

THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS  
—IN—  
KENNEBEC COUNTY,  
MAINE.

BY  
RUFUS M. JONES,

PRINCIPAL OF OAK GROVE SEMINARY.

(Author of *Life of Eli and Sibyl Jones*.)

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# SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

KENNEBEC COUNTY, MAINE



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—IN—

## KENNEBEC COUNTY, ME.

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NO man is more intimately and essentially connected, by his life and labors, with the rise and growth of the Society of Friends in Kennebec county than David Sands, a Friend minister from Cornwall, Orange county, N. Y. In the year 1775 David Sands, then thirty years of age and nine years a member of the Society of Friends, came to New England to attend the yearly meeting at Newport, R. I. Again in 1777, he felt called to more extended labors throughout the towns and villages of New England, and he came with a minute from his own meeting for that service. In his journal we find the following passage:

“We had many meetings, although passing through a wilderness country. I trust they were to the encouragement of many seeking minds. We were invited to the house of Remington Hobbie; he received us kindly, and we had two meetings at his house, one on First day, where were many of the town’s people; this place is called Vassalborough, on the Kennebec River; and another in the evening at a Friend’s house. These meetings were much to my comfort, feeling the overshadowing of our Divine Master. We next proceeded up the river for two days, through great fatigue and suffering, having to travel part of the way on foot, to a Friend’s house, who received us kindly, there being no other Friend’s house within forty-five miles. We had a meeting among a poor people, newly settled, but to our mutual comfort and satisfaction, witnessing the Divine Presence to be underneath for our support.”

This is the first of his four visits to the towns of Kennebec county, and this account shows the true state of this region at the time. The country was only just beginning to be settled. If there were any Friends, there was not more than one family in a settlement. Each visit of David Sands was attended with striking success, showing that he possessed peculiar gifts and ability for missionary work among these Maine pioneers. Hardly a meeting was begun in the county a

century ago which did not owe almost the possibility of its existence more or less directly to his influence, and a very large number of the prominent Friends in these early meetings were convinced by his preaching or through his personal efforts. It would be safe to say that the position Friends have held here and the work they have been able to do, is in great measure owing to the zeal and faithfulness of this true and devoted Christian apostle. Nearly twenty years from his first visit he made a final journey through the county, of which he wrote:

“I proceeded towards the eastward on horseback \* \* \* on our course toward Kennebec, where we arrived 5th month, 9th. 1795, and found things greatly altered since my first visit, there being now a pretty large monthly meeting where there was not a Friend's face to be seen when I first visited the country; but rather a hard, warlike people, addicted to many vices, but now a solid good behaved body of Friends.”\*

The first meeting for worship established by the Society of Friends in this county was at Vassalboro, on the east side of the Kennebec river, in the year 1780. Members of this society were among the pioneer settlers of the towns of China and Vassalboro, and as the settlers increased many embraced the peculiar views of the so-called Quakers. These early Friends were men and women of great strength of character; their lives were their strongest arguments in favor of the views which they promulgated and, though few in number, they at once made their influence felt. They lacked the broad culture of the schools and colleges, nor had they gained the intellectual skill which long study gives; but they had keen judgment, prompt decision, unwavering faith in God, and they looked constantly to him for guidance. The solitary life in their new homes, where the forests were just yielding to give place to fields and pastures, was well suited to this people, and they were in many respects peculiarly adapted for the only kind of life possible in this county in the last quarter of the last century. For a better understanding of these Friends themselves, their fitness for their condition and surroundings, and their influence especially on the early life of this county, it will be necessary to take a hasty glance at the rise and growth of the society, and to consider the character of its founder, George Fox, for he is the proper exponent of Quakerism.

He was born in 1625, and began his active career in about the year 1649, closing his eventful life, with those words of triumph, “I am clear, I am clear,” in the year 1690. For centuries the truths declared to men among the hills of Judea had been unknown to the *people*; the signification of the Incarnation was completely lost to them, symbols

\*This *Journal* [New York: Collins & Bro., 259 Pearl street] is highly interesting not only to Friends but to all who love to read the simple record of a good man's life.

were taken for the things symbolized, mechanical performances took the place of vital communion with a loving Father as revealed by the Son; but the rise of modern Protestantism, and the fearful struggles of the century which followed Luther's first protests belong to general history. The unrest which was so noticeable in the first half of the sixteenth century goes to show that the people were not yet satisfied with the *religious* condition of the country any more than with the *political*. Numerous characters and various societies came forward at this time, each with its own peculiar conception of the relation which exists between this world and the next; between the human creature and the Creator.

The feeling that outward signs of religion are empty and that the relation between God and man is in the highest degree a personal matter came, at a very early age, with great force, into the heart of George Fox. He had sat on the knee of a mother who came from the stock of martyrs, and he inherited a fearlessness which never left him when the "voice within" bade him stand in his place. His father, who was the "Righteous Christer," taught him by his life and words that there is no crown on earth or in Heaven to be compared with a "crown of righteousness." He possessed a tender but strong nature which could be satisfied by what was genuine alone. Let us see by looking a little farther at the experience of George Fox what being a "Quaker"\* means.

He went to keep sheep for a shoemaker, and his work as shoemaker and shepherd combined went on until he was twenty, and might have continued through his life, had not He who appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, appeared no less certainly, though differently, to him. Carlyle says: "Perhaps the most remarkable incident in modern history is not the Diet of Worms, still less the battle of Austerlitz, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other battle; but George Fox's making himself a suit of leather. This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom, under ruder or purer forms, the Divine idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself, and across all the hulls of ignorance and earthly degradation, shine through in unspeakable awefulness, unspeakable beauty in their souls; who therefore are rightly accounted Prophets, God-possessed, or even God's, as in some periods it has chanced."

No man ever instituted a more earnest search for the truth; far and near he sought for a teacher who could really teach him; he was ready to listen on his knees to such an one when he found him, but though he traveled as far as London he could find no man who could lift a jot of the weight from his burdened heart. The answers he received would have completely discouraged a less earnest youth, but he was on a quest he could not abandon: "Be sure they sleep not whom God

\* At first a nickname started by George Fox's telling a magistrate to "Quake at the word of the Lord."

needs." At length, when all his hope in men was gone, and as he tells us, "When I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do; then, O! then, I heard a voice which said: 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.'"

He had always heard a dead Christ preached in the churches, but he sought a Christ who could teach him and act upon him so as to change his life; only a living Christ could do that. Doctrines *about* Christ and what He has done for man are not Christ himself; and at length Fox reached the great truth, as Kingsley says, "That Christ must be a living person, and He must act directly on the most inward, central personality of him, George Fox;" or again in his own words, "Christ it was who had enlightened me, that gave me his light to believe in, and gave me hope which is in Himself, revealed Himself in me, and gave me His spirit and gave me His grace, which I found sufficient in the deeps and in weakness."

He and the early Friends were orthodox in regard to the atonement, but this has sometimes been overlooked, owing to the emphasis which they put on the spiritual Christ who is the Light within, the constant guest of the soul. Their characterizing peculiarities were, then, obedience at all times to the voice within, the maintenance of a life in full harmony with their profession, protestation against all shams and formality, the use of "thee" and "thou" to show the equality of all men,\* and their refusal to doff the hat to so-called social superiors. Still farther, they declared the incompatibility of war with perfect Christianity; oaths, even in courts of justice, they utterly refused; in regard to the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, they held that "they were temporary ordinances, intended for the transition period, while the infant church was hampered by its Jewish swaddling clothes, but unnecessary and unsuitable in a *purely spiritual religion*." Men and women were equal in the sight of God and "the gift for the ministry" was conferred upon both by the Head of the church. It was wrong for a minister to receive payment for preaching the Gospel, whether from the state or from the congregation. Silent communion was an essential part of their worship and it was believed that the true voice could be best heard at such *seasons*.

