

George Fox, founder



### History

George Fox founded the sect in England in the mid-1600's.

- Early members were urban, middle-class merchants and manufacturers.
  - Labeled as Nonconformists due to their feelings about the Church of England.
- Persecution in England was extremely violent.
  - Between 1651-1657, over 2,000 were imprisoned. Many died in prison.
  - Massachusetts dreaded their coming.
    - Law went into effect fining shipmasters one hundred pounds for any Quaker brought into the province.
    - Provision had to be made for their return.
    - All Quakers in the province should be whipped and imprisoned.
    - Circulation or custody of any Quaker book imposed a fine of five pounds.
    - Severe penalties were enacted on anyone who befriended a Quaker.
  - Eventually, more tortuous penalties were enacted that will not be mentioned here.
- Massachusetts enacted the most severe penalties in New England. Rhode Island became a refuge for Quakers, and many migrated there.

Harsh laws were repealed in 1661, and George Fox visited soon after. He spoke to a crowd on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. (Photo depiction above.)

*“An interesting occurrence during this tranquil period was the arrival of George Fox, the founder of the sect of Friends or Quakers. In the assemblage which gathered on the shores of the Chesapeake to listen to his preaching were members of the legislature, the leading men of the province, Indian sachems and their families, with their great chief at their head.”* (Ellis. Page 254)

George Fox also counseled members to keep meticulous records, which included:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their movements.</li><li>• Their births and baptisms.</li><li>• Their weddings.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Names of those who attended meetings.</li><li>• Quarterly conferences.</li><li>• Sins and disowning.</li></ul> |
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### **Quaker Migration Into America**

*“Stand true in that which is pure”*

*~ George Fox~*

Peggy Clemens Lauritzen, AG, FOGS  
MissPeggy55@gmail.com

### **The Society of Friends**

Arrested for his religious beliefs, in England, Fox once appeared before a judge who warned him about his ideas. The story goes that the court cautioned Fox "to quake in the presence of the Lord." Ever after, his followers were called "Quakers."

## Quakers in Virginia

Colonial Virginia held much animosity against Quakers. Those who defied the law were subjected to whippings and imprisonment. Many lost farmland, stock, and crops.

A short history of the Quakers in Colonial times:

- Quakers were flocking to Maryland, where the Act of Toleration was practiced by the Catholic Church.
- Some went on to North Carolina, and established meetinghouses and left lots of records.
- Quakers were vulnerable. They would not resist or defend themselves.
- Wherever they lived, they held the same beliefs.
  - All people could choose their beliefs.
    - Europe, New England, and Virginia held no state church, but allowed no doctrinal differences.
    - The Church of England was the major religion in Virginia. Puritans, Quakers, and other sects were not welcome.
  - Quaker converts were frequently punished by their own families. Most would end up being disinherited.
- Thousands of early Virginians became Quakers.
  - The earliest Quaker missionaries were after 1650.
    - Court records show severe punishments for home meetings.
      - Property was confiscated, fines and tithes and 'priest costs' had to be paid to the Anglican church.
    - Homes were invaded. Military leaders confiscated pewter to make bullets.
- Several became "*redemptioners*".
  - It involved selling themselves to the shipping agent to pay for their passage.
  - When they arrived in Pennsylvania, the captain sold them to the colonists.
    - They worked to pay their owner for a period of five to ten years. There was no lasting stigma or disgrace because it was considered a business transaction.

Just before the Revolutionary War, there were reasons for Quakers to be on the move.

- They were under strict teachings concerning slavery.
- Look to monthly meetings for 'disownings'.
- If you have Virginia or North Carolina Quakers that 'disappear' before and after the Revolutionary War, look to Ohio valley – good land for less acreage.
- Look to courthouse records for fines and grievances, for as conscientious objectors, they would not fight or supply goods to the cause.

## Quaker Meetings

"Meeting" = a congregation. May refer to a unit in the church, or an actual meeting.

Local meetings (called preparative meetings) → Monthly meetings → Quarterly meetings → Yearly meetings

Monthly meeting minutes were originally kept separately by men's group and women's group.

**Calendar System**

Quakers did not believe in using the names of pagan gods (Janus, Mars, Aprillus). Months went by numbers only.

- This system makes it a bit easier to locate Quaker records in wills and depositions.
  - "Third day of the fourth month" will usually indicate a Quaker record.
  - They followed the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1752.

5th month 26th day 1750	July 26, 1750
22nd of 2nd month 1759 (o.s.) meaning never converted	April 22, 1759 (n.s.) meaning new style
Jan 20, 1750/51	Old style/New style used

**Naming Patterns**

<b>Scots-Irish</b>	<b>Puritans</b>	<b>Germans</b>	<b>Quakers</b>
First born son – father's father	First born son – father's father	First born son – father's father	First born son – mother's father
Second born son – mother's father	Second born son – mother's father	Second born son – mother's father	Second born son – father's father
Third born son – father	First born daughter – mother's mother	Third born son – father's oldest brother	Third born son - father
First born daughter – mother's mother	Second born daughter – father's mother	First born daughter – father's mother	First born daughter – father's mother
Second born daughter – father's mother		Second born daughter – mother's mother	Second born daughter – mother's mother
Third born daughter – mother		Third born daughter – mother's oldest sister	Third born daughter - mother

