

GRAND OPENING OF 1851 HICKSITE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

North Collins Historical Society proudly announces the Grand Opening of the 1851 Hicksite Quaker Meeting House at the front of North Collins Cemetery on Route 62 in North Collins on Sunday, July 14th, 2013. The official ribbon cutting will take place at Noon. David Willett will do the honor of cutting the ribbon in recognition of the many, many hours he has spent on the restoration of the building.



This meeting house is unique for several reasons. In September 1857, Susan B. Anthony spoke there during a Friends of Human Progress Meeting that more than filled the building. She debated The Nature of Women with a nationally known Spiritualist speaker, Andrew Davis. His contention was that women were superior to men because they were more loving and nurturing. Anthony's contention was that women were not superior, but rather were equal to men. She felt that if they were allowed to masquerade as men, most would be able to do any man's job in addition to raising the family and tending the home--a very radical concept at that time.

The building is also unique in that it has never been remodeled on the inside since it was built. It is still in two rooms with a movable partition between what would have been the men's side and the ladies' side. The partition was open during services so that all could hear the preachings and meditate upon them together. When the religious portion of the meeting was concluded, the partition was closed so that separate Men's Business Meetings and Ladies' Business Meetings could be held. The separate business meetings were unique to Quakers at that time as women publicly still had no rights.

A cast iron coal stove was placed just inside the outside wall on each side with its exhaust pipe suspended across the room to the center chimney to allow warmth to radiate across

the room. A fold-down lectern was in the benches on which the elders and any speakers sat at the front of the room. There were separate entrances/exits for men and for women.

Come and learn more about the Quakers who met to worship at this building. Alternating open house hours with North Collins Historical Society Museum, the Meeting House will be open on Sundays July 14th and 28th, August 11th and 25th, and September 15th and 29th. The hours are from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. each open house.

Grand Opening Day will also be an opportunity to buy a Krolick's BBQ Chicken dinner (cooked on site) to take home with ½ chicken, hot salt potatoes, coleslaw, rolls and butter and homemade cookies. Very limited seating will be available if weather permits. Tickets will be \$9 on site or \$8.50 presale from any North Collins Historical Society member.

Open to the Public

In addition to the regularly scheduled open house dates, the building can be opened to the public by appointment for groups who wish to hold a meeting there or tour the building. There would be no charge for using the building this year unless damage is incurred. After the September 29th open house, it will be closed for the winter as there is no heating or electricity in the building as historically accurate. The new entrances to the building are not historically accurate but necessary for safety (poured concrete blocks with no handrails do not meet safety codes). A battery-operated lantern can be used for an evening meeting. No food is allowed in the building. Contact the town historian through the Town Clerk's Office to make an appointment for your group

Restoration

The restoration project began in 2009 with a \$10,000 legislative initiative grant from New York State. Nearly that much additional money has been spent on the following work despite donated labor by many individuals led by David Willett and the James Renaldo Family with advice from architect John Haas. The building was been stripped and repainted after replacement of damaged siding. The roof has been replaced with period-appropriate wood shingles. Carpenter bees were removed, window frames rebuilt, shutters repaired and new hinges , installed, missing or broken glass panes replaced, stone foundation pointed, French drains installed, new safe entrances built and interior plasterwork repaired. The interior was then painted grey—its original color—as were the benches.

As with any wooden building, maintenance will be ongoing. Contributions to the Quaker Meeting House Restoration and Maintenance Fund are welcomed at any time. Checks can be made out to North Collins Historical Society with the notation at the bottom "Quaker Meeting House" and mailed to P.O. Box 32, North Collins, NY 14111.