To note these distinguishing points in belief, life and conduct, taken with the successful efforts of George Fox to gain light and perfect peace, will help the reader to form a just conception of the Friends of Kennebec county, who were the inheritors of the principles and practices of the men who so aroused and influenced the world a hundred years before them. We do not need to speak of the fearful persecution which attended their labors; suffice it to say that

\* The use of "you," the plural to superiors, and "thou," the singular to inferiors, was very common then, as it still is, in Germany.



in central Maine they were allowed peacefully to pursue their manner of life, and no remonstrance was raised against their tenets. Here, as in England, the Friends marked out no creed, but contented themselves with the life and words of the Lord as recorded by the holy men who received the revelation, and they strove to be in their measure reproductions of Christ. The following words used by a recent writer on the "Quakers" very nearly express their views at all the different epochs of their existence:

*"Christianity is a life; the true life of man; the life of the spirit reigning over all the lusts of the flesh. \* \* \* Christianity, we call it, because first in Jesus, the Christ, this life was manifested in its highest perfection. \* \* \* Our creeds and theologies are human conceptions of what the Christian life is; but the Christian life was before them all, is independent of them all, and probably no one of them is a perfectly true and adequate description of the reality. Their diversities, their mutations, prove that they are imperfect. Christianity is the life which Christ lived, which lives in us now by His Spirit."*

Such, then, was the belief and such, in a measure, the life of the little company which met in Vassalboro, on the hill side overlooking the Kennebec valley, in the year 1780. The history of the Friends in this county can never be adequately written, since from their first appearance until the present time they have done their work in a quiet, unobtrusive way, leaving behind them little more record of their trials and triumphs than nature does of her unobserved workings in the forests; but this fact does not make their existence here unimportant, and no careful observer will consider it to have been so.

In 1779 John Taber and family moved from Sandwich, Mass., together with Bartholomew and Rebecca Taber, brother and sister, and established themselves in Vassalboro, being the first Friends to settle in this locality, excepting Jethro Gardner, who lived on Cross hill. They soon held a meeting at John Taber's house. In 1780 Jacob Taber, aged eighty-one, father of the above mentioned John Taber, together with Peleg Delano and their families, settled in Vassalboro. About two years later Moses Sleeper joined this little group of Friends. In the 3d month of 1786 Stephen Hussey and Rebecca Taber were married at the house of John Taber, this being the first marriage in this meeting. The same year Joseph Howland moved hither from Pembroke and brought the first removal certificate which was placed upon the records of the meeting.

Friends Meeting House at Vassalboro was built from 1785 to 1786, only one half being finished, and the little company met one, if not two, winters without any fire, meeting holding sometimes three hours. The meeting house at Vassalboro was rebuilt about fifty years ago. In 1787 Joshua Frye moved to Vassalboro. In 10th month,

1788, Joseph Howland and Sarah Taber, and Pelatiah Hussey and Lydia Taber were married, being the first married in the new meeting house. It then being the custom to request for membership, verbally and in person, Anstrus Hobbie, Levi Robinson and wife, John Getchell, John Baxter and wife, with Ephraim Clark and George Fish, of Harlem, went up to Falmouth in 1782 to request the "care of Friends," *i.e.*, the rights of membership.

In most other parts of the land opposition brought out the character of the Friends more distinctly and their lives became a part of written history; here they were allowed to worship God unhindered, and the leaven which they became in the various communities was a constantly active, though often unnoticed, force.

Remington Hobbie was at first undoubtedly the strongest and most influential member of the little society at Vassalboro. He was a magistrate in the place and inhabited a spacious house built like the old English homes, with a front hall so large that a "yoke of oxen with cart attached could be driven in the front door, up the hall and turned around in it," as the neighbors said. When David Sands and his companion were in Vassalboro holding their first meetings, Remington Hobbie said to his wife: "I hear these Quakers are decent, respectable looking men; I believe I shall invite them to my house, as they must be but poorly accommodated where they are." She agreed and they were invited. When they came they were shown into the common room or kitchen. After being seated, they remained in perfect silence. Remington Hobbie being entirely unacquainted with the manners of Friends, was at a loss to account for their remarkable conduct, and attributed it to displeasure at being invited into his kitchen. He at once had a fire made in his parlor, saying to his wife: "I believe these Quakers are not pleased with their reception; we will see how they like the other room." He invited them in, but the same solemn silence continued, at which he became almost vexed, and thought to himself, "they are certainly fools or take me to be one."

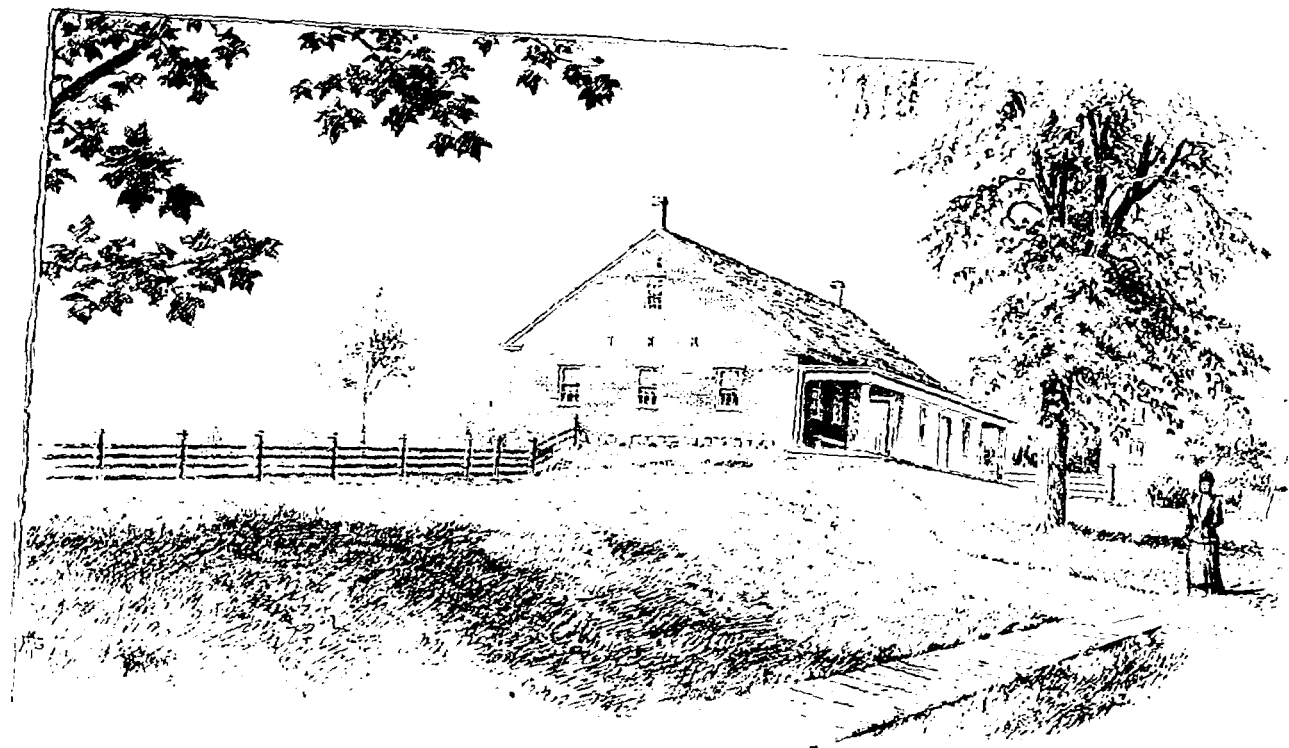
As these thoughts were passing in his mind, David Sands turned and fixed his eye full in his face and in the most solemn manner said: "Art thou willing to be a fool?" when he paused and again repeated, "Art thou willing to become a fool for Christ's sake?" He continued with such power that Remington Hobbie could not withstand it, and in a short time he was fully convinced of Friends' principles and practices. He was ever after a most intimate friend of David Sands and often his co-laborer. "His gift for the ministry was acknowledged," and for many years he preached the Gospel acceptably. In the affairs of the church he was a "weighty man."

