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cians in this state firmly believe they will carry it in October against all the "isms" now thoroughly fused and combined; but in November they entertain no doubt.

from your friend
very respectfully
James Buchanan.

Hon: Bedford Brown.

THE FOUNDERS OF RICH SQUARE MEETING.*

BY JULIANA PEELE.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century there was a large body of Friends in Southeastern Virginia. These came mostly from the colonies of Pennsylvania and Jersey, with some additions from the Mother Country.

The Friends in Northeastern North Carolina were at the first mainly a continuation of the Virginia Quakers. Their natural increase drove them southward to seek new homes. It may be well to note, however, that about the first seeds of Quakerism in North Carolina were sown by William Edmundson and George Fox, who came on a religious visit to the Albemarle district in the year 1672. These Friends were the first missionaries who travelled within what is now North Carolina. Edmundson was the first to come, and he found but one Quaker in all the province—Henry Phillips, who had come hither in 1668. To this man's house Edmundson immediately went; and there he held the first meetings for worship ever held in the State. Thus we see that the peaceful Quaker was the first to proclaim the gospel of love within our borders.

Edmundson seems to have found the inhabitants in an unsettled condition, with no sort of religious confirmation. "They came," said he, "and sat down in the meetings smoking their pipes, and the Lord's power broke forth among us and many were convinced." The growth of Quakerism in what is now Pasquotank and Perquimans counties was also rapid, for the records show that from 1681 to 1685 they were frequently setting up monthly and quarterly meetings, and a yearly meeting was held among them in 1698.

The pioneer members of Rich Square Meeting were but an extended and extending wing of the Virginia Quakers,

*This article was first published in the *Roanoke Chowan Times*. It is here reprinted with a few changes and notes furnished by Mr. W. A. Bryan as the introduction to a more comprehensive study of the records of the Friends in Northampton county.—W. K. B.

together with some additions from the more eastern meetings of North Carolina. All along in and between the dates of 1730 and 1760, and even later, we find records of deeds to lands bought by some of these in Bertie, Hertford, and Northampton counties (though Northampton was not formed till 1741). Two meetings for worship were regularly held in private houses prior to the building of old Rich Square Meeting House—one in Hertford, the other in Northampton.

However, in 1760 their numbers had so increased that they builded a house for worship, and requested a monthly meeting. This was granted by Eastern Quarterly Meeting of Friends; and the first monthly meeting was held in the new house the seventh of June, 1760. I believe the records of this monthly meeting from its establishment nearly one hundred and forty years ago to the present time have been preserved intact.*

Upon the roll of members registered soon after the meeting was settled we find the following names: Page, Hall, Copeland, Gray, Peele, Jacobs, Parker, White, Ross, Pitman, Knox, Hollowell, Brown, Griffin, Elliott, Baughm, Outland and others.†

Space permits that only a few of the prominent characters be treated. John Copeland came from Perquimans county and settled near what is now the village Ahoskie. A weekly

*I heard of these records just before the past Christmas holidays and made a special trip to the home of the writer and looked over the records of this meeting, which date back to 1760. They are in good condition and contain much material which is of historical interest. Many of them relate to marriages among the Friends, and to those who have never had the pleasure of seeing a Quaker marriage they would be highly interesting. This society keeps a complete record of all the marriages among its members, especial care being taken that none marry outside the fold. I think members have been expelled for disobeying in this respect, but the rules are not so stringent now as in the early days. Possibly the part of these records which is of greatest historical interest is that which relates to the Quaker in his relation to slavery. The slaves were early freed and to these people is due in a great degree the early sentiments against the evil of slavery. The writer takes this question up in another part of this article.—W. A. B.

†Many of the Friends now living in the vicinity of Rich Square bear these names, showing that they have lived true to the faith of their fathers.—W. A. B.

meeting for worship was held at his house before Rich Square meeting house was built. Thomas Knox came from Isle-of-Wight county, Virginia, and settled near where Thomas C. Peele now resides.* Knox was one of the first overseers of the meeting, a man much used upon important committees, and the one left to complete the meeting-house, and have it properly registered. This he did and reported it to the meeting second month, seventh day, 1761. Robert Peele, Sr., came from Nansemond county, Virginia, about 1742 and settled most probably near the village Woodland. When his son Robert took the home, a weekly meeting for worship was also held at his house.

Moses Hall, Sr., was also much used in the early days of this meeting. Whence he came, the writer has no certain knowledge, but it is believed upon good authority that he settled not far from the home of the late Joseph Hall,† and that he owned a large body of land thereabout.

Richard Jordan stands out in bold relief among the early Friends of Rich Square. Though he came here from Isle-of-Wight county, Virginia, eight years after the meeting-house was built and may not strictly be considered a founder, yet his deep earnest christian life was a strong source of ingathering during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. He was a minister of the gospel with a large gift. We find this entry in his journal, written in old age: "I have now visited many of the smaller meetings, and all the yearly meetings for discipline in the world, some of them several times; and have everywhere been treated with courteous consideration." Were the historian to search the early records of Rich Square Monthly Meeting he would soon notice that the name of John Peele is the one which appears most frequently upon its pages. He came from Nansemond county, Virginia, and settled probably about a mile from the old Peele home-

*This is the home of the writer, and is slightly over two miles west from Rich Square.—W. A. B.

