

A Short History of Camden

A 600 acre tract of land known as "Brecknock", which now includes Camden, was warranted to Alexander Humphreys in 1680. The earliest known settler in the present town was a James ^{present} Wells whose dwelling was situated slightly east of the ~~A~~ residence of Maxine Howell at 237 E. Camden-Wyoming Avenue. The Wells home was built around 1685. Nearly a century passed before a village began to appear.

In 1783 Daniel Mifflin, formerly of Accomac County, Virginia purchased a 112 acre portion of the Brecknock tract, called Piccadilly. At the junction of the Upper Kings Highway (of which Main Street is now a part) and the road leading from Forest Landing (Lebanon) to the headwaters of the Choptank, Mifflin constructed an inn. This was a coaching and horse changing stop. He also laid out building lots with the vision of a Quaker town before him.

The names Mifflin's Cross Roads and Piccadilly were both used, but by 1788 the name Camden appears on a deed. Many Georgian and Federal period homes are still to be seen scattered about Camden and the surrounding area.

During the Civil War, escaping slaves from the South found friends here among the Quakers who offered their homes as stations on the "Underground Railroad." The abolitionist movement was strong among Quakers. The Hunns, the Lowbers and Cowgills were probably the main families in this area who were involved in assisting escaping slaves, although the Mifflins, Jenkineses, Nocks, Dolbys, Emersons and others, if not actually aiding escaping slaves, gave moral assistance to the cause. One known station in Camden is the Cooper House located at #15 North Main Street. A tunnel is said to have connected this house with the one to the south and the loft over the kitchen held bunks. Here slaves in transit were lodged by day. At night they were moved on, in many cases no doubt, to nearby Wildcat Manor, where they again could be hidden until a ship could be secreted in and out of the St. Jones River. This was just one of the many stages in the slaves flight for freedom.

When the Delaware Railroad was started in the 1850's the original surveys showed that it would come through the then western edge of Camden. The Quakers objected to this rather strenuously and as a consequence the plan was changed and the tracks were laid a mile west of Camden.

in 1963 that the Little Creek Friends Meeting was an extremely well proportioned building. Unfortunately, it is now in disrepair and being used for storage of farm implements.

Camden Meeting has become more active in recent years. In 1959 an annex was added and a parking lot was made. The land was donated by George and Annette Butler. Meeting is held each First-Day from 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock and a First-Day school is also conducted. We welcome visitors at any time.

Bibliography:

History Of Delaware, by J. Thomas Scharf
Historic Houses of Delaware, by Harold Donaldson Eberlein
Historic Landmarks Of Delaware And The Eastern Shore, by
Betty Harrington Macdonald

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