Moses Starkey was another strong pillar in this Vassalboro meeting, and he, too, was convinced under the preaching of David Sands,



*Thomas B. Nichols*





FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, EAST VASSALBORO. ME.



in the following remarkable manner. He was a carpenter by trade, and if not a rough man, he was at least one who was unconcerned about spiritual things. As he was one day riding along the newly made road, he was asked by a neighbor passing by if he was going to hear the Quaker preach? To whom he replied that he had not thought of doing so. A little farther on, the road divided, one branch going by the meeting house, where David Sands was to have his meeting, the other going to where the village now is. It came into his head to let his horse take whichever road he would, and if he should go by the meeting house, to go in. The horse took the road leading to the meeting house. Moses Starkey went in and sat down by the door. As he entered David Sands was preaching. He stopped in the midst of his discourse and looking at the new comer said: "So thee left it to thy horse, did thee. It would have been well if thee had left it to thy horse years ago;" and thereupon he continued his former line of thought with wonderful power. Moses Starkey was so deeply stirred that his conversion soon followed; he became a Friend and was appointed to the station of minister in due time, sitting for many years at the head of the meeting.

John D. Lang was born in 1789 in Gardiner, Me., where he lived until he was six years of age. He went to school only about three months, and so was forced to educate himself. While still a young boy he worked in the wool carding mill at Fryeburg. He worked much of the time with his Bible open before him, and thus early in life he became acquainted with the teaching of the Scriptures. In 1820 he was married to Ann Elmira Stackpole, and about a year later they both joined the Society of Friends. They began their married life in North Berwick, and at about the age of thirty his gift as a minister of the Gospel was recognized by the Friends' meeting in that place. In the year 1840, in company with Samuel Taylor, he visited the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi, and they made an exhaustive report of their travels and the condition of these Indians to the yearly meeting of Friends for New England, and when U. S. Grant became president he appointed John D. Lang commissioner to the Indians. In 1846 John D. Lang came to Vassalboro and gained possession of the Vassalboro Woolen Mills, which owe much of their prosperity to him, he having formerly owned and managed the woolen mill at North Berwick, in company with William Hill. For the remainder of his life he resided at Vassalboro, near the Kennebec river, where he had a beautiful home and entertained many friends. He sat for nearly thirty years at the head of the meeting at Vassalboro, and for many years occupied the same position at the yearly meeting of Friends at Newport, R. I. He died in 1879.

In four years from their first assembling for worship in Vassalboro, a preparative meeting was held there, and in 1787 a monthly meeting

was established in that place. This meeting included all the Friends in this county, there being no meeting nearer than Durham, Me. The system of their meetings was as follows: As soon as a family or two settled in a place they held meetings for worship on the Sabbath and in the middle of the week. As the number of Friends increased a meeting for transacting the business affairs of this little branch of the society was held, called the preparative meeting. The members of two or more preparative meetings in easy access of each other met together once in the month, a week after the several preparative meetings, for the transacting of further business. This was called the monthly meeting. Again, two or more monthly meetings joined to make a quarterly meeting, and, finally, all the quarterly meetings of New England were subordinate to the yearly meeting, then held annually at Newport, R. I. This system applies to the present time, except that the yearly meeting is held every other year at Portland, Me., and the alternate years at Newport, R. I. The chief settlement of Friends was on the eastern bank of the Kennebec river; but in a few years a "goodly number" gathered in the easterly part of the town near the outlet of China lake.

An early writer says: "Toward the close of the year 1797 it was found expedient to establish a meeting for worship there. In the summer following, *i.e.*, in 1798, a meeting house was built there. It was called the 'East Pond meeting,' to distinguish it from the River meeting." Two years later a preparative meeting was granted them and the Vassalboro monthly meeting was held there half the time.

Thomas B. Nichols, a minister of the gospel, for many years occupied an active and prominent place in this meeting, not only being a man of weighty counsel, but possessing as well a gift for the ministry. His influential life and his gospel labors made him well known throughout New England yearly meeting.

Anna Cates, granddaughter of Benjamin Worth, was one of the "endowed women" of the East Vassalboro meeting. She was brought closely under the power of the Divine Life while still quite young, and through faithfulness to the Master, whom she loved, she became of great service to Him in the community, by her words of truth and her practical Christian life. Besides her work in New England she took a message of the gospel to the yearly meetings of New York and Baltimore, closing her earthly life in 1865.

Sarah W. Newlin, the daughter of Elijah Winslow, was born in China, 5th mo. 27, 1826. She was married to Henry Goddard in 1847. A great change in her life was wrought by a message which Benjamin Jones, a minister among Friends, felt called to deliver to her personally. Her gift in the ministry was acknowledged by Vassalboro monthly meeting in 1872. The next year she went on a religious visit to Canada, attending the yearly meetings and all the meetings of



Friends in Canada. In 1876 she attended Ohio and Iowa yearly meetings, working for nine months in the latter state, holding meetings, visiting families, jails, prisons and reformatory institutions, and accomplishing great results. Her first husband having died in 1875, she was married in 1883 to Jehu Newlin. Since her last marriage she, in company with her husband, also a minister, visited England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France and the Holy Land, in all of which countries much service for the Master was accomplished. She has attended all the yearly meetings of Friends on the American Continent, working throughout the territory which such meetings cover, while she has been a faithful messenger of the Gospel in her own community, exerting a wide influence by both life and work. Her membership until her second marriage was at East Vassalboro meeting.

The well known red brick meeting house at East Vassalboro was built sixty years ago and remained unchanged until 1891, when the inside was entirely remodeled. It is now a very convenient and attractive place of worship. Vassalboro monthly meeting is now held in it every month and the quarterly meeting twice in the year. Besides those already mentioned, Charles B. Cates, Rachel B. Nichols, William Cates and Eliza P. Pierce have been prominent among its members. This meeting has recently risen in importance by a large addition of new members.

Prior to the year 1795 Salem quarterly meeting included all Friends east of Boston. In 1781, about the time Friends began to settle in Kennebec county, to accommodate the members in Maine, the Salem quarterly meeting met once during the year in Falmouth, Me. Thither the Friends in this county traveled on foot and on horseback to attend this meeting and to hear the gospel messages from the ministers who were generally in attendance. In the year 1795 the yearly meeting divided Salem quarterly meeting and established Falmouth quarterly meeting, which was held circular, viz., at Falmouth, Vassalboro, Durham and Windham, including all the meetings of Friends in Maine, except those at Berwick and Eliot, who found it more convenient to remain attached to Salem. From this date Vassalboro meeting held a prominent position and received visits from the gospel messengers coming from the other states and from England.

Vassalboro quarterly meeting proper was established in 1813, and then included the monthly meetings of Vassalboro, Sidney, Leeds and China, with the smaller meetings in their boundaries. It was held four times a year at the "River meeting house," viz., in the 2d, 5th, 9th and 11th months.

The provision of Article VII, Section 5, of the State Constitution, exempting Friends from military duty, was secured largely through

the efforts of the Vassalboro quarterly meeting. On the meeting records is spread the report of its committee:

“ The object of our appointment, it seems, was to use our endeavor to have our rights and privileges as a society secured in said convention, more especially as respects military requisitions, and finding many members of the convention, who upon the principles of impartiality, were not willing to give any sect or society the preference in point of privileges, and who thought it but right and just that all of every denomination should be involved and equally liable to perform military duty, or pay an equivalent, we found it incumbent to urge the justice, and, on gospel principles, the necessity of exempting all who were principled against war.

“ When we found that to urge so general an exemption was of no avail, we then confined ourselves to the narrow limits of our society, on behalf of whom we plead that we as a religious society had found it incumbent to bear our testimony against war, and that the society had for almost two centuries, amidst severe persecutions and sufferings, supported the same with a firmness and constancy from which, under the guardianship of superintending goodness, no penalties inflicted by human policy, however severe, had been able to turn us; a testimony and faithfulness to that testimony unexampled by any society on the earth; that while we were engaged, as one general peace society, in support of this all important testimony, it would entail great hardship and suffering on our society, and on our young men in particular, to impose such military requisition, from which we had been in great measure exempt under the then existing laws. After much labor and care on the part of your committee, with the aid of faithful and zealous advocates not of our profession in the convention, a clause is inserted in the new constitution by which Friends may be exempt from military duty.

