

William Penn, a Quaker, founded Pennsylvania in 1681 and Philadelphia (the "city of brotherly love") shortly thereafter. York was founded in 1741 by settlers from the Philadelphia region, and named for the English city of the same name. It was incorporated as a borough on September 24, 1787, and as a city on January 11, 1887. During the American Revolutionary War, York served as the temporary capital of the Continental Congress. The Articles of Confederation were drafted and adopted in York, though they would not be ratified until March of 1781.

The first notice of Friends meeting in York was recorded in the minutes of Warrington Monthly Meeting June 9, 1764. Their clerk recorded that the Quarter was informed "that Friends at York have a Meeting settled there....." York became an indulged meeting and in October, 1765, lots Nos. 175 and 176 in the city of York were deeded from Nathan and Edith Hussey to trustees William Willis, Joseph Garretson and Herman Updegraff "for the use of the Society of Friends forever." Joseph Garretson and William Matthews were appointed "to employ workmen to build the House."

What is now the east portion of the meeting house was completed in 1766 (10 years before the American Revolution) and has been continually used by the Society since then, giving rise to the claim of being the city's oldest house of worship still in use. Later in 1783 the west room was added to accommodate the "Women's Meeting." Women met separately to conduct business and administer their own money. After these meetings the raised panel partitions that run through the center of the meeting house would be raised and lowered to transform the interior into one large room for Meeting for Worship.

York was established as a Monthly Meeting in 1786 with William Kersey appointed clerk of the meeting. Two years later, York Meeting and the Warrington Quarter would be parted from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and begin their current affiliation with Baltimore Yearly Meeting. York Meeting has seen many periods of growth and decline in the first half of the 19th century. York saw many of its members move west to settle the territory that would become Ohio and Indiana. Membership dropped so low that in 1858 "there were not resident Male Members sufficient to hold a Monthly Meeting" and so York's remaining Membership was given over by Warrington Quarter Meeting to the care of Baltimore Monthly Meeting (Hicksite) as an Indulged Worship Meeting

York Meeting continued in this capacity and relationship until May 1933 when Friends from York requested "that a Preparative Meeting be established at that place." The request was favored and Bertha Cleaver was appointed clerk. Nineteen years later, in 1932, York would reorganize as an independent Meeting of the Society of Friends under the guidance of Bliss Forbush.

Another 19 years would pass until March, 1951, when the Meeting would again reorganize and petition once again to become part of the Warrington Quarter. York Friends were welcomed back into the Quarter at the next Quarterly Meeting, May 1951, held at Pipe Creek. George Jessop sat as clerk of the Meeting until January 1955, when Eldon Leech was appointed. Eldon clerked York Meeting for 38 years, and at times was the only Friend in attendance to "keep the Meeting."

The 1960s were tumultuous times for York as well as the nation. Many who attended came out of opposition to the Viet Nam War. Some in the greater York community did not appreciate the gathering of anti-war folk at the Quaker Meeting, so one night someone tied a rope to the gate and pulled it off its hinges into the street.

By the mid-1970s, the Meeting House was desperately in need of repair. Vandalism had taken its toll on the old structure; bricks had been pulled from the foundation; window panes were broken; and the gravestones had been disturbed, defaced, and removed. The old lime and sand mortar had crumbled to powder; the end walls were bowed and buckling; the tin roof was leaking; and the electrical system was in need of repair. At that time, only 9 people were members and obviously could not raise the \$25,000 needed for restorative work.

With the aid of the Chamber of Commerce and the Historical Society of York County, the plight of the Meeting House was publicized and a citizens committee formed. It was known as "Friends of the Friends York Meeting". The response was prompt. Local trade unions offered skilled workers and construction firms promised donations of building materials. Financial contributions also poured into the Restoration Committee treasury. By 1976, without recourse to State or Federal funds.....the restoration was completed. York Meeting has survived its history and remains today a spiritual refuge where worship is conducted in the manner of Friends, as it has been for almost 250 years.

\* This paragraph was taken from  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/York, Pennsylvania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/York,_Pennsylvania)

The remainder of the information for this history was taken from:

- Records held by Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College
- Minutes of York Monthly Meeting
- "Broadbrims and Bonnets" (a pamphlet published by the York Friends Meeting House Restoration Association; 1976)