



Friends Meeting House and Cemetery Association of Randolph Township, NJ

An Independent Preservation Association

Editor's Note. The unexpected discovery in January of over 200 probable or possible unmarked burials in the Cemetery (inside story) has changed the Association's preservation plans. Before moving ahead with site upgrades (parking and new paths) and some work on the Meeting House (improved drainage), we need to know more about the unmarked burials.

Further archaeological exploration will be expensive but offers exciting opportunities to learn more about the site if we can obtain funding. It provides an opportunity to learn more about how the site was developed and used. The study of a few individual graves to assess whether the excavation needed for parking and paths will disturb any human remains should add to the little we know about early Quaker burial practices. The discovery of early artifacts would be an added bonus and greatly enrich the content of future displays.

Equally important, the discovery of over 200 unmarked graves suggests that the early Meeting was larger and more active than documented in the Quaker records. Building on this new information, we now have an opportunity to enlist help from historians and genealogists to link names and families with these burials.

Normally, we would talk about the challenges and opportunities raised by the new discovery during **Annual Meeting on June 13th** at the Meeting House. However, since there is no guarantee that long-distance travel will be possible in June, the decision has been made to hold Annual Meeting by phone with a video option. Dial-in instructions will be sent to Association members at the end of May along with the meeting agenda. If you are interested in participating via video, please send a message to editor@randolphmeetinghouse.org. All you need is a computer, smart phone or tablet.

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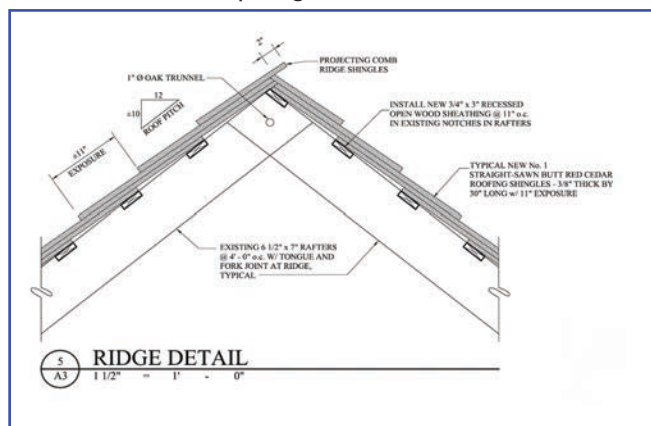
Association News and Updates

2019 MCHPTF Construction Documents Grant

- In January, Tim Horsley of Horsley Archaeological Prospection conducted the ground penetrating radar survey funded by the 2019 Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Construction Documents Grant. The survey is essential for planning parking and other site work requiring excavation (inside story). The survey covered two-thirds of the one-acre Meeting House site. Joe Schilip of County College of Morris recorded the survey for use in a video documenting the Association's preservation efforts and other promotional material.
- At the end of March, Connolly and Hickey submitted the final construction documents for asbestos removal, roof replacement and site upgrades, completing most of the work on the grant.

2019 NJHT Roof Replacement Grant

- The 2019 round of New Jersey Historic Trust Grants received legislative approval in January 2020. David Mott represented the Association at the January grant workshop in Trenton. Work on roof replacement will begin once the financial paperwork is completed and the arrangements for matching funds worked out.



Plan for installation of cedar shakes along the ridge.

2020 MCHC Regrant

- In January, the Morris County Heritage Commission awarded the Association funds to produce a video documenting asbestos removal and roof replacement. The focus of the video changed, depending on when roof replacement begins and other work begins.



- The final work on this project is a report on recommended stains and finishes for the exterior, based on laboratory testing.

Siding removed to test stains and finishes.

2020 MCHPTF Construction Grant Application

- In April, the Association submitted a Construction Grant application to the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund for support for the archaeological survey needed to continue with site upgrades as well as matching funds for the New Jersey Historic Trust roof-replacement grant and some additional structural work when the roof is replaced.



visit us at: www.randolphmeetinghouse.org
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Join us for Annual Meeting online or by phone: June 13, 2020 at 10:00 am

The search for unmarked burials

In addition to replacing the aging cedar shake roof, the Association has two high-priority projects that are essential for expanding public access: on-site parking and accessible paths. Due to the historical importance of the property, the Association cannot undertake these projects until more is known about the number and location of unmarked burials on the site.

Since the early Quakers did not believe in marking graves, there is no record of where members were buried before the acceptance of markers starting in the 1840s. The early Quaker records list about 40 Mendham/Randolph burials, which is certainly less than the actual number of burials. But how many less and where on the property are the unmarked graves located? This is what we hoped to find out through the ground penetrating radar study funded by our recently completed Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Construction Documents Grant.

The search. Ground penetrating radar (GPR) provides a non-invasive way to explore underground features. The GPR instrument used in surveys sends radio-frequency signals into the ground. Using specialized software to interpret how the signals are reflected back, it is possible to identify the location of grave shafts and other underground features, such as paths and buried structures.