“ Now, on our part, we can say with gratitude that the success our cause met with was not owing merely to human exertions, but to the interference of the hand of Providence, as a member of the convention said, ‘ the hand of Providence is in it.’ ”

The report is a long one, and the committee go on to say that the statement was made in the convention, as an argument against their plea, that “ many shelter themselves under your name and yet in their external appearance afford no evidence of their scruples as to military duty, and though nominally of your religious body, there are some among you and especially young men who so nearly assimilate with us in dress and address and in their deportment generally, that you ought to turn them out, that we may enroll them in our ranks. ‘ Your members,’ said they, ‘ ought to certify by their appearance to whom they belong,’ from which we are led to infer that, though the constitution makes provision for our exemption from military requisition, yet the enjoyment of this privilege depends principally, if not wholly, on our demeaning ourselves in accordance to our high and holy purposes.”

OAK GROVE SEMINARY.—It is to the honor of the Society of Friends in Kennebec county that its members espoused so zealously the cause of education. Although the early Friends here were unlettered in

large degree, and perhaps partly for this very reason, they resolved that their children and those of future generations should be wisely and carefully taught. The grove of oak trees crowning the top of the hill to the northeast of the village at Vassalboro was chosen as the location of the school which these Friends founded thirty-four years ago. There are few more striking landscape views in the state. The eye follows the winding Kennebec through its beautiful course among farms and forests until it reaches Augusta, and far beyond the city, to where the horizon is skirted with hills. The noted peaks in the range of western Maine mountains are prominent in the northwest, while Mt. Washington and Mt. Adams are visible over the western hilltops. The position could not fail to be a constantly inspiring influence; then, too, only a few rods from this spot the first Friends' meeting in the county had been held in 1780, and a large body of Friends still assembled there for worship. Furthermore, this was a center to a large community in which the children had no educational advantages beyond the ordinary town school; and, finally, in or near this neighborhood lived men who had hearts large enough to use their means in laying the foundation to an institution, the good work of which had only begun in their life time.

About the year 1850 John D. Lang and Ebenezer Frye, of Vassalboro, Samuel Taylor, of Fairfield, and Alden Sampson and Alton Pope, of Manchester, all prominent members of the Society of Friends, advocated the establishment of a school where the children of Kennebec county might receive careful training, cultivating influence, religious impression and broad teaching. To secure its establishment they individually gave \$1,000. William Hobbie (grandson of Benjamin Hobbie), a vigorous spirited man and a natural teacher, was the first principal, but the school in these first years not being a financial success, it was closed.

In 1856 Eli Jones, the Friend minister and missionary, whose home was in the town of China, advocated that an effort be made to open the school; \$15,000 being necessary to secure the success of the new undertaking, he became chairman of a committee to raise that amount, which was nearly all subscribed by six hundred Friends in the state. Eli Jones was made principal for the first year and had a large and successful school. A large part of the children of Friends in the county had the benefits of a longer or shorter period at the Oak Grove Seminary, as it was named, and here they have been helped to become good citizens and to lead noble and valuable lives.

In 1880 a fire destroyed the academy building, necessitating the close of the school. Five years later a large building for school purposes was constructed joining the boarding house on the south side of the road. In the autumn of 1887, as a large school had just begun, the entire structure was burned down by an incendiary. In this time

of discouragement friends were not wanting and the present set of buildings was raised, Charles M. Bailey, of Winthrop, paying for their construction in order that all other funds might be used as a permanent fund, which has now reached \$20,000. Besides the principals already named, it has been under the instruction and care of Albert K. Smiley, Augustine Jones, Elijah Cook, Franklin Paige, Richard M. Jones, Edward H. Cook, Charles H. Jones and Rufus M. Jones, some others serving for a short period.

The seminary is now owned and managed by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Originally the Friends aimed at having "select schools" where their children might be taught by themselves; to-day their two schools in New England are open to all who are suitable to be admitted, and the seminary last year enrolled 131 students.

All such institutions have an inner history which no one can write and an influence no one can measure. Perhaps no other one thing which the friends of Kennebec county have started into existence has accomplished so much good or has in it so much possibility of future blessing, not only to this county, but to the state at large, as Oak Grove Seminary; and so long as it stands it will be a noble monument to the memory of the faithful and generous men who wrought for it in its infancy, who mourned for its reverses, and who lifted it from its ashes to its present condition of usefulness.

CHINA MONTHLY MEETING.—No Friends' meeting house was built in China or Harlem before the year 1807, but there had been scattered families of Friends in the town ever since 1774. So long as they had no common place for worship, they made their own homes sanctuaries, and from the rude house in the gloom of the forest, many an earnest cry went up to the loving Father. If there could be no gathering of the faithful, there was the beautiful possibility of individual soul-communion, and though there was no visible temple except the over-arching trees, centuries old, yet to each one of these spiritually-minded men and women came the inspired words, "Ye, yourselves, are Temples of the living God." It seems never to have occurred to them that future generations would care to know what they were doing and suffering and striving for; at all events, they have given us no record of their life history. We are able to judge of them only by what we know from results that they must have achieved, and by the influence of their sturdy lives on the generation which succeeded them and inherited many of their strong qualities.

Miriam Clark, wife of Jonathan Clark, sen., the first settler of the town, and mother of the four Clark brothers, was a member of the Society of Friends, as were also two of her sons, Andrew and Ephraim Clark; the other two, as well as the father, not being members. One daughter, Jerusha, took the faith of her mother, and married a Friend from England by the name of George Fish, who was lost at sea while

on a voyage to England to revisit his native home. His widow, dying many years later, was the first Friend buried in the grave yard adjoining the "Pond meeting house." Of the four Clark brothers, the two Friends chose the eastern, and the other two the western side of the lake. The nearest meeting they could attend was at Durham, about forty miles away, until the meeting was begun at Vassalboro, in 1780; this would require a walk of about ten miles.

Twenty-one years subsequently, in 1795, David Braley and family settled about one mile from the head of the lake, on its east side, making them about five miles north of the Clark Friends. Some time during the next year their daughter, Olive Braley, became the wife of Ephraim Clark. Anna, the wife of David Braley, was a woman of great piety and an accredited minister of the society. After the meeting was begun at East Vassalboro in 1797, these Friends could easily and regularly attend, as the whole journey could be made by boat in summer and across the ice in winter.

The next year (1798) Benjamin Worth came from Nantucket and settled near the Clarks, on the lot now owned by Benjamin Fry. He was an able gospel minister, and his labors did much toward strengthening the brethren and arousing the community. Soon after came Lemuel Hawkes, a man of precious memory, settling on the lot afterward owned by Bowdoin Haskell, about two miles from the south end of the lake. In his house the first regular Friends' meeting in town was held, and meetings continued here until 1807; hence the Friends' meeting in China dates from 1802.

Abel Jones left his home in Durham in 1803, and joined this little band of Friends on the east shore of China lake. Two years later Jedediah Jepson and his son, John, and daughter, Susanna, came hither from Berwick. They rode on horseback a distance of 115 miles, bringing their few household treasures in saddle bags. The father, Jedediah, was a well approved minister and a scholar for his time, so that now the meeting, though still quite small, had three members on whom the "gift of ministration" had been conferred. Jedediah Jepson chose the lot subsequently owned by the late Cyrenus K. Evans, for his new home, and in the year following his daughter, Susanna, was married to Abel Jones. The marriage took place at one of the regular meetings, in the house of Lemuel Hawkes, and was the first marriage in the town according to regulations of Friends.\*

\*The marriage was conducted as follows: After a religious meeting or some time during the meeting, the bride and groom arose and taking hands said the ceremony, "In the presence of the Lord and before this assembly, I take thee, Susanna Jepson, to be my wife, promising to be unto thee a faithful and loving husband, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us." She saying in return, "In the presence of the Lord and before this assembly, I take thee, Abel Jones, to be my husband, promising to be unto thee a faithful and loving wife, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us." It was concluded by the reading of the certificate and the signing of the proper names.