†Adjoining the land of T. C. Peele, referred to above.—W. A. B.

stead recently owned by William T. Peele. He, too, like many others of the early settlers, was a large landholder. Tradition says his plantation extended all the way from his residence to the Roanoke River. He married a certain Mary Nasworthy, only daughter of a wealthy Virginia planter, and from them descended the Peeles of Northampton county. He was a man of a fair education, for one of his time, wrote a good hand, and endeavored to educate his children. One of his sons became a medical doctor—John Peele, father of the late Isaac Peele and grandfather of the Peele family of Jackson, N. C. He, as well as other Friends, owned a large number of slaves.

Rich Square Monthly Meeting was settled just about the time when a few of North Carolina Friends were beginning to feel that slavery was an evil from which the Lord was requiring the Quakers to cleanse their hands. From 1758 to about 1800 various concerns of the body and plans for the amelioration or emancipation of their slaves are to be found on record.

The course at last pursued by North Carolina Friends was for the owners of the slaves to transfer them to trustees appointed by the meeting, whose duty it was to look after these wards, hire them out to suitable parties, receive their wages, and use the same for their benefit, and to provide means to transport them either to a free state or to Liberia whenever way opened for it. Among our old family papers the writer has found a list of the names and dates of birth of sixty negroes, born to her great-grandfather, John Peele, and transferred to two of his sons, Edmund and Thomas, and by them, in 1809, to the trustees of the meeting. Another list names fourteen negroes belonging to the same Edmund Peele, that appear to have come to him by his wife, also transferred upon the same date to the trustees of the Meeting. Another list gives names and dates of birth of twenty Quaker negroes, sent through the trustees to Indiana; another of twenty-eight who were sent to Liberia in 1827, and still

another of fifty-eight who doubtless were also sent to Liberia. Doubtless, similar papers could be found in other Friends' families. In this connection, it may be well to state that the aged and infirm negroes generally remained with their former master.

The Friends possessed true Southern hospitality, enjoyed social gatherings and big weddings. After one of great-grandfather John Peele's daughters was married, in Rich Square Meeting House, he got upon a stump in the grove, and invited the entire meeting to go home with him and dine. Tradition gives several other similar instances.

An old time Quaker marriage would be a novel thing today. When two members intended marriage with each other, they both appeared in a monthly meeting, the man went into the women's meeting, took the woman by the hand, and led her into the men's meeting. There they declared their intention of marriage with each other, then they went back into the women's meeting, and again declared the same intention. After this was done the meeting usually appointed a committee to ascertain whether they were clear of other marriage engagements, and to obtain the consent of the parents or guardians of such as were minors. At the next monthly meeting the parties re-appeared, and in the same manner, expressed their continued intentions, and asked liberty to marry. If the committee entrusted with the case reported favorably, and the meeting was satisfied, they were left at liberty to marry. Wedding presents were often given, but by the nearest connections only.

That the founders of Rich Square Meeting were alive in their faith, is evident not only by their patient endurance of losses and reproaches, both during the War of the Revolution and in the work of freeing their slaves, but they were growing in numbers, for in 1768 they settled a new meeting in Edgecombe county, and in 1794 a monthly meeting was established in the upper part of this county, at a place called

Jack Swamp; while the membership in these parts was scattered or spread over five counties.

By consulting the records one notices a pretty general decline of the Quakers about the close of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. The historian would naturally ask, "What caused this decline?" If he searches for the answer to this question he will find that though there were many minor reasons the one far more effective than any or all others was slavery.

After the invention and introduction of the cotton gin, cotton became a staple crop in North Carolina, and the State at once determined to keep the negro. The Quaker felt that she could not keep him and so thousands of them emigrated to the new lands of the free middle West. In some instances whole meetings went at one time. Jack Swamp was almost an example of this. In the year 1810 the writer's mother with her parents went with about forty others from this immediate neighborhood to Mount Pleasant, Ohio.

THREE LETTERS RELATING TO CONDITIONS IN
EASTERN CAROLINA IN 1864.

The originals of the following letters are in the possession of the Trinity College Historical Society. They illustrate conditions in Eastern North Carolina during the last year of the Civil War. General J. R. Stubbs, to whom they were addressed, was a member of the State Senate and Chairman of the Military Committee, and was then living in Raleigh. Because the local history of Halifax and Martin counties is unwritten, some desirable notes and references are omitted; but just as they are, the letters may be of service to him who shall in the future write that history, and if reading them may lead some one to investigate the life in that section during the period of the war, their publication will be more than justified.

WILLIAM K. BOYD.

Major Gilliam to Stubbs.

At Home Sunday night.*

My dear Stubbs:

Our people are somewhat exercised over a yankee raid from below and I write to give you what news I have. Our last is by Dick who left Shep's before day this morning. On Friday and yesterday Capt. Pitt fought them from Gardiners Bridge to Foster's Mill. Yesterday evening they pressed him back from the latter place and they camped at Skewanky. A few officers went to Williamston after night. All of our soldiers except Pitt's Company and one piece and its men of the alla. Battery had been sent to Weldon. Last night four companies of infantry reached Spring Green to help Pitt. The force of the enemy is variously estimated. Pitt says there are 1200. Mathusbee saw their camp fires last night and he thinks there is a brigade. They have but six

*Probably written from Halifax in December, 1864.

