

Pendle Hill, A Place to Be and Become

Reflections on the First Ninety Years



Doug Gwyn

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About the Author

Doug Gwyn grew up in the pastoral stream of Friends in Indiana. After experiencing a call to ministry in 1968, he attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he began to know unprogrammed Friends better. Over the years, he has followed his calling into work as a Friends pastor, as a writer for the American Friends Service Committee, and as a teacher at the Quaker study centers Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke. His training in biblical studies has informed his research and writing on early Friends and on current issues among Friends today. Doug has coined the term “bispiritual” to describe Friends like himself who are engaged and nurtured by both pastoral and unprogrammed Friends, in different ways. His wife, Caroline Jones, is a Friend and dharma teacher in the Insight Buddhist tradition.

Doug is the author of the Pendle Hill pamphlet, *“But Who Do You Say That I Am?”: Quakers and Christ Today* (no. 426). His books include *Apocalypse of the Word: The Life and Message of George Fox* (1986), *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (1995), *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience* (2000), *Conversation with Christ: Quaker Meditations on the Gospel of John* (2011), *A Sustainable Life: Quaker Faith and Practice in the Renewal of Creation* (2014), and *Personality and Place: The Life and Times of Pendle Hill* (2014).

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Foreword: A Sacrament of Hope

In the first book published about Pendle Hill's history, Eleanore Price Mather defined Pendle Hill as "A Quaker Experiment in Education and Community," which is directly linked with the idea and spirit offered by Doug Gwyn as he opens this pamphlet with the title "Pendle Hill, a Place to Be and Become." I cannot stop thinking about the courage and faithful openness shown by the Friends who founded Pendle Hill in 1930. With the rest of the world, they were facing many challenges and uncertainties as the Great Depression unfolded before them and their newly created institution.

Today we are in similar circumstances, a complex context of challenges and uncertainties that seem to overwhelm our capacity to address them—the social injustices and inequalities, war conflicts and violence, structural racism, and environmental abuses, to mention only some that we face. Add to that, we are in the middle of a pandemic that exacerbates them. All this presents us with a very obscured passage in our history. This is where we are as we come to celebrate Pendle Hill's ninetieth anniversary and to consider what impact this small Friends' organization has had on peoples' lives.

In my own experience of Pendle Hill, I have always felt this as a place where I can celebrate the sacrament of hope. As a liminal space with a strong commitment to transformation grounded in Quaker spiritual practices, we are invited to explore the many issues we face as individuals and as community. A place where faith, experiential learning, and action are intertwined as we open ourselves to the Light and as we respond to the condition of today's world with a

firm testimony. This is the spirit behind Pendle Hill's daily worship. It is the fountainhead of the institutional actions of environmental stewardship, radical hospitality, and work for justice as Pendle Hill supports the re-creation of the Beloved Community.

In this pamphlet, Doug Gwyn offers a great overview of Pendle Hill's history. A history full of names, details, and testimonies. As you open this manuscript, I invite you to embrace and experience the living dynamic behind Pendle Hill. To be open to the Spirit that motivated the creation of this place as an *oikos* for Friends and seekers; a welcoming place where peace and justice are experienced as essential for transforming lives. A place where you can easily "give reasons for your hope" as hope is practiced and found in silence, in work, and in community. A place where the process of learning, unlearning, and re-learning constitutes a critical part of an institution that aims to continue serving the Religious Society of Friends and many others. In summary, a small retreat, study, and conference center that seeks to be a space for personal and communal renewal, and a space to find inspiration for creating a better world.

Francisco Javier Burgos
Incoming Executive Director
June 2020

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Preface

As this pamphlet goes to publication, Pendle Hill is temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Wrenching staff reductions have been necessary, as with many organizations and businesses around the country and around the world. It is still uncertain at this moment when Pendle Hill can reopen and what reopening will look like. So this is a time of uncertainty. But one recalls that Pendle Hill opened its doors in 1930 as the world was descending into the Great Depression, and it has faced other uncertain times since. There is confidence that Pendle Hill has a future and an urgent purpose in the new world to come. But it may look rather different from the first ninety years we celebrate now. Questions are raised whether Pendle Hill is still a place people should travel long distances to reach, considering the present climate crisis. More programming may need to be delivered online.

Indeed, a new online life has already begun. Daily meetings for worship, which have always been the pulse of Pendle Hill's

life, continue to take place in the Barn with just a handful of socially distanced staff, but with an average of one hundred fifty others from around the world participating via Zoom each morning. For many, it is a way to reconnect with the physical place that has meant a great deal to them sometime in the past. For others, it is a special place within cyberspace that they have discovered for the first time. Five hundred registered for an online lecture, “Love in a Time of Coronavirus,” given by John Calvi. Sixteen hundred have viewed it thus far on Pendle Hill’s YouTube channel, Pendle Hill USA. These impromptu adaptations to the pandemic may betoken Pendle Hill’s future.

Meanwhile, the staff community and board have shared the nation’s grief over recent incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence. Pendle Hill was founded by a predominantly white American Religious Society of Friends. It had high aspirations to racial inclusion and advocacy from the beginning. But like many well-intentioned white Americans, Pendle Hill in particular and white Friends in general have been on a long, slow learning curve to discover how deeply an abiding white normativity marginalizes people of color. Pendle Hill continues to re-examine itself and redouble its efforts to become truly interracial. One significant milestone in this journey was the appointment in March of Francisco Burgos, director of education over the past three years, to become the first person of color to serve as Pendle Hill’s executive director, beginning in September.