The first meeting house erected in town, and which stands on its original site, was the well known Pond meeting house, situated on the east shore of the lake, about three miles from the north end. This was erected in 1807, on a piece of land purchased of Jedediah Jepson. The society records of 2d month, 1807, say: "This meeting concludes to build a meeting house in Harlem, 30x40 feet, and 10 feet posts; and apportions the expense of building said house to the property of each individual member of this meeting." "Reuben Fairfield, James Meader, Isaac Hussey and Jedediah Jepson are appointed to go forward in building said house in a way as to them may appear best, and report as the occasion may require."

The writer remembers having seen, as a boy, a set of wagon wheels which must have gone over 10,000 miles in making the journey back and forth between a Friend's house and this meeting house, a distance of a little over two miles. This house was used for meetings a few years before it was wholly finished. The building was originally heated by a wood fire in the potash kettle described elsewhere; furthermore, the seats were not models of comfort. The society has since erected houses at Dirigo, West China and South China. The house at Dirigo was built and meetings were held there continuously until the house at South China was erected in 1885, on the site of a former Baptist church which had been burned. The West China house, now a venerable structure, is still used for meetings.

The first meeting for business held in this town by Friends was a preparative meeting held 9th month, 1809. In 1813 they were permitted by the quarterly meeting to hold a monthly meeting in connection with Friends in Fairfax (now Albion). Since, in 1813, China monthly meeting was established, 939 of these monthly meetings have been held, and only in one instance has the meeting failed to be held, then owing to impassable roads. The only way to form an idea of Friends in this meeting will be for us to call up some of the best known of the individual members who have made their lives useful in the community, who have been tools in the hands of the Supreme Worker, and have done something which has built itself into other lives. In making special mention of a few, we must not forget that all the faithful, active members of this society have lived to some purpose, and though we make no definite record of them, we believe "they were a part of the divine power against evil, widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower."

Let us remark here that at this time the Friends in Kennebec county were with very few exceptions ignorant, so far as book education is concerned. They were unlettered men and women, with no opportunities for culture. The Bible was in many cases their one book. The heroes of faith pictured forth in the Old Testament, were the only heroes they ever heard about. David and Isaiah were their poets. This same book furnished their only history and ethics; it was

the child's reading book and spelling book. But with all their days devoted to stubborn toil, with all the scarcity of books and difficulty they had in reading, yet these people in this wilderness grew refined, took on a culture and a grace, as they were faithful to the "Spirit of Truth." Many will bear witness that those who centered their thoughts on the things that are pure and lovely, and honest and of good report—with what there is of virtue and praise—became decidedly possessed of a courtesy and nobility which stamped them as belonging within a circle where an unseen influence ennobles and refines the life. This power of moulding lives and raising the whole individual out of the realm of the ordinary is an almost essential characteristic of genuine Quakerism, and some exemplars of this truth will occur to those who have had familiar intercourse among Friends in their various communities through the county. We should be far from claiming that all enrolled members of this society show this; it only applies to those who have *dwelt* in the "Spirit of Truth and Love," to use one of their most expressive phrases. Nor is it by any means confined to this society, being true of genuine Christianity everywhere.

Among the most important members of China monthly meeting, in its early history, and by the favor of long lives, even down to the last half of this century, were the two brothers, James and Elisha Jones, with their cousin, Stephen Jones, all of whom came into the town from Durham. Elisha was an approved minister, Stephen was a man of shrewd and careful judgment, looked to not only in his own home meetings, but of great influence in the yearly meeting assembly, as it met at Newport. He was a man of "ancient dignity," slow of speech, but with a clear mind to perceive and set forth the suitable line of action. He, as well as his two cousins, was marked by spotless integrity, and they made their lives felt widely in the country. Perhaps three men who were nearer the ideal of the old time Friend could not be found in the state.

James Jones was known among Friends throughout the United States as a minister of the gospel. He was especially marked by his power of prophecy. Nearly all who remember the man remember how on some particular occasion he saw the condition of some one in the meeting, or how he marked out the course in which the Lord would lead some one present. In fact his friends and acquaintances looked almost as trustingly for the fulfilment of his words of foresight as though they had been recorded on the same page as those of Isaiah. He made at least three religious visits to Friends as far as Iowa, going in his own carriage. Some think that he accomplished this journey no less than six times. He also visited Friends in North Carolina, Canada, Europe, and in various other remote regions. He generally drove his own horse to Newport and back at the time of the



yearly meeting. Nothing gives stronger evidence of the efficiency of his preaching than the influence it had on the young.

Benjamin Worth was, as has been said, a man universally loved, and a strong preacher of the gospel. He was a great friend of the children, and he was accounted a prophet in the community. There are some still living who heard him say in a public meeting shortly before the "cold year," that the time was soon coming when the children would cry for bread and the fathers and mothers would have none to give them, a state of things which was literally realized; for in the year 1816 there was a frost in every month, and a snow storm covered up the fallen apple blossoms the 12th day of sixth month. Corn ripened in this vicinity in only one field, on the slope of the hill behind the house where Edward H. Cook of Vassalboro now lives. Many such utterances, followed by evident fulfilment, made his neighbors have faith in his word as prophetic. He lived to a good old age, and was taken from his work here very much lamented and missed by those among whom he had lived and labored. He was at first settled in Harlem, but later he was a member of the meeting at East Vassalboro, and the larger part of his service as minister was in the latter meeting.

The writer, when very young, used to count to see if he could find in China, as Abraham could not in Sodom, ten righteous persons, so that he might rest sure that no fire and brimstone would be poured down there for its destruction. The list generally began with Desire Abbot, a sweet and gentle woman, who seemed to be a saint dwelling on the earth. She still lives in the memory of many, as a soul ripened in the sunshine of God's love. Peace Jones is another who has made many lives richer by her presence and work in the world, and though happily still among us, she should be spoken of among those who have been the saving salt in the community. Even as a child, as she sat one day near the back seat of the old meeting house in Albion, she longed to be as good as those who sat on the high seats and seemed never to have temptations; as these longings were in her heart, a good Friend arose and said: "There are some here yearning to have their lives like those who seem to have reached a greater perfection. Let me tell such ones that if they give their lives wholly to the Lord and follow His will fully they will come to experience the life they are yearning for." The little girl knew in her heart that the speaker had been "led to feel out her condition," and she believed his words, which she has certainly verified. It is safe to say that few women in the same sphere of life have reached a fuller Christian experience or have been the cause of more blessing to others. She has always obeyed the voice when it has called her to labor in more remote places, having gone for religious service to Ohio, Iowa, Nova Scotia, and many times throughout New England.



No other Friend born in the county has made such a wide reputation as Eli Jones. He was born in 1807, being the son of Abel and Susanna Jones, before mentioned. He received a fairly good education for the time and locality, but this was finely supplemented by a life of careful reading and keen observation. In 1833 he married Sybil Jones, of Brunswick, a woman wonderfully gifted for the work she was to perform, though of slight physical health. She possessed in large degree a poetic soul, and she was blessed with a beautiful, melodious voice and a flow of suitable words to give utterance to the thought which seemed to come to her by inspiration. For forty years they worked together, at home and in foreign fields, striving to show to as many as possible the meaning of the full gospel of Christ. Their first long journey was in 1850, to Liberia, which they made in a sailing packet. They spent a number of months along the coast preaching to and teaching the colonists of that young republic. The next year after their return from this visit, 1852, they made an extended missionary journey to England, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland and Norway. Everywhere they found eager listeners, and this visit was greatly blessed.

