand man, and as editor of the Anti-Slavery Bugle and the Pennsylvania Freeman, and coeditor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard. A kindly person, "alert and firm," he could keep a meeting to its "best line of thought and give it animated interest . . . . He knew how to conduct a meeting without its knowing that it was being led." His personal tastes, however, led him to dress in a manner quite unlike that of most of the regulars. Conservative critics described his coat as fashionable and thought that his "dress would have done credit to a tip-top dandy, if placed upon a well-shaped person."

Johnson was followed as presiding clerk by three very able and very handsome Unitarians: Charles G. Ames, of Germantown, Pennsylvania (1874-1877), Charles D. B. Mills, of Syracuse, New York (1878-1884), and by Frederic A. Hinckley, of Providence, Rhode Island and other cities in the East. Hinckley, like Johnson

---

89 Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1856), 4. The annual meeting in 1862 was called the "Tenth Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Progressive Friends" in spite of the fact that it was actually only the ninth. "The Society held no meeting in 1861, but that of the present year is numbered without reference to that circumstance." Pa. Y.M. Prog. Frds., Proceedings (1862), 3n. The same technique was used in numbering yearly meetings after the cancellation of the 1917 meeting. The result is that, although only eighty-six actual yearly meetings were held, the final one was called "The Eighty-Eighth and Last Yearly Meeting 1853-1940." Program leaflet for 1940, Hymns, Programs, Prog. Frds., E. Marl. Twp. Churches, CCHS.


92 West Chester Jeffersonian and Democratic Herald, June 15, 1853.

before him, made religious and social reform his career, serving the Progressive Friends and other groups for over thirty years. During that time, wrote one regular attendant, "To most of us Longwood was Frederic A. Hinckley . . . ." When he became fatally ill in 1917, the yearly meeting suffered its second cancellation, again coincident with American involvement in war. From 1918 through 1926 the annual conventions were carried along by the local regulars and a variant group of ministers and college professors.

In 1927, however, the regulars in search of a leader struck pay dirt—a most inelegant way to describe Jesse Herman Holmes, one of the founders of the American Friends Service Committee, former president of the National Federation of Religious Liberals, professor of philosophy and religion in Swarthmore College, and possessor of a Ph.D. in chemistry from Johns Hopkins. His students called him "Ducky"—at least those who were able to survive his grueling Socratic teaching technique. Hovering somewhere between pragmatism and idealism, he cast doubt on the reign of natural law in the social world and yet urged people to regard the "inner light" as an "inner spur," driving them on to create better futures for themselves and for society. Serving as presiding clerk at Longwood until 1940, he brought to the meeting his twinkley-eyed humor, his professorial desire to have each meeting discuss a theme, and his conviction that socialism, with its emphasis upon cooperation, offered the best hope for peace on earth. In 1931 the theme offered
by Holmes at the Saturday morning session of the yearly meeting was "Why a Third Party?" After lunch Allan S. Olmsted, an attorney, argued that "We Don't Need a Third Party." He was followed by A. J. Muste, dean of Brookwood Labor College, who claimed that "We Do Need a Third Party." Next day the Sunday-afternoon crowd heard Andrew J. Biemiller, of the League of Industrial Democracy, assert that "We Have a Third Party." 100

Given such persuasion, it was not surprising that Jesse Holmes became the Socialist candidate for governor of Pennsylvania in 1934, running with James H. Maurer, of Reading, candidate for United States Senator. His friends thought that he had no hope of being elected but saw the campaign as an opportunity to mount still another platform from which to expose local political corruption. 101 Holmes soon found other and more dangerous corruptions abroad in the world, most notably in the rise of the totalitarian ideologies. "The Menace of Fascism" was discussed at Longwood in 1935, in 1937 the theme of the meeting was "The Future of Democracy," and in 1938 a few hundred attendants considered the question "Whither Civilization?" 102

By this time, however, the regulars were asking themselves "Whither Longwood Meeting?" There had been signs of decline since 1906, when it was decided to discontinue publishing the proceedings. The Sunday school and ordinary Sunday services had long since been abandoned. And, now, in the late 1930s, a white-haired professor emeritus addressed sparse audiences of white-haired reformers too little refreshed by the young. 103 It seemed absurd to maintain a building used only two days a year. In 1939 Jesse