The body of this pamphlet is mostly a reflection on Pendle Hill’s first ninety years, in hope that we can learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of that history. A pamphlet format is not adequate to tell the story in a linear fashion. So the focus here is on the buildings and grounds, the various spaces where some beautiful and powerful things have “taken place” and will continue to do so as Pendle Hill advances in faith, hope, and love.¹



Pendle Hill is a place of hospitality. It begins with the trees. Its twenty-four acres host over one hundred fifty species. Together, they uphold the diverse human personalities who come to renew their spirits, learn, dialogue with one another, find new direction for their lives, strengthen their organizations—or simply retreat and rest. In *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen defines hospitality as “the creation of a space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.”² His definition is itself roomy, hospitable, adaptable. Pendle Hill’s hospitality is extended to people through its buildings, interpersonal relations, organizational practices, and stewardship of the earth.

Pendle Hill’s hospitality is grounded in Quaker spiritual practices. Those practices flow from the daily half hour of Quaker waiting worship in the Barn, where participants quietly make space within and among themselves for the Spirit to move, heal, renew, and guide. During the rest of the day, it extends to peaceful, caring interactions that offer mutual hospitality between staff, sojourners, and people from the wide variety of groups that meet here. It also extends to interactions with other species of life on the grounds and the way the organic garden is tended.

These interactions are undergirded by the Quaker testimonies, which are generally named as peace, integrity or truthfulness, equality, community, simplicity, and sustainable stewardship of the earth. As an organization, Pendle Hill’s Quaker faith and practice also includes participatory forms of decision-making, finding unity in the Spirit rather than resorting to majority rule. Like any organization ninety years old, Pendle Hill has undergone adjustments in structure and programmatic emphasis in order to maintain both its prophetic challenge and its hospitable

openness to a changing world. But its Quaker spiritual practices have remained consistent since its founding.

Founding

By the early twentieth century, Friends were abandoning their traditional sectarian separation from the wider world and adopting a more engaged, activist profile. In order to educate and train adult Friends for service and social witness, Friends General Conference (FGC) founded the John Woolman School in 1915 in a large house on the edge of the Swarthmore College campus. When the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was founded in 1917, the Woolman School helped prepare Friends to work with it at home and overseas. But the school's institutional basis proved untenable. In particular, it drew mainly from FGC Friends, but not enough from the Orthodox branch to be viable. When the Woolman School closed in 1927, the Quaker visionary Rufus Jones led a group of AFSC Friends in planning another such experiment in adult education. This time they included both FGC and Orthodox Friends from the start. One aim of the new venture was to nurture an eventual reunion of these two branches, after a century of separation. The large founding board drew Friends from as far west as Kansas, representing a spectrum of Quaker support from evangelical to liberal-progressive.

The new experiment was named Pendle Hill, after the hill in Northwest England where George Fox, the central figure in the early Quaker movement, had a vision in 1652 of "a great people to be gathered." Pendle Hill aimed to equip and renew individuals, the Society of Friends, and the wider peace movement, in order to meet the daunting challenges of the twentieth century. Its founding director, Henry T. Hodgkin, a British evangelical Friend and co-founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, defined four

specific aims. First, to be a “haven of rest,” a place of quiet where Friends could find respite from periods of service, while retaining a sense of the world’s need. Second, a “school of the prophets,” offering education on a few well-chosen subjects in order to strengthen convictions, while preserving openness to new truth and a spirit of tolerance. Third, a “laboratory of ideas” to apply scientific methods to faith, testing beliefs in practice. And fourth, a “fellowship ’round Christ” and between staff and students, to nurture “reconciling personalities” who would take lessons from their Pendle Hill experience out into the wider world.³ These founding aims still describe Pendle Hill’s overall character and purpose, even as specific emphases have shifted over time.

The board searched the Philadelphia area for a suitable combination of buildings and grounds. They finally settled on a tract of seven and a half acres with a large, recently built house and an 1890s brick barn. It was located near a suburban train stop in Wallingford, nestled between Swarthmore and Media. The immediate neighborhood was not as racially mixed as hoped, but the industrial town of Chester just five miles away presented ample opportunities for service and witness. Hodgkin wrote, “We all know this is ‘IT.’”⁴ The land had been developed as an arboretum in the previous century. (The variety of trees has expanded ever since.) Work began immediately to convert the barn into offices and a meeting space on the ground floor, with dormitory rooms for resident students upstairs.

Pendle Hill’s centerpiece was to be its resident program, featuring three ten-week terms of study. This was patterned after Woodbrooke, the Quaker study center in Birmingham, England, founded in 1903. Life in the resident community of students, staff, and sojourning visitors was inspired by the Benedictine discipline of work, study, and worship—a powerful formula for the education and renewal of the whole person. Work: each student was

assigned a regular physical task of housecleaning or kitchen work. Study: courses on a variety of religious and social subjects were supplemented by individual study projects, often culminating with a paper or other form of presentation at the end of the term. Worship: the community gathered for half an hour of Quaker waiting worship after breakfast to ground physical and mental activity in the life of the Spirit.

In crafting Pendle Hill's regimen, Hodgkin observed that although many graduate from college with high ideals and a desire to make a difference in the world, they are soon stymied by the demands and structures of a bureaucratized, industrial society. Pendle Hill would be a place where such adults could put their social ideals on a stronger spiritual basis for a more resilient life of faith, witness, and service.⁵ As Rufus Jones wrote in 1947, "I assume that the major business we are here for in this world is to be a rightly fashioned person as an organ of divine purpose."⁶ Pendle Hill thus fulfilled the vision of William Penn, Pennsylvania's Quaker founder, who suggested in 1682,

I have long thought it an error among all sorts, that use not monastic lives, that they have no retreats for the afflicted, the tempted, the solitary, and the devout; where they might undisturbedly wait upon God, pass through their religious exercises, and, being thereby strengthened, might, with more power over their own spirits, enter into the business of the world again.⁷

One further purpose folded into Pendle Hill's strategy was to provide spiritual grounding for AFSC's far-flung projects of service, peacemaking, and economic empowerment at home and abroad. Many AFSC staff and volunteers received their initial training at Pendle Hill, and often returned to rest and reflect after service assignments. For the next twenty years, Pendle Hill and

the AFSC worked in a close relationship that Henry Cadbury described in 1940 as “the obverse and reverse of the same good currency of American Quakerism.”⁸ Pendle Hill’s collaboration with the AFSC found its fullest realization during the years of Anna and Howard Brinton’s leadership as director and director of studies respectively, from 1936 to 1952.