In 1854 Eli Jones was in the legislature at Augusta, where he did much work for the cause of temperance, and being appointed to the office of major general, he delivered a speech in declining it which for its wit and eloquence is deservedly famous. In 1865 Sybil Jones, in obedience to a direct call, visited Washington to work among the soldiers in the hospitals, and in the work she carried a message of love to no less than 30,000 of these suffering and dying men. In 1867 Eli and Sybil Jones were liberated by China monthly meeting and Vassalboro quarterly meeting for religious work in England, France and the Holy Land. One of the results of this visit was the founding of two Friends' missions in the Holy Land, one on Mount Lebanon, the other, called the "Eli and Sybil Jones Mission," at Ramallah, near Jerusalem. Sybil Jones, after a life of continual activity, in which her spiritual power made itself remarkably felt in all parts of the world, was called to the kingdom of peace and joy in 1873. Eli Jones continued to labor for the spread of the gospel, for the missions, for the causes of temperance, education and peace until 1890, dying at his home on the 4th of second month. His life was one of great value to the world. No better example of Friends, as George Fox intended them to be, have appeared in New England than Eli and Sybil Jones.

Alfred H. Jones, born in China, Me., 6th mo. 12, 1825, was educated in the public schools of China and Vassalboro, and in Waterville Classical Institute. After finishing his course of study he taught for eight years in Maine and four years in Ohio, returning to Maine in 1854. He has in many ways taken active part in the affairs of the town. He was a birthright member of the Society of Friends, and in

1858 his gift as a minister was acknowledged. In 1868 he was chosen superintendent of the Freedmen's schools and other mission work in Virginia and North Carolina, under the Friends' Freedmen's Aid Association, of Philadelphia, holding this responsible position until he resigned in 1880. Since that time he has devoted himself mostly to the ministry, doing the larger part of his service in his own meeting in West China. He was clerk of the meeting for ministry and oversight for New England from 1881 to 1892, besides holding various other clerkships in the subordinate meetings.

China monthly meeting has produced a number of Friends who have become well known as educators; among the number, Augustine Jones, LL.B., principal of Friends' Boarding School, Providence, R. I.; Richard M. Jones, LL.D., head master of the William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia, Pa.; Stephen A. Jones, Ph.B., president of Nevada State University; Wilmot R. Jones, A.B., principal of Stamford, Conn., High School; Rufus M. Jones, A.M., principal of Oak Grove Seminary, Vassalboro, Me.; Charles R. Jacob, A.B., professor of modern languages in Friends' Boarding School; Arthur W. Jones, professor of Latin in Penn College, Iowa. William Jacob and his wife, S. Narcissa Jacob, also Frank E. Jones, all ministers in this society, have labored faithfully here and elsewhere to extend the blessing of the gospel.

Toward the close of 1810 a meeting for worship was established in Fairfax (now Albion) and two years afterward a preparative meeting was held at the same place. In a little more than a year after this, Vassalboro monthly meeting, to which the Friends in Fairfax had hitherto belonged, was divided and a new one established called Harlem monthly meeting, which was to be held one-third of the time in Fairfax. A meeting house was built at this place, which is still standing, one of the quaintest and most unadorned of the many meeting houses in the state.

The most noteworthy member of this meeting was John Warren, a minister. He was a man entirely original and *sui generis*, and he was undoubtedly endowed with a gift for the ministry. While living on the Maine coast as a young man, and concerned only with the things of this world, he had been told by a traveling Friend that he had a mission in the world. "John, thou must preach," were the words spoken to him, and he lived to feel the necessity laid upon him for service. He traveled much in the United States, and went on one religious visit to the British Isles.

There are many anecdotes told of him, a few of which may be related, as bearing on the character of the man. At one time one of his neighbors, of a very irritable nature, became angry with him and said many hard things against him. John Warren listened quietly and then said: "Is that all thou canst say? If thou knewest John Warren

as well as I do thou couldst say much more than that against him." At another time, being greatly troubled by one of his neighbor's cows, which had many times gotten into his field, he went to see the neighbor, somewhat vexed, though not "unscripturally angry," and said with emphasis: "If thee doesn't take care of thy cow I shall—I shall." "Well," said the man, "what will you do?" "I shall drive her home again!" During one of his visits at a certain place he appointed a meeting, through which he sat in perfect silence. As he was coming out he overheard a young man say to another, "That beats the Devil." John Warren turned to him and said, "That is what it was designed to do." It is related that on his return from England John Warren returned a portion of the money furnished him from the yearly meeting's treasury for his expenses, which was spoken of as a wonderful thing, never having happened before or since. While John Warren lived the meeting was in a flourishing condition; after his death it began slowly to decline, and at present the house is unused, there being no Friends in the community.

FAIRFIELD QUARTERLY MEETING.—*Litchfield Preparative*.—In the latter part of the last century a meeting of Friends was begun in the township of Leeds. As this is now not a part of Kennebec county, we shall not go into any detailed history of the society there, though this meeting gave its name to the monthly meeting which included many subordinate meetings which were in the county.

Joseph Sampson was probably the first member of the society there, he having been a soldier in the revolutionary war, but was brought over to the society of peace loving Friends through the efforts of David Sands. Before the end of the last century a large meeting had been formed, composed of sturdy, hard-working men and women, extremely zealous for their tenets. Perhaps a little too stern sometimes in "dealing" with unfaithful members. The intent of their hearts was right, they believed greatly in righteousness, and the records show that here as well as elsewhere in the county those who yearned for a life in harmony with the Divine Spirit became pure, true, noble and *graceful* men and women.

Until 1813 Leeds Friends made a part of Durham monthly meeting; after that time they were joined with the Friends in Litchfield and Winthrop. In 1803 a religious meeting was commenced in Litchfield; this was at first made up of a few families who met for worship in a school house near the south end of the lake. The most influential member of this meeting seems to have been Moses Wadsworth, a man of beautiful life and Christian character, a recognized minister. He was for sixteen years clerk of Leeds monthly meeting. Noah Farr was another very worthy member of the meeting. There was no organized meeting until 1812, when a preparative meeting was established, and on the 20th of second month a new monthly meeting was

begun covering a large region, and including many Friends. The records of this first monthly meeting show the following extract from the quarterly meeting held at Windham second month, 1813: "We, your committee to consider the proposal from Durham for setting up a new monthly meeting at Leeds, are of the opinion that it will be best for Lewiston, Leeds, Litchfield, Winthrop and Wilton \* to be set off and denominated Leeds monthly meeting." The name of this monthly meeting has often been changed, as we shall see.

In 1812 a proposition had been made in the Litchfield preparative meeting to build a meeting house on the farm of Noah Farr, near the south end of the lake, but in the 5th month, 1813, the following report was accepted in the monthly meeting: "The committee appointed to visit Friends in Litchfield respecting building a meeting house report that they think best to build one near the place where they now meet (in the school house) twenty-six x thirty-six and ten feet posts." Later we find that they received "a donation of \$150.00 from Friends toward building the house," and "the Treasurer is directed to pay \$7.42 for the land."

This house was on the spot where the West Gardiner Friends meeting house now stands. The Friends in these meetings during the early part of the century were much disturbed by the tendency manifested by some members to chose wives outside the limits of the society. As a Friend in their eyes was no longer a Friend if he did not in every particular conform to "the good order of the society," they were often hasty in dropping from membership some who with different treatment might have become valuable members, though they not unwisely saw that in order to maintain their good name, and to keep their principles unchanged through generations, they must purge themselves of all who loved the world more than the faith of their fathers. The following is a record often appearing:

"This may inform Friends that A— W— has so far deviated from the good order of Friends as to keep company with a young woman not of our society, and going to *training* as a spectator, and is not in the use of plain language or dress, for all of which he has been labored with, without the desired effect."