On a mild and snowless day in January, GPR specialist Tim Horsley rolled his lawn-mower-sized instrument across roughly two-thirds of the Meeting House property. Two weeks later his preliminary data summary provided an image that significantly altered both our preservation planning and historical understanding of the Mendham/



Simplified interpretation of the geophysical anomalies discovered by the January 2020 ground penetrating radar survey, superimposed on a drone photograph of the site taken by Joe Schilip, County College of Morris.

Randolph Preparative Meeting. The results suggest that beneath the large open spaces in the Cemetery and elsewhere on the property there are 202 probable, 77 possible and 44 tentative burials.

Further exploration. The GPR survey identified grave shafts but not their content. It raises the possibility but does not confirm that the excavation required to lay new paths or a stable parking surface might disturb buried human or cultural remains. The only way to find out what might be encountered as we move ahead with parking and new paths is to conduct further archaeological exploration. Therefore, as a next step, the Association has a proposal from Hunter Research to carefully excavate a few graves in the area proposed for parking and additional limited exploration around the Meeting House. We are seeking funding to move forward with this work as quickly as possible.

The main purpose of the archaeological exploration is to locate but not disturb human and cultural remains. Are there any human remains left, given the fact that the last unmarked burials took place over 150 years ago? How far below the surface were bodies interred? Were they

buried in caskets? Is there more than one burial in a shaft? The archaeological exploration is designed to answer these questions, without disturbing the human remains. If human remains are found and must be disturbed, they will be properly handled and re-interred, following standard archaeological practices. Cultural remains will be catalogued and stored for use in displays and educational programs.

Future planning. Assuming the top layers of soil (18-24 inches) do not contain any significant human remains, the Association has voted to move ahead with parking and new paths in areas with unmarked burials. It is felt that doing so is consistent with 18th century Quaker beliefs and their unpromising commitment to practicality.

Had the early Quakers wanted their place of burial remembered and specially treated, they would have marked their graves. That they did not is in part due to their belief that death is best celebrated by remembering the lives of deceased members, rather than their death and place of burial.

In its planning for the restoration of the Cemetery and grounds to a more natural 18th century landscape, the Association will recognize and commemorate those buried in unmarked graves. The Meeting House site is open 24/7. Our goal is to turn it into place that can be easily visited and a resource for learning about the early Randolph Quaker community.

Historical understanding. The identification of over 200 unmarked graves and forgotten paths as well as the possible discovery of cultural artifacts provides an opportunity to greatly enhance our historical understanding of the early Meeting.

The archaeological survey may add to our understanding of Quaker culture and social life. Although no remains will

be exhumed, the survey may provide information on how they were buried. Any other cultural remains found will provide additional information and possibly tangible artifacts to enrich future displays and educational programs.

Through the archaeological survey we also may learn more about how the site was used. The GPR survey found evidence of an east-west path just north of the Meeting House. There are also indications of earlier excavations adjoining or under the Meeting House that need to be explored. It is possible that at one time the Cemetery extended beyond the current stone wall on the west, toward or into Quaker Ave. Further work in this area could also reveal the location of the shed used to stable horses that was torn down shortly after the Meeting was laid down in 1865:

About the year 1870, John Hance, Isaac Alwood Vail, and others whose ancestors and relatives were buried in the graveyard, contributed money to build a stone wall to enclose the grounds. ...A row of sheds at the rear of the meeting house formerly sheltered the horses in unpleasant weather, but this fell into decay and was not rebuilt. (Platt, Dover Dates, p.47)

Most importantly, the larger than expected number of unmarked burials suggests that the early Meeting was larger and more active than is evident from the written records. The new information about burials provides an opportunity to encourage the genealogical research needed to develop a more complete understanding of the early families, including births, marriages, deaths, moves to other areas and steadfastness in the faith.

The 43 documented unmarked burials are associated with 17 families.

Brotherton (12)	Liken (1)	Tone (1)
Dell (5)	Moore (1)	Vail (1)
Dennis (1)	Mott (1)	Williams (1)
Fitz Randolph (5)	Nap (1)	Wills (2)
Hance (2)	Schooley (4)	Willson (2)
Hunt (1)	Simcock (2)	

Many of the original and later settlers had large families, some of whom remained in the area and no doubt account for the 200 or more unidentified unmarked burials. Tracking down the missing names is a difficult task. If you have information about families that might have buried relatives in the Mendham/Randolph Friends Cemetery, please get in touch. And for updates on information about burials, go to randolphmeetinghouse.org/cemetery.

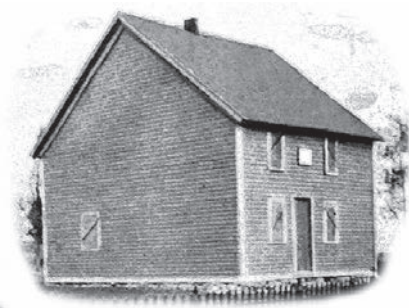


GPR machine and grid lines for the survey conducted by Horsely Archaeological Prospection on January 22, 2020.

Friends Meeting House and Cemetery Association
of Randolph Township, New Jersey

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Visit us at:

www.randolphmeetinghouse.org

FMHCA Spring 2020 Newsletter

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please visit our webpage
www.randolphmeetinghouse.org

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Nick Steneck, Editor

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