Despite the stock market crash of 1929 and an accelerating tide of bank failures over the following year, Pendle Hill launched in September 1930 with a group of eighteen students and sufficient finances to survive at least two years. Two African Americans were among that first student group: Marshall Shepard, a Baptist pastor in Philadelphia, and Richard McKinney, a future university professor of philosophy who had been recommended by Howard Thurman. Pendle Hill fitfully attempted to recruit more African Americans over the next decades, but with limited success. In the 1940s, a small settlement house serving Blacks, poor whites, and immigrants was started in a disused Friends meeting-house in Chester. Another outreach to Chester in the early 2000s was a project working with adjudicated youth. But Pendle Hill’s sincere aspirations to racial inclusion have often been eclipsed by global crises of depression and war, its own financial crises, the predominantly white makeup of its Quaker constituency, and its middle-class white neighborhood.

Some Deeper Roots: The Beech and the Elm

Behind the original house stands a large American beech tree reckoned to be well over three hundred years old. It was probably just getting its start in 1682 when Penn made his initial purchase of land from the Lenni Lenape people, one of the Algonquin

tribes. It is Pendle Hill's iconic tree, a powerful presence beloved by many, and the site of a number of Quaker weddings over the years. It has lost some major limbs since 2000 and shows signs of decline, but most of the tree remains in good health. The beech stands as a reminder of the pre-colonial life of this land and its people. Fifty yards from it stands a scion of Philadelphia's Treaty Elm, where Penn made his initial agreements with the Lenape chiefs. This descendant was planted in the 1970s.

Pendle Hill's property is part of a large tract of 1,040 acres purchased in 1682 from Penn by the English Quaker settler John Sharpless. But one doesn't need to know any of these details to sense the deep natural, cultural, and religious history of this place. Since 1930, more acres and buildings have supplemented the original purchase. Each building has stories to tell. And along the way, we will note some further history of the grounds.

Main House

The colonial-style house included in the 1930 purchase was enlarged in 1940 and again in 1989 to expand kitchen and dining space, as well as accommodations upstairs. The linden trees that line the back terrace have grown several times larger over ninety years. They drop flowers, seeds, and leaves all through the warmer months. Outdoor diners on the terrace simply pick them out of their food and continue their conversations. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Pendle Hill was heaving with so many people, all kinds of accommodation were devised within its limited space. It was so hard to get away from people to practice personal prayer and contemplation, some resorted to the attic.

Word was spreading about this new Quaker center. Among countless others, it attracted intellectuals Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, and Gerald Heard, newly arrived from

Britain. Huxley described Pendle Hill's hospitality to traveling seekers as "pilgrim accommodation." He went on to write novels and screenplays in California. Heard taught a summer course in 1937, which he summarized in *A Quaker Mutation* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #7, 1939). Inspired by Pendle Hill, he went on to found a Hindu ashram in southern California and became a seminal figure in the human potential movement. Christopher Isherwood was working with the AFSC to settle European refugees in the Philadelphia area. He attended Dora Willson's Gospels classes, where he felt he had his first glimpse of the figure behind the "propaganda" of the Gospels. He described Dora as "The Pendle Hill Madonna." But Isherwood also displeased Anna Brinton one day when he announced in the lunch tray line that he was wearing no underwear. He, too, soon migrated to California and became a pioneering gay novelist. In the 1950s the African American singer and actor Paul Robeson attended a weekend conference advocating better relations with Russia. He spontaneously sang "Deep River" during a meal in the dining room, to the awe of everyone.

One day in 1958, the religious philosopher Martin Buber came to talk to Howard Brinton, whose book on the German mystic Jacob Boehme he admired. Modestly, Howard had told no one Buber was coming. But Buber's writings were already gaining readers at Pendle Hill. Soon after arriving, he was sitting on a rug in front of the fireplace in the living room, enchanting students and staff with his Hasidic tales. In the 1960s and into the 1970s, the leading Buber scholar Maurice Friedman taught courses on Buber and related subjects at Pendle Hill. His wife, Eugenia, was a popular teacher of literature courses.

Pendle Hill's library started in the Main House reading room and soon spread, lining the walls of the Barn meeting room and other locations to accommodate its burgeoning volumes. Anna and Howard Brinton employed the young George Fox scholar

Lewis Benson to visit old Philadelphia Quaker families and collect their unwanted Quaker books, many of them rare.

The reading room was also a site for some courses. Pendle Hill's tradition of Gospels study began in 1930 with the scholar Henry Burton Sharman. His method continued and evolved through his successors Dora Willson, Mary Morrison, Rebecca Kratz Mays, and Chris Ravndal. The Sharman method had profound effects on many who like Isherwood had never looked to the Bible for wisdom or inspiration. Henry Hodgkin taught a year-long course, "Seeing Ourselves through Russia," the opening year. It was a group research project examining both the good and bad outcomes of the Russian revolution, to see what a capitalist society might learn from its example. A passionate Christian, Hodgkin had dialogued with Confucians and Buddhists during his mission years in China and was always ready to receive truth from new quarters.