The *military training* was another constant temptation, especially to the younger Friends, and any violation of Friends' testimony against war was "dealt with" vigorously. One Friend, who had served in the revolutionary war, as had a number of Friends before becoming members, was "disowned" for receiving a pension from the government for his services. Again, it is recorded that a certain Friend "has deviated from the good order of Friends in apparel and conversation, and he sayeth that if called upon he thinks he should bear

\* There was originally a large body of Friends at Wilton, in Franklin county, though there has been no meeting there in many years.



Very Respectfully  
Wm. L. Burleigh





*Hannah J. Bailey*





arms. For these causes he has been labored with to no satisfaction."

The early records also show that a great effort was made to keep the members of this society free from the use of intoxicating liquors, and that, too, when there was no general sentiment against their use; and it is certain that their example has had much to do in forming the present sentiment in the state. At the very beginning of the century we find members were disowned not only for drunkenness, but for the *use of liquors*. Still farther, the little details of every day life were looked after with minuteness, and none were allowed to stand before the world as Friends if their public life did not stamp them as worthy of the name.

This meeting in Litchfield has continued uninterrupted since its start in 1803. The meeting is now called West Gardiner preparative meeting, making one of the subordinate meetings of Winthrop monthly meeting, which is held in West Gardiner, in second, fifth, eighth and eleventh months. David J. Douglas now resides within the limits of this meeting. As chairman of the committee on gospel work for New England yearly meeting, his field of work is throughout the yearly meeting. He has for many years been an earnest and active minister of the gospel.

WINTHROP PREPARATIVE MEETING.—A statement in the journal of David Sands probably gives us the earliest recorded reference to the rise of Friends in Winthrop, where is now one of the most flourishing meetings in New England. In the year 1777 he wrote: "We went to a new settlement called Winthrop, where we had divers meetings. Here were *several convictions*, and many that appeared seeking the right way." So far as we know there was not a single Friend in this township before David Sands' visit, and it is directly to his preaching and influence that we trace the conviction of all the original members of this meeting. A number of the most prominent men who were brought to adopt the principles and practices of Friends through the work of David Sands had served in the revolutionary war. Among these was Stewart Foster, whose father had received from the government a large tract of land on condition that he would settle in the township with his family, which he did. During the war Stewart Foster had been taken prisoner and was confined on board an English prison ship. One dark night he and another prisoner jumped overboard and swam to the shore, and so escaped in safety to their own homes. After his return to Winthrop he settled on the farm now owned by Hannah J. Bailey, where he reared a large family of boys and girls. After his conviction he continued through his long life to be a faithful Friend and a steady attendant of the meeting.

Another convinced member and former soldier was John Whiting, who lived not far from the so-called Snell school house. He was a

very genial, cheerful man, much loved and respected in the neighborhood. He was a good example of a gentle, sweet Christian, and though he lived to be old, he was considered "very young for such an old man." He was chosen to act as clerk during the first year of Leeds monthly meeting in 1813, and was always a strong man in conducting business.

Ezra Briggs was one of the first Friends in Winthrop. A Friend minister, doubtless David Sands, came to his house one day and had a "religious opportunity" with his family. The service over, the minister started on his way, but had not gone far before he came back and said, "Ezra, it is high time thee requested and became a Friend;" this advice was followed and for the rest of his life Ezra Briggs was an active Friend. He acted as clerk at the first session of Leeds monthly meeting, was appointed an elder, and was prominent in all the business of the meeting.

We find from the journal of Joseph Hoag, the famous preacher and traveller from Vermont, that he visited Winthrop in the summer of 1802. He makes the following entry under the date of 7th mo., 25th: "After a meeting at Leeds we rode to Winthrop; here we found a little company of goodly Friends among rigid Presbyterians. We had a large and favored meeting here."

In these days, when such harmony prevails among different sects, it will do no harm to call to mind an anecdote which the oldest may still remember. The Presbyterians above referred to were building a church or, as Friends would have said, a "steeple house" in Winthrop. The men sent out to invite the neighbors to the "raising" were strictly charged to ask no "Quakers." The day came for the raising, and sad to relate, for lack of men or for some reason the frame fell back and killed three men. The Friends rejoiced that they had received no invitation. The next day an effort was again made to raise the frame which had so disastrously fallen, when a part of it once more fell, very nearly killing another man. As superstition still lingered in the minds of some, it would not be strange if the Friends drew their own conclusions.

The first regular meeting for worship was established in Winthrop in 1793; nine years later, in 1802, a preparative meeting was started, being subordinate to the Sidney monthly meeting, which was also begun that year, Stewart Foster being the first representative from Winthrop to Sidney monthly meeting. Six years later the meeting became very small and came near dying out. Sidney monthly meeting records for third month, 1808, have the following entry: "The committee to visit the meeting at Winthrop report that they have visited that meeting and think Friends there are not in a capacity to hold a preparative meeting to the reputation of society, which the meeting accepts, and after due consideration thereon discontinues said pre-

parative meeting.” The Friends at Winthrop continued to attend the Sidney monthly meeting until 1813, when they were included in the new monthly meeting held at Leeds and Litchfield.

About this time the Friends at Winthrop began to increase in numbers, and the meeting, which seemed likely to have a short existence, showed signs of strength and vigor, so that in the year 1816 it seemed best to grant them a preparative meeting, this time subordinate to Leeds monthly meeting, on whose records is the following minute: “8th mo. 16th, 1816. Friends at Winthrop sent a few lines to this meeting requesting the liberty to hold a preparative meeting at that place, which after consideration this meeting concludes for them to hold on 4th day of the week. Paul Collins, Moses Wadsworth and Joseph Sampson were appointed to attend the opening of this meeting.”

This was the turning point in the history of this meeting. Since the above date the course of the meetings has been a progressive one. Three times it has been necessary to replace the meeting house by a larger one, and the present large meeting room is filled on the Sabbath. The first Friends’ meeting house in Winthrop stood on a piece of land owned by Stewart Foster, nearly opposite the location of the present meeting house. This was a very small house. It was warmed by the old-fashioned “potash kettle,” as were all the early meeting houses. A framework of brick was built up about two feet in circular form; in the front of the brick work was a door to receive wood, in the back an opening to apply a smoke funnel; over this brick work a large iron kettle was turned, bottom up, which served as cover for the “stove.” Those who desired had “foot warmers,” or bricks or soapstones for their respective seats. A partition was arranged fastened to a beam in the ceiling by hinges, so that the whole partition could swing up and be fastened, making the whole house into one room, while the same partition could be let down when the men and women Friends desired separate rooms for business meetings. Some still living remember the stuffed arm chair near the stove, in which the wife of Stewart Foster used to sit.

This house was sold and has since been used as a blacksmith’s shop. The house which was built to take its place was across the road, where the present house stands, and was larger than the former one, being about twenty-four by thirty. One Friend thought the house was too large, but it was not very long before this was sold for a dwelling house, and a still larger one raised on the same spot; and this last in its turn gave place to the present imposing and still more spacious one, which was built in 1883, as it appears in the illustration on page 292.

This meeting has been in a growing condition throughout nearly its whole history. Though it has raised up few who were specially endowed with a gift for the ministry, yet it has always had a goodly number of strong, active, spiritual members. Reuben Jones, whose

home was in Wilton, after living in Leeds for a few years, moved to Winthrop in 1839. He was a minister of considerable strength and for fully thirty years he sat at the head of this meeting and frequently preached to the people. No less than 412 ministers from other meetings have attended the meeting at Winthrop and have stirred the hearts of Friends there by their messages of love, often borne from lands far away.

In the year 1873 a general meeting was held in Winthrop, at which time the spirit of the Lord was abundantly poured out. Fully three thousand people attended the meetings in one day and many souls were brought from darkness to light. This is certainly one of the most memorable dates in the history of the meeting, and since



this time the meeting has almost constantly grown in size and in life. Charles M. Jones and Harriet Jones were the only ministers living within its limits until 1887. During that year Jesse McPhearson, from North Carolina, settled with his family at Winthrop, where he has ever since resided, giving his whole time to the work.