---


101 Program leaflet (1931), Hymns, Programs, Prog. Frds., E. Marl. Twp. Churches, CCHS.


103 Program leaflets (1934, 1937, 1938), Hymns, Programs, Prog. Frds., E. Marl. Twp. Churches, CCHS.

104 West Chester Daily Local News, September 14, 16, 1935; Kennett News and Advertiser, September 13, 1940.
Holmes proposed that the organization be dissolved, the property sold, and the proceeds used to set up "an endowed lectureship . . . in the Longwood tradition . . . at some such center as Lincoln University or Cheyney State Teachers College . . . ." The Longwood board of managers, with the consent of the membership, decided to follow Holmes's suggestion and authorized the trustees to sell the property subject to their discretion as to its future use. After one more meeting, brimming with nostalgia and reminiscence, the property was sold to Pierre S. DuPont for $6000. This sum was more, according to the court decree, "than [could] be obtained at public sale." The meetinghouse furnishings were sold to individuals at nominal prices, or given to institutions like the Cheyney State Teachers College and the Chester County Historical Society. The building itself, with some interior alterations, has been used since 1942 by such organizations as a local girl scout troop, a garden club, and the Kennett Little Theater group.

The proceeds of the sale were deposited in a West Chester bank under a trust-fund arrangement. For a while there was doubt as to just how to use the fund. But after Jesse Holmes's death in 1942, a way opened to use it in the original Longwood spirit. In 1943 his friends dedicated the Jesse Holmes Memorial Chair in the History and Philosophy of Religion at Howard University, and the following year the Longwood trustees decided to devote the income from their fund to the support of this chair. They stipulated,

\[\text{104 West Chester Daily Local News, September 12, 1939, September 5, 1940; Kennett News and Advertiser, September 13, 1940.}\\
\text{105 West Chester Daily Local News, September 9, 1940; Chester County Deed Book 0-20, Vol. 486, 362.}\\
\text{106 Kennett News and Advertiser, September 20, 1940, May 9, 1947; Coatesville Record, September 20, 1940; Violet K. Thomas, "Longwood Meeting," July 21, 1960 (a manual for the information of guides leading tours through the Longwood Gardens), courtesy of Grace I. Shoemaker, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.}\\
\text{107 Decree, In the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County[,] Pennsylvania[,] Bill in Equity[,] No. 951, July 28, 1941, in File 1156, Trust Dep't, Southeast National Bank of Pennsylvania, West Chester.}\\
\text{108 West Chester Daily Local News, November 18, 1941; Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, May 28, 1942.}\\
\text{109 Program leaflet, "Service of Dedication, The Jesse Holmes Memorial Chair in the School of Religion of Howard University, . . . December 17, 1943," courtesy Samuel L. Gandy, dean, School of Religion, Howard University.}\]
however, that the income would flow only "so long . . . as the lecture subjects . . . be confined to religious, moral, scientific and literary purposes, with the design of accommodating, fostering and sustaining the progressive spirit of the age . . . ." Given these conditions, we are glad to report that this income, although woefully small, has been sent regularly to Howard University.

How shall we evaluate these Progressive Friends—these reformers who thought that it was their Christian duty to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable? They were agitators, gadflies, iconoclasts, and educators. An association of individualists, united by an infinite concern for human welfare, they made their country meetinghouse a center, if not the center, for liberalism in Pennsylvania. We like to think that they had something to do with the fact that Hicksites no longer separate women from men in business meetings, that they now have music in the church, and that Quakers have found effective ways of advancing humanitarian projects through the American Friends Service Committee. If they were sometimes guilty of beating the air at Longwood, telling each other what they already believed, the broad picture is one of mutual stimulation and clarification of individual ideas, plus a nudging of public opinion toward accomplishment in social uplift. Essentially Jeffersonians, they helped to keep the American Democratic Faith alive through their individual efforts, their meetings, and through the published accounts of their deliberations. Call the roll of the major reforms from 1853 through 1940—Negro rights, woman’s liberation, the social gospel, the labor movement, et cetera—and you will find a rich commentary in Progressive-Friend records on almost every reform creative and idealistic Americans tried to advance in those years. Their spiritual descendants have been Freedom Marchers; they are in John Gardner’s Common Cause, in the Sierra Club, and in Nader’s Raiders. Driven by Jesse Holmes’s “inner spur” long before he articulated the concept, their greatest legacy is their answer to Emerson’s question: “What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Remaker of what man has made; . . . ?”