But the soul of Main House is found in the kitchen and dining room, where the hospitality of delicious, healthy food and engaging table conversation continues day by day. The kitchen has been staffed by a long line of inspired amateurs (which perhaps describes most Quaker endeavors). Experiments continue to be perfected and enhanced, and community members share in cleaning up and washing dishes. Favorite recipes are posted on the Pendle Hill website.

The meadow near Pendle Hill's entrance was a large garden in the 1930s and 1940s, supplying produce for the kitchen. A pacifist version of the "victory gardens" of the war years, its production peaked in 1944 with more than four tons of fruits and vegetables, including 717 quarts of canned tomatoes. Today's garden is at the back of the property, with organic production begun by Sarah Narum (later Rivers) in the early 1980s. A hoop house added in 2009 enables productive growth most of the year.

The Barn

Pendle Hill's unbroken sequence of daily meetings for worship throughout these ninety years has almost always taken place in the Barn. The old tulip poplar benches were donated in the 1930s by two local Friends meetings. The sliding doors go back to the original building's use as a stable. The same room has been the scene of various other activities: class sessions, Monday Evening Lectures (which continue to this day), dramas, concerts, end of term "Festival Week" presentations, Ping-Pong tournaments, and more.

Memorable speakers have included the Indian poet and associate of Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, the peace activist A.J. Muste, the civil rights strategist Bayard Rustin, the pioneering sociologist Elise Boulding and the economist Kenneth Boulding, the farmer-poet Wendell Berry, the English pacifist Muriel Lester, and the civil rights leader Vincent Harding. One surprising appearance was Jean-Paul Sartre in 1945, speaking in French on current trends in European philosophy. Presumably, he included his own emerging existentialist philosophy.

In the late 1960s, the English Quaker and dramatist Jack Shepherd began organizing Barn productions with students and staff, calling themselves The Apocalypse Repertory Theater. Productions started out fairly orthodox but soon employed more improvisation, even asking the audience for possible dramatic solutions. From Lorca and O'Casey to Sophocles and Aeschylus, plays were adapted to grapple with current issues such as the generation gap of the 1960s and the fading hopes of peace and justice activism by 1970. Meanwhile, Janet Shepherd taught courses on the Hebrew prophets and literature through the 1970s.

Music, especially group singing, has always graced Pendle Hill's life. In the late 1970s, Jackie Coren organized group sing-

ing and taught courses on music and spirituality. She returned in 1993 to initiate the Pendle Hill Chorus, which presents three inspired performances in the Barn a year. Peter and Annie Blood-Patterson, disciples of the folk icon Pete Seeger and creators of the songbooks *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again*, have led many rousing group-sings in the Barn over the years. George Lakey, the civil rights and environmental activist, has led group-sings of Broadway standards from the piano. Besides all this, films, dance, yoga, Buddhist meditation, as well as many group hugs and tearful term endings have transpired in the Barn meeting room.

During a lecture in 1933, the Quaker devotional writer Douglas Steere suggested that Pendle Hill start publishing short, readable “tracts for the times.” The Pendle Hill Pamphlet series began the next year. At their peak of popularity in 1950, each pamphlet had an average subscription and sales distribution of 3,500 copies. The series continues today, well past four hundred sixty volumes. As a body, the pamphlets represent the most substantive and far-ranging Quaker literature of the twentieth century and into the present.

By 1997, a major renovation and reorganization of the Barn, led by Pendle Hillers Dave Dobbins and Larry Wilson, was completed. The meeting room’s low ceiling was raised, exposing beams and offering more attractive, adjustable lighting for different occasions. The bookstore was greatly expanded, and the upstairs dormitory was turned into offices to accommodate Pendle Hill’s expanding staff and technologies. Chuck Fager, Issues Program coordinator, inched the Barn into the digital age in 1994 as the first staff member using email. The next year he established a fledgling Pendle Hill web page.

Upmeads

When Anna and Howard Brinton arrived as directors in 1936, Pendle Hill hit its stride.⁹ Three new houses were built along Plush Mill Road in 1936–37. The first of these was a residence with an adjoining library-classroom for the Brintons. Anna named it Upmeads (from *The Well at the World's End*, a medieval fantasy novel by William Morris). There, the Brintons raised three daughters and a son, who were immersed in the life of the community. For example, during the war, General George Marshall, head of the Selective Service, came one day to talk to a group of Civilian Public Service (CPS) administrators in the Upmeads library. Meanwhile, in the next room, the children took turns photographing one other wearing his hat and coat. Pendle Hill was full of conscientious objectors and other pacifists in those days, and the FBI occasionally came to investigate. Some neighbors grew hostile during the war. Yellow paint was splashed against the front of Upmeads one night. But the internal dynamics and pacifist resolve of the community were strong; students and staff were undaunted.

Lecture teas were held in the late afternoons in the Upmeads library in those years. Other courses met in the evenings. This format allowed the wider community to participate. Students performed volunteer service during the day at the AFSC offices in Philadelphia, in Chester, and elsewhere.

Dorothy Day came down periodically from her Catholic Worker headquarters in New York to take retreat time and visit with Anna at Upmeads. Although Anna had earned a PhD in classical studies from Stanford University in 1917, she devoted endless hours to the administration of this burgeoning center of activity and responding to individual needs. She was quick to spy out and foil inappropriate romances, but smiled upon some oth-

ers. And when a student was slow in finding his or her way out of Pendle Hill, he or she was moved to the top floor of Upmeads, where Anna could gently encourage the search for next steps. To that end, she asked the Pendle Hill board to “keep their minds open for odd kinds of work that odd kinds of people can do.” The genius of Pendle Hill’s hospitality has been to offer the space for personalities to blossom and expand, in trust that they will find renewed faith and direction in the process.