While Winthrop meeting has not produced many ministers, it has had a good number of influential men and women, such as Friends call "weighty members." Prominent among these have been Charles M. Bailey, who has been very useful in evangelizing work and has largely assisted the cause of education. Moses Bailey, for many years clerk of the quarterly meeting, was a splendid example of a strong, pure hearted, earnest Christian, one who adorned the name "Quaker."



Levi Parsons



Hannah J. Bailey, wife of the latter, has exerted a wide Christian influence, filling important positions in her own religious society, as well as in other organizations, using her means freely for the advancement of good causes, and showing herself a broad minded Christian woman.

Levi Jones has, through his long and busy life, been very active in the affairs of the church, and has illustrated the Quaker idea of a business man.

Here, as in all the other meetings of the county, there has been work done which no pen can record, an influence has gone out which no human eye can measure, and lives have been lived here the worth of which only the Divine Father knows. To a casual observer there would seem to have been a decided change in views and methods during the hundred years of this meeting's existence, and so there has in appearance, but in heart, in purpose and in hope there has been little or no change. The fathers wrought in their way; the children work for the same end differently, but as sincerely.

MANCHESTER PREPARATIVE MEETING.—In 1832 a new preparative meeting was established in what is now the town of Manchester, though it was then a part of Hallowell. This meeting has at various times been called Hallowell, Kennebec and Manchester preparative meeting. There had been Friends in this region for a number of years before the meeting was begun. These Friends had been a part of Litchfield preparative meeting. Paine Wingate, one of the first to settle northeast of the lake, had married a wife from among Friends, and it was not long before he found himself of her views and became an active Friend. Proctor Sampson, a son of Joseph Sampson, the first member of Leeds meeting, brought his young bride to this shore of the lake and made the second Friends' family. Jacob Pope came about the same time and gradually others came, while still others joined the society, being convinced that their neighbors' faith was the true one, from the life and character of the persons professing it.

These Friends felt the need of a house where they could hold a meeting of their own, and so avoid the long ride to Litchfield twice in the week, and in 1838 they became numerous enough to have a meeting established in their midst. During that year a meeting house was built, where, though changed, it still stands on the summit of the high hill at the northeast end of the lake. (Nearly all the Friends' meeting houses in the county have been on or near the bank of some body of water.) The committee to build this house reported that they contracted to have it built for \$985, and we find from the records that these Friends had much difficulty in raising this amount at that time. There was no minister in this meeting for many years. Week after week the Friends here, as in all the early meetings, met together

to worship. They did not listen with critical ear to the nicely turned sentences of some teacher humanely wise, but

“ Lowly before the unseen Presence knelt  
Each waiting heart, till haply some one felt  
On his moved lips the seal of silence melt.

“ Or, without spoken words, low breathings stole,  
Of a diviner life from soul to soul,  
Baptizing in one tender thought the whole.”

Some here as elsewhere may have thought of business or other things of this world, but the ideal was a glorious one and was attained by many a true, sensitive soul, all open to the divine touch.

For many years Paine Wingate, a good, upright man, sat at the head of this meeting. Like Winthrop meeting, this has received messages from a great number of ministers from other places, and though there have been few of its members especially endowed with a gift for the ministry, there have been many raised up whose lives have been influential in a more or less extended degree. Alden Sampson was for many years a prominent member of this meeting. Widely known as a business man, he was also a man whose influence was far reaching in the line of religious activities, giving of his means and his energy for bettering the world. I. Warren Hawkes has for some years held an active place in the work of the society here and he is a minister approved by the church, being a man of deep piety and sincerity.

In 1839 Leeds monthly meeting was changed in name to Litchfield, and still later it has been changed to Winthrop monthly meeting. In the year 1841 Vassalboro quarterly meeting was divided, and from the meetings at Litchfield (now West Gardiner), Leeds, Hallowell (now Manchester), Winthrop, Sidney, Belgrade, Fairfield and Saint Albans, a new quarterly meeting was established called Fairfield quarterly meeting. This meeting has had the following clerks: Samuel Taylor, jun., 1841-2; Sage Richardson, 1842-64; Alden Sampson, 1864-7; Moses Bailey, 1867-81; I. Warren Hawkes, since 1881.

SIDNEY PREPARATIVE MEETING.—The Friends' meeting was begun in Sidney in 1795, the preparative meeting being granted them in 1800; a monthly meeting was established in 1802, called Sidney monthly meeting. This was for the accommodation of Friends in Sidney and Fairfield, being held alternately at each place. Phineas, Jeremiah and Obed Buttler, with their respective families, were the earliest Friends in Sidney, they being Friends when they moved into the town. Then a number of families came there from Sandwich, Mass., among them Isaac Hoxie and family, Benjamin Wing, Adam and Stephen Wing, also John Wing Kelley, and their families.

Most of the money for the first meeting house was raised in Sand-



wich, the heads of the various families in the town doing all the carpenter work themselves. This house stood until 1855, when it was torn down and built over into a new one. Edward Dillingham was another useful member in the early days of the meeting; he finally moved to Saint Albans. Deborah Buttler was an acknowledged minister, while Daniel Purington generally had a message for the meeting, though he was not an appointed minister. Samuel Pope was an elder of prominence in somewhat later times, and Mary Alice Gifford, a highly gifted and endowed minister of the gospel, a woman of great faith and of unblemished life, lived in this meeting during the present generation, until she felt her place of labor to be in Newport, R. I., where she spent the remainder of her valuable life, which ended in the spring of 1889. The Friends in Sidney have been few in number, but a meeting has always been held there since it was first begun in 1795. Sidney monthly meeting includes the Friends in Fairfield and is still held, as at first, alternately at each place.

In 1801 a meeting for worship was begun in Belgrade. Calvin Stewart and Samuel Stewart, with their families, were the earliest Friends in the town; Eleazar Burbank, a revolutionary soldier, was another of the first Friends in this meeting, but he was afterward dropped from the society for receiving a military pension from the government. Samuel Taylor was the first minister in this meeting; he was a very good man and a good preacher of the gospel, having had a deep Christian experience, and he had the approval of all who knew him in daily life, or who heard his words of love. The Friends who lived in Belgrade had no separate meeting for business, but were joined with those who lived in Sidney. This meeting was always small, and gradually decreased in size until it was closed in 1879; its members having died or moved into other places.

A meeting for worship was begun in the city of Augusta, 8th month, 1888, and another in Hallowell the same year, both of which are now under the care of Winthrop monthly meeting, and though small in numbers they are in a flourishing condition. The meeting at Hallowell is about to construct a commodious meeting house.

More than a hundred years have passed since the members of the Society of Friends began to organize themselves in this county. They were then very few in number, comprising only one distinct monthly meeting in the county and only one preparative meeting was established before this century began. At the present date there are two quarterly meetings, composed of seven monthly meetings, which in turn are composed of fourteen preparative meetings, enrolling a membership of 1,033, most of whom live in Kennebec county. It is certain that the Friend of to-day is, in appearance at least, unlike the Friend of one hundred years ago, and it is a question whether the heads of the first families here would recognize that they were among

their own people could they return to the meeting houses where they so faithfully worshipped a century ago. The onward movement of the years has brought change everywhere, and the Friend who seemed a century ago so unmindful of the transitions going on about him has been swept on by the wave, which now at its flood has left nothing unstirred. The question still remains, have the members of this society been true or untrue to the legacies of the fathers? and while the outward, the externals, have in a measure felt the touch of time, have they guarded as their dearest and truest possession the spirit of truth bequeathed by those who gained it at so dear a price? We have no right to speak here more than our own opinion, and that is that the "live members," to use an expression which carries its own meaning, are to-day, as they always have been, seeking to hear and obey the true Voice, are seeking to have their lives shaped and moulded by the ever living Christ, who stands as their Redeemer, their Saviour and their constant Teacher. They have the faith and the hope and the love which characterized their predecessors—

“And if the outward has gone, in glory and power  
The Spirit surviveth the things of an hour.”

