

975.6
F 2a
246

by Francis Anson

meetings are Piney Woods (Belvidere), 1794 and Up River (Whiteston), 1867.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS. In spite of the great distance of Eastern Quarter from New Garden — 250 miles — three very remarkable travelling Friends visited Eastern Quarter, namely John Woolman (1720-1772), Thomas Shillitoe (1754-1836), and Stephen Grellet (1775-1855). These Friends had much in common, save that Grellet was of noble French lineage, while Woolman and Shillitoe were of English extraction. They were each puritanical and abstemious; they practiced holiness; they were given to much walking, even incredible distances; they were great humanitarians, being concerned especially with the evils of slavery; they were diligent in visiting from house to house; they were each possessed of incomprehensible courage; they did not hesitate if they believed it to be the Lord's will to plead with emperors, kings, rulers and dignitaries; yet they also visited prisons and saloons; they were considerable penmen; and were indeed Apostles. They stirred Eastern Quarter. John Woolman says that between six and seven hundred attended meetings at which he preached. It may truly be said that these extraordinary Quakers were saints and mystics. Every Friend should become acquainted with them.

PINEY WOODS MONTHLY MEETING. According to old records there were Friends meeting here, at Belvidere, by 1754 and probably earlier. The group became a monthly meeting in 1794. The four acres of land upon which the meeting house now stands consists of one acre given by Joseph Newby and three acres purchased from Thomas Newby in 1832 for \$20.00. The yearly meeting was held in 1788 at Wells located between Winfall and Belvidere. Wells meeting was discontinued and Piney Woods established in 1794. Before that date meetings had been held at five places in Perquimans — Little River, Suttons Creek, Old Neck, Vosges Creek (now Brights Creek) and Wells. This last named group set off Suttons Creek Monthly Meeting then transferred itself to Piney Woods Monthly Meeting at Belvidere in 1794. However, in an old book entitled: *Memoirs of the Life of Catherine Phillips*, an English Friend, printed in 1798 there is this statement: "On the sixth of second month, 1754, we reached Perquimans River, where the main body of Friends in the province is settled. Our first meeting among them was at Piney Woods meeting house, which was pretty large considering shortness of time allowed, to give notice of it. We visited two other meetings in this quarter." Catherine Phillips and her

companion rode horseback. She encountered difficulties upon some ice over the Perquimans River and was injured by a fall.

In 1788 the meeting house at Old Neck was wrecked by a storm and the annual gathering was therefore held subsequently at Wells, which eventually became Piney Woods Monthly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting assembled in the East till 1791, when for the first time it was held at New Garden. From that date (with few exceptions) it met alternately at New Garden and in the Eastern Quarter.

In other records dated between 1736 and 1770 there is a reference to Piney Woods: "At a monthly meeting held at Perquimans second of sixth month, 1762 . . . this meeting taking into consideration the request of the Friends that desired to have the week day meetings that had been settled at Caleb Elliott's removed to the Piney Woods meeting house, and Friends agree thereto." This shows that Friends have worshipped at Piney Woods for two hundred years, but how much longer is uncertain. The records of these early gatherings are sprinkled with well-known Quaker names, including Albertson, Bagley, Blanchard, Cannon, Elliott, Knight, Maudlin, Mendenhall, Moore, Newby, Nicholson, Nixon, Parker, Sanders, Smith, Toms, White, Williams, Wilson and Winslow. There is also a record of a house of worship at Simons Creek, near Nixontown, in Pasquotank between 1702 and 1706. This was the second place of worship in the colony. The old meeting house was replaced some years ago. According to custom the early house had partitions separating the men from the women at the business sessions, and the Quaker garb of course was in vogue. There was no pre-arrangement and the worshippers sat in silence and meditation for a portion or even the whole of the hour. If a woman Friend had a "concern" to communicate to the men's business meeting, she first presented the matter to the women and asked permission to visit the other meeting. If the request were granted a woman Friend was named to be her companion and the door-keeper would take a message to the door-keeper of the men's meeting; he would take it to the clerk, who would read it to the meeting; it would then be solemnly and silently considered for a while and then discussed before permission would be given. The woman Friend would then be admitted, advance to the clerk's table and deliver herself of her concern.

The Discipline required simple living and plainness in all affairs. It is on record that Dinah Carver, a minister, was "elderred" for riding in a gig and carrying an umbrella.