After the war, Anna’s benign matriarchy was increasingly challenged, particularly by men fresh from the Civilian Public Service camps, where more participatory forms of decision-making had advanced. She decided she had made her best contributions to Pendle Hill and resigned in 1949 to work for the AFSC. Howard continued to teach and write and they lived at Pendle Hill for many more years.

Governance indeed became more consultative and participatory over the following decades. The student community sought more decision-making authority from the staff, while the staff sought more decision-making authority from the board. Recommendations made in 1970 by Pendle Hill teacher George Willoughby helped moderate some of the tensions in governance. But the fundamental tension between a lively community of students and staff versus the institutional arrangements of a non-profit organization governed by an external board continued to simmer until the resident program was discontinued in 2014 due to waning enrollment.

Waysmeet

Next door to Upmeads, another residence was finished the same year. It was named Waysmeet in memory of founding director Henry Hodgkin (he and his family had given their off-campus

home that name). This new house was built by the AFSC for its director Clarence Pickett and his family. The Picketts and the Brintons enhanced one another's vision. The writings of both Howard Brinton and Clarence Pickett during these years evince their influence on one another, fulfilling the founding hope that Pendle Hill and the AFSC would find a useful symbiosis.¹⁰

The AFSC's work among unemployed coal miners and their starving families in West Virginia and western Pennsylvania impressed Eleanor Roosevelt, who became a friend and ally to the Picketts. They were invited to visit the Roosevelt home, Hyde Park on Hudson, shortly before Franklin's first inauguration. Eleanor also stayed at least one night at Waysmeet.

The rush-seat chairs that are found in the Waysmeet dining room, the Main House reading room, and the Firkbank library were made from mountain hickory by laid-off coal miners in West Virginia, as part of an AFSC employment project during the Great Depression. They have held up as well or better than any other Pendle Hill furniture.

In addition to the house, a Little Barn was built near Waysmeet as a place for Pickett to hold meetings larger than the Waysmeet living room could accommodate. Today the remaining concrete slab and fireplace have become a picnic area. The AFSC also built a large residence next door to Waysmeet, which was named Edgehill and served as the home of Homer Morris, secretary for social and industrial affairs.

As the AFSC became increasingly professionalized in the 1950s, the symbiosis with Pendle Hill loosened. Pendle Hill bought Waysmeet from the AFSC in 1960 and Edgehill in 1967. Waysmeet was quickly redeployed as space for silent group retreats, which had never found adequate space on campus before. Douglas Steere was a frequent retreat leader in Waysmeet for years afterward.

Edgehill became the residence for a series of Pendle Hill administrators. Among these were Parker and Sally Palmer and their three children. Parker became dean of studies at Pendle Hill in 1975, two years after the death of Howard Brinton. He quickly absorbed Pendle Hill's genius and gave it fresh articulation for the post-Sixties era in essays like "The Meeting for Learning" and his Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *A Place Called Community* (#212, 1977). These were early expressions of Palmer's deep insight and writing gift, which Henri Nouwen helped mentor in those early years, as he came down monthly from Yale University to visit. Palmer brought Elaine Prevallet, Sandra Cronk, and Bill and Fran Taber to Pendle Hill as resident teachers. Prevallet was a member of a Catholic order, the Sisters of Loretto. Cronk, a Quaker, had immersed herself in Anabaptist spirituality. The Tabers came from the Conservative Friends tradition, where Bill was a recorded minister in Ohio Yearly Meeting. Together, they helped reclaim the deeper registers of Quaker spirituality at a time when many Friends and like-minded seekers still suffered from the dashed hopes of Sixties radicalism. Not everyone welcomed this new emphasis. Some on the board missed the heyday of Pendle Hill's more activist past. One opined that Pendle Hill had become a "navel observatory." But the inward turn of the 1980s was vital for its time.

Firbank

In 1945, as the AFSC prepared for major relief and reconstruction work in post-war Europe and Asia, Pendle Hill prepared to be the training center for AFSC staff and volunteers before they shipped out. In order to accommodate a major influx of residents, Pendle Hill purchased a large mid-nineteenth-century house on a seven-acre property west of Main House. It was named "Firbank"

in 1950, after the hill where George Fox preached to a thousand Seekers, shortly after his Pendle Hill vision. The library, housed in various locations on campus, finally found a more adequate home when it was consolidated in Firbank.

The latter 1940s were no doubt the most frenetic period in Pendle Hill's history. Anna Brinton reflected in 1950 on the past decade of the war and the post-war reconstruction project with AFSC:

We grew accustomed to anxiety but even so, Pendle Hill remained like "some radiant upper story of the world, detached from and independent of the dark stretches below" [from Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*]. Like nature's beauty that continues constant if man withholds his marring hand, Pendle Hill retains its outward charm and inward grace as we who are its members happily and faithfully fulfill our part.¹¹

Pendle Hill's collaboration on post-war relief and reconstruction contributed to British and American Friends receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

Notwithstanding Anna's background in classical literature and the arts, the Brintons kept arts and crafts out of the curriculum through the 1940s, in order to maintain the outward impetus of collaboration with the AFSC. But in the 1950s, under the leadership of Dan Wilson (director from 1954 to 1970) creative writing and drawing classes began to appear. The fertile interplay of art and spirituality advanced in 1960 with the development of a craft studio in the Firbank basement, led by Stan Zielinski, a widely recognized weaver. Weaving and especially pottery served as important media where students integrated their overall Pendle Hill experience and spiritual progress into form and color. Zielinski was succeeded in the studio by Paulus Berensen,

Sally Palmer, Mimi Wright, Carol Sexton, and currently Jesse White. Charlotte Fardelmann's *Sink Down to the Seed* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #283, 1989) and Elizabeth Sutton's *Treasure in Clay Jars* (#346, 1999) are among the published accounts of Pendle Hill students whose work in pottery facilitated their spiritual renewal. Perhaps clay was an especially apt medium for the underground ambience of a basement studio and the intuitive work of shaping an outward representation of an inward formation.

