

George Fox by Peter Lely

## Fair Hill Burial Ground

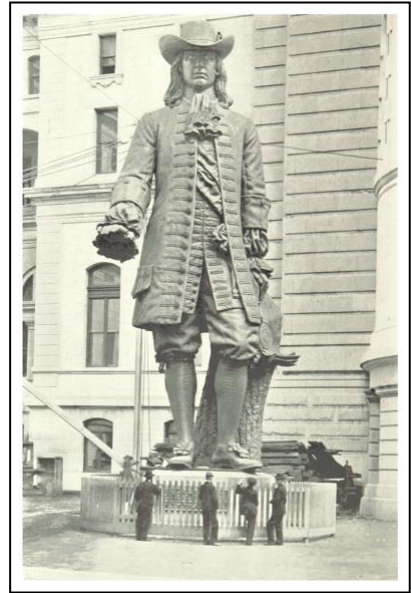
*Latest in a series of articles about interesting places near Temple University*

*By Paul LaFollette, Editor Faculty Herald*

Several years ago, a friend who often, as I do, rides the 23 bus, said to me, “Did you ever notice the big pet cemetery on the way to Temple University?” I asked, “Where?” When he told me, I replied, “That is not a pet cemetery, that is the historic Fair Hill Burial Ground.”

He asked, “Why is it historic, and if it is for humans, why are the gravestones so small.” I told him the following:

In 1681, William Penn gave 1250 acres of land in Pennsylvania to his friend George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends. Fox dedicated six acres of this land to be used for a stable, a meeting house, and burial ground.



William Penn by Alexander Calder

During the Revolutionary War, the original meetinghouse was occupied by the British following the Battle of Germantown. The burial ground was used sporadically until early in the 19th century when the Green Street Monthly Meeting took control of the site. By 1840, the Philadelphia, Spruce Street, and Green Street Meetings were using the site as a burial ground. At this time, the rules of the cemetery included a restriction that headstones be no larger than 18 inches wide, 9 inches deep, and 10 inches out of the ground.

The stones are small because Quakers believe in simplicity and equality. Everyone is equal in the eyes of God and equally has name and two dates on their grave stone.

In the 1880s, a new meetinghouse was constructed nearby. In the 1980s, the burial ground was purchased by Ephesians Baptist Church who struggled to maintain it when 9th and Indiana hosted the largest open-air crack cocaine market in the city. In 1993, the five-acre burial ground was purchased by a 501c3 Quaker board who cleaned it up and manages it today.

Fair Hill was one of the first racially integrated cemeteries in Philadelphia. Many prominent abolitionists and advocates for women’s rights are buried there, including Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock, Robert Purvis, and Sarah Pugh.

The remarkable story of the manner in which this historic site has been reclaimed as an urban green space and site for community activity is documented at <http://historicfairhill.com/about/our-story>. An application to have the cemetery listed on the National Register of Historic Places can be viewed at [http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/CRGIS\\_Attachments/SiteResource/H104865\\_01H.pdf](http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/CRGIS_Attachments/SiteResource/H104865_01H.pdf).



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