In 1992–93, Firbank underwent a major renovation and modernization, expanding accommodations for students, staff, workshop attenders, and sojourners. (This made possible the conversion of the Barn dormitory to offices.) The arts studio moved up to a large ground floor room with plenty of natural light. With more space and light, clay has been increasingly supplemented by other media. Jennifer Elam recounts how painting in the studio affected her spiritual life in *Art as Soul's Sanctuary* (#452, 2018). Since the resident program was laid down in 2014, Jesse White has continued teaching and mentoring in arts and spirituality with short courses and workshops.

The Firbank library has also been the site for many term course sessions and some weekend workshops, ranging from Bible, spirituality, and Quakerism courses to Niyonu Spann's "Beyond Diversity 101" courses and workshops since the early 2000s.

Besides helping the arts to enter Pendle Hill's curriculum, Dan Wilson also invited Richard Stenhouse to become its first African American resident teacher in 1961. His teaching centered on community-based responses to situations of economic, social, and political conflict. But after two years, Stenhouse was frustrated by Pendle Hill's failure to attract more Black students. He returned to teaching at Paine College in Georgia, where he could be more engaged in the civil rights struggle. Though he remained

a Baptist, he maintained association with Friends through the Wider Quaker Fellowship. In 1965, he published an article, “Some Barriers to the Community of Peoples within the Society of Friends,”¹² a sympathetic but penetrating critique of Friends and what is now often termed white normativity.

Chace and Cadbury Court

After more than two decades of packing students, staff, and sojourners into every available space, a dormitory was built in 1958, adjacent to the Barn. It was named Chace in honor of the Chace Fund that enabled the building. It added twenty-four single rooms, increasing the total number of private rooms to thirty-six. This was a particular concern of board chair Douglas Steere, who shared the monastic tradition’s conviction that community must be balanced by solitude for optimal spiritual growth. Subsequent renovations in 2000 added helpful sound baffling between floors.

Another expansion provided seven new staff apartments between Main House and Firbank. Finished in 1968, they were named Cadbury Court, in honor of the beloved lecturer and New Testament scholar Henry Cadbury. Unfortunately, the apartments developed structural problems over the years and were finally razed in 2016. Below the ever-advancing ivy at the east end of the remaining concrete slab, you can still find a small brick patio with a peace sign patterned in the middle. It was added by George Willoughby and his students in the “Preparing for Radical Quaker Living” course. They playfully dubbed it “The George Fox Revolutionary Plaza.”

Willoughby’s teaching, supplemented by his colleague George Lakey, brought Pendle Hill’s civil rights and anti-war concerns into sharp focus in the late 1960s, through the theories and actual experiences in nonviolent action for social change. But this was

also a time when the campus was packed with students, many of them young and awash in the chaotic energies of the time. Fearing that the spiritual grounding of Pendle Hill's social vision was being lost, the board chose not to renew Willoughby's teaching contract in 1970. There were difficult feelings on all sides. Willoughby and Lakey went on from Pendle Hill to create the Life Center in Philadelphia and the Movement for a New Society, which were more adequate vessels for their vision.

The Blue Route, Brinton House, the Perimeter Path, Owen's Garden

In 1961 plans were aired for a new interstate to be constructed in the area, to facilitate traffic around Philadelphia. Possible color-coded routes were publicized and considered. The so-called Blue Route was chosen and was initially planned to run right through Pendle Hill. A large letter-writing campaign helped Pendle Hill begin a conversation with highway planners to find some adjustment. Finally, the route was shifted enough to cut off only a small corner from the property. The government made a generous settlement of \$100,000 for the land. Still, many dreaded that the interstate highway would seriously violate Pendle Hill's peace and quiet.

In case the future highway made Pendle Hill's existing space intolerable, a large house on five and a half acres across Plush Mill Road was purchased in 1969, as a potential lifeboat for the ongoing Quaker experiment. In the meantime, the property would provide new space for Pendle Hill to generate more short-term programs. Money from the government's purchase of land for the Blue Route was used to buy the property and make some

improvements. After Howard died in 1973 (Anna had died in 1969), the conference center was named Brinton House in their honor. In 1992, a gift from Douglas and Dorothy Steere helped initiate a large extension of single rooms to Brinton House. This furthered the Steeres' concern that retreatants and workshop participants need private space to process their experience. The resulting Steere Wing was then supplemented in 2000 by a large new meeting space, the Conlon Room, to accommodate not only larger workshops but also dance, movement, yoga, and meditation retreats.

Construction for the Blue Route (I-476) reached Pendle Hill's boundary in 1988 and was completed in 1992. The wooded trails that had connected Pendle Hill with the Swarthmore College campus were cut off. The time had come for Pendle Hill to create its own nature trail. Grounds-manager Lloyd Guindon (Pendle Hill's longest continuing staff member at thirty-four years in 2020) initiated the project in 1989. An environmental architect had suggested the idea in 1986. Students and staff joyfully aided in establishing the wood-chip trail over the next year. Approximately a mile long, the Perimeter Path circles the property on both sides of Plush Mill Road. It offers a quiet response to the bustle just outside its orbit. Ever-increasing Blue Route traffic adds subliminal "white noise," but has not proved to be the ruin of the place after all. An earthen berm was added close to the highway to help with sound abatement.

In 2003–04 an enclosed garden was created between Main House and the organic garden, featuring a small waterfall and pool, benches, and a screened shelter-house. It has added a beautiful natural space for reading, quiet reflection, and conversation. It was named Owen's Garden in memory of Owen Richmond, Lloyd Guindon's father-in-law and a supporter of Pendle Hill.

New House

By 2010, as conference business and short-term education programs continued to grow, various options were considered to upgrade facilities and expand capacity. An environmentally minded architectural firm drew up a master plan for reworking existing buildings and adding another dormitory. But there wasn't money to materialize these ambitious ideas. Meanwhile, a family who had occupied a neighboring house on Plush Mill Road since it had been built in the 1950s was ready to put it on the market. But they gave Pendle Hill the opportunity to make an offer first. Purchased in 2013, this six-bedroom residence added useful capacity, with ample meeting space. The house also fit better than a new dormitory with Pendle Hill's spirit and style of hospitality. At the time of this writing, New House has not yet received its permanent name.

Oikos

The ancient Greek word for 'house' is *oikos*. The steward who ran the operation of the ancient Greek house (both residence and place of business) was an *oikonomos*, the root of our word 'economy.' *Oikos* also underlies two other English words, 'ecology' and 'ecumenical.' These three words describe three dimensions of Pendle Hill's Quaker practice of hospitality.

The challenging task of keeping this lively experiment afloat through changing times has required economy and stewardship. That challenge has been met by a variety of able stewards on staff and on the board through the decades. Pendle Hill programs also address wider economic issues, advocating for a more just and equitable society. The ecumenical and interfaith dimension has been present from the start, with Henry Hodgkin's open-ended

Christian faith and Howard Brinton's dialogue with Buddhism and other Eastern traditions. Ecumenical and interfaith interest and hospitality toward Eastern, Native American, Jewish, Muslim, African, and other traditions continue to this day. The ecological dimension has always been part of Pendle Hill's sensitivity to the land it occupies, the organic gardening it continues, and the permaculture it has taught in recent years.

A Great People to Be Scattered

Atop England's Pendle Hill in 1652, George Fox envisioned "a great people to be gathered." Wallingford's Pendle Hill is no hill at all, but it is truly a place where visions are received and followed. Thousands of men and women have been renewed and sent back out into the world. They are "a great people to be scattered" throughout many countries, in various forms of ministry, witness, and service—more widely than anyone can know. Most never find an occasion to return. But the experience is indelible in their memory. That is the fullest realization of the spiritual practice of hospitality: not to keep people forever but to send them on their way refreshed.

One example stood out in recent years. Parker Palmer invited Vincent Harding to come to Pendle Hill in 1979. Harding had been a friend and ally of Martin Luther King Jr. and had drafted his historic "Beyond Vietnam" speech of 1967. He had also founded the King Center in Atlanta at the request of Martin's widow, Coretta Scott King. While at Pendle Hill, Harding finished *There Is a River*,¹³ his acclaimed history of the African American liberation struggle, while teaching courses on nonviolent social change, Black liberation, and other movements. After two years, Harding moved on to Iliff Theological Seminary in Denver, where he taught and later directed the Veterans of Hope project until 2004.

Harding returned to Pendle Hill in the spring of 2014 to work on his memoirs. Even in failing health, he was an inspiration to many in the community. In a Monday Evening Lecture at Pendle Hill shortly before his death that spring, Harding referred to his recent book, *America Will Be!*,¹⁴ affirming that this nation will continue living into the provisions of its own constitution and its highest motivating ideals.

As I write this, historic demonstrations have taken place for weeks around the country. Blacks and whites together are insisting that Black Lives Matter,¹⁵ after millions watched a video of the police killing of George Floyd, a Black man. In a statement of solidarity with the demonstrations, Traci Hjelt Sullivan, interim executive director, wrote on the Pendle Hill website:

From our position as a conference center and educational institution, Pendle Hill strives to support agents of change. We seek to find ways we can strengthen our educational offerings related to overcoming racism by providing opportunities for people of all races to strengthen their determination for change, expand their skills, and heal from the trauma of oppression. We will also continue to provide programming exclusively for and led by people of color.

Now is not the moment for despair or paralysis. Now is the time for change and action. Now, and next week, and next month, and next year, and. . . let us become the ancestors deserving of our great-great-grandchildren's pride.

In September 2020, a month after the publication of this pamphlet, Francisco Burgos will become executive director. The campus will still be closed at that time, but there is hope for a new kind of community emerging from the isolation of the pandemic, and from the energy and commitment of the demonstrations. A

new kind of recovery will be underway. Pendle Hill intends to be part of that recovery.

A PENDLE HILL TIMELINE

**(focusing primarily on administration,
buildings, and grounds)**

- | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1903 | Opening of the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, England |
| 1915 | Opening of the John Woolman School, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania |
| 1917 | Founding of the American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia |
| 1927 | Closing of the Woolman School and first meetings to plan its successor |
| 1930 | Opening of Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, Henry T. Hodgkin as director. Property consists of Main House and Barn on seven and a half acres |
| 1930–42 | Joseph and Esther Platt provide administrative continuity |
| 1930–54 | Robert Yarnall serves as chair of Pendle Hill's board of managers |
| 1932 | Hodgkin forced to leave due to failing health (died 1933) |
| 1932–34 | John Hughes serves as acting director |
| 1934 | Pendle Hill Pamphlet series begins |

- 1934–35 Howard Brinton serves as acting director
- 1935 Collaboration between Pendle Hill and the AFSC becomes more programmatic
- 1935–36 Richard Gregg serves as acting director
- 1936 Anna Brinton and Howard Brinton begin service as director and director of studies
- 1936–37 Upmeads, Waysmeet, and Edgehill built along Plush Mill Road
- 1940 Wakefield built (purchased in 1951)
- 1942–48 Training for service in Friends Ambulance Unit and then AFSC relief and reconstruction work after the war (peaking at 155 students and trainees in 1946)
- 1945 Firbank and seven acres of surrounding land purchased
- 1949 Anna Brinton resigns as director, Howard Brinton becomes sole director
- 1950 Dan Wilson begins work as administrative assistant to Howard Brinton
- 1952 Brintons leave for two years in Japan, Dan Wilson becomes acting director
- 1953–55 Programmatic collaboration between Pendle Hill and the AFSC leads to AFSC's booklet, *Speak Truth to Power* (1955)
- 1954–72 Douglas Steere serves as chair of the board

- 1955 Dan Wilson named director and Gilbert Kilpack
 named dean of studies
- 1958 Chace dormitory built
- 1960 Pendle Hill's byline is changed from "Center for
 Religious and Social Study" to "A Quaker Center
 for Study and Contemplation."
- 1960 Waysmeet purchased from the AFSC for additional
 meeting and retreat space
- 1960 Pendle Hill's first art studio created in Firbank
 basement
- 1965 Crosslands built
- 1967 Edgehill purchased
- 1968 Cadbury Court and maintenance shop/garage built
- 1969 Brinton House property (on 5.4 acres) purchased as
 a conference center
- 1970 Dan Wilson resigns
- 1971-72 Colin Bell and Bob Scholz serve as director and
 dean
- 1972-74 Bob Scholz serves as director, Pendle Hill board
 integrates more staff and student input into its
 governance
- 1974-81 Edwin Sanders serves as director under new title,
 "executive clerk" with expanded administrative
 team
- 1975-80 Parker Palmer serves as dean and then 1981-85 as
 teacher and writer in residence

1981–86	Robert Lyon serves as executive clerk
1986–91	Margery Walker serves under new title, “executive secretary”
1989–90	Perimeter Path is established
1989–2003	Several buildings are renovated or expanded
1991–2000	Daniel Seeger serves as executive secretary
2000–05	Steve Baumgartner serves as “executive director”
2003–04	Owen’s Garden is developed
2005–07	Barbara Parsons, then Ken and Katharine Jacobsen as interim directors
2007–11	Lauri Perman serves as executive director
2009	Pendle Hill Pamphlet 400 published
2011–19	Jennifer Karsten serves as executive director
2014	Resident program ends
2019	Traci Hjelt Sullivan becomes interim executive director
2020	Campus closes temporarily starting in March
2020	Francisco Burgos begins as permanent executive director in September

ENDNOTES

1. For those who would like to learn more about Pendle Hill's history, Eleanore Price Mather's *Pendle Hill: A Quaker Experiment in Education & Community* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1980) is still a lively read for the first fifty years. For a deeper dive, my own *Personality and Place: The Life and Times of Pendle Hill* (Philadelphia: Plain Press, 2014) takes the story up to 2014 and calibrates Pendle Hill's evolution with changes in American Quakerism and the wider society. Most of the anecdotes and quotations in this pamphlet may be found there.
2. Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 71.
3. Henry T. Hodgkin, "A Dream to Be Realized," *The Friends Intelligencer*, Fourth Month 27, 1929.
4. Hodgkin, in the Pendle Hill log-book for 1930–32, Pendle Hill archives, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.
5. See the full Hodgkin quotation in Gwyn, *Personality and Place*, 47.
6. Rufus Jones, *The Luminous Trail* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 13.
7. William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* (London: Sowle, 1682), Chapter 5, xiv.
8. Henry J. Cadbury, "A Quakerism Adequate for Today," a 1940 lecture celebrating the completion of Pendle Hill's first decade (unpublished, Pendle Hill archives).
9. For more on the Brintons, see Anthony Manousos's fine biography, *Howard and Anna Brinton, Re-Inventors of Quakerism in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: FGC QuakerBridge, 2013).
10. Some instances of the mutual influence between Pickett and Brinton are noted in regard to Pickett's addresses to FGC Conferences in Gwyn, *A Gathering of Spirits: The Friends General Conferences 1896–1950* (Philadelphia: QuakerPress of FGC, 2018).
11. Anna Brinton, annual report to the board, published as "1940–1950," *Pendle Hill Bulletin* #98, August 1950.
12. Richard Stenhouse, "Some Barriers to the Community of Peoples within the Society of Friends," in *No Time But This Present: Studies Preparatory to the Fourth World Conference of Friends at Guilford College* (Birmingham, England: Woodbrooke, 1965), 161–69.
13. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).

14. Vincent Harding and Daisaku Ikeda, *America Will Be!: Conversations on Hope, Freedom, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Dialogue Path Press, 2013).
15. “How Black Lives Matter Reached Every Corner of America,” *New York Times*, June 13, 2020: <https://nyti.ms/2AvYz8Q>.

Pendle Hill, a Place to Be and Become

Doug Gwyn, historian of Pendle Hill (*Personality and Place: The Life and Times of Pendle Hill*, 2014), tells the story of this experimental community, structured around the features of the campus, beginning with the beech tree and ending with New House (so called as of August 2020). The early history of Pendle Hill is entwined with the American Friends Service Committee, providing a base for activism. In the 1960s the focus began to shift to study and contemplation. With the closing of the resident program in 2014, Pendle Hill moved into an identity yet to be fully envisioned as it looks at the potential for creating a new kind of community in the wake of the pandemic and the worldwide call to grapple with systemic racism. The pamphlet includes a time line and a foreword by Francisco Burgos, newly named executive director of Pendle Hill.



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