

# The Carman Family Collection



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Gardiner Foundation and uses Long  
Island Studies Institute collections as the  
basis for the project.

*By Lauren Farmer*



# Presentation Agenda:



- The development/history of the Quaker movement
- The Carman family and their ties to Quaker culture
- Quakers strongly believed in uniformity and were pioneers of many ideas/rights
- Quaker activity on Long Island today
- The overall impact the Carmans made on the Long Island/Quaker community

# Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends

Political conflicts between Parliamentarians and Royalists resulted in the famous English Civil War during the mid-17th century. These conflicts developed over time because citizens were unhappy with how the English government was operating. During this time, men and women did not feel a sense of liberation, which led them to further question traditional forms of religious worship and a strong desire for a more spiritual experience.

This then led to the formation of the Quakers, a successful group/movement that made its name well-known in different locations around the world, including here on Long Island.



# *George Fox, Founder*

George Fox was an English Dissenter and Protestant Christian who was unsatisfied with what the Church of England had to preach and teach to the people. While living in England, he had visions about the Inner Light of Christ which led him to travel around England, the Netherlands, Barbados, and eventually making his way to Long Island to continue the spread of his faith in 1672. As the founder of the Quaker movement, he also travelled to oversee the establishment that had migrated to the United States, visiting the towns of Gravesend and Flushing, and also attending a Friends meeting at Oyster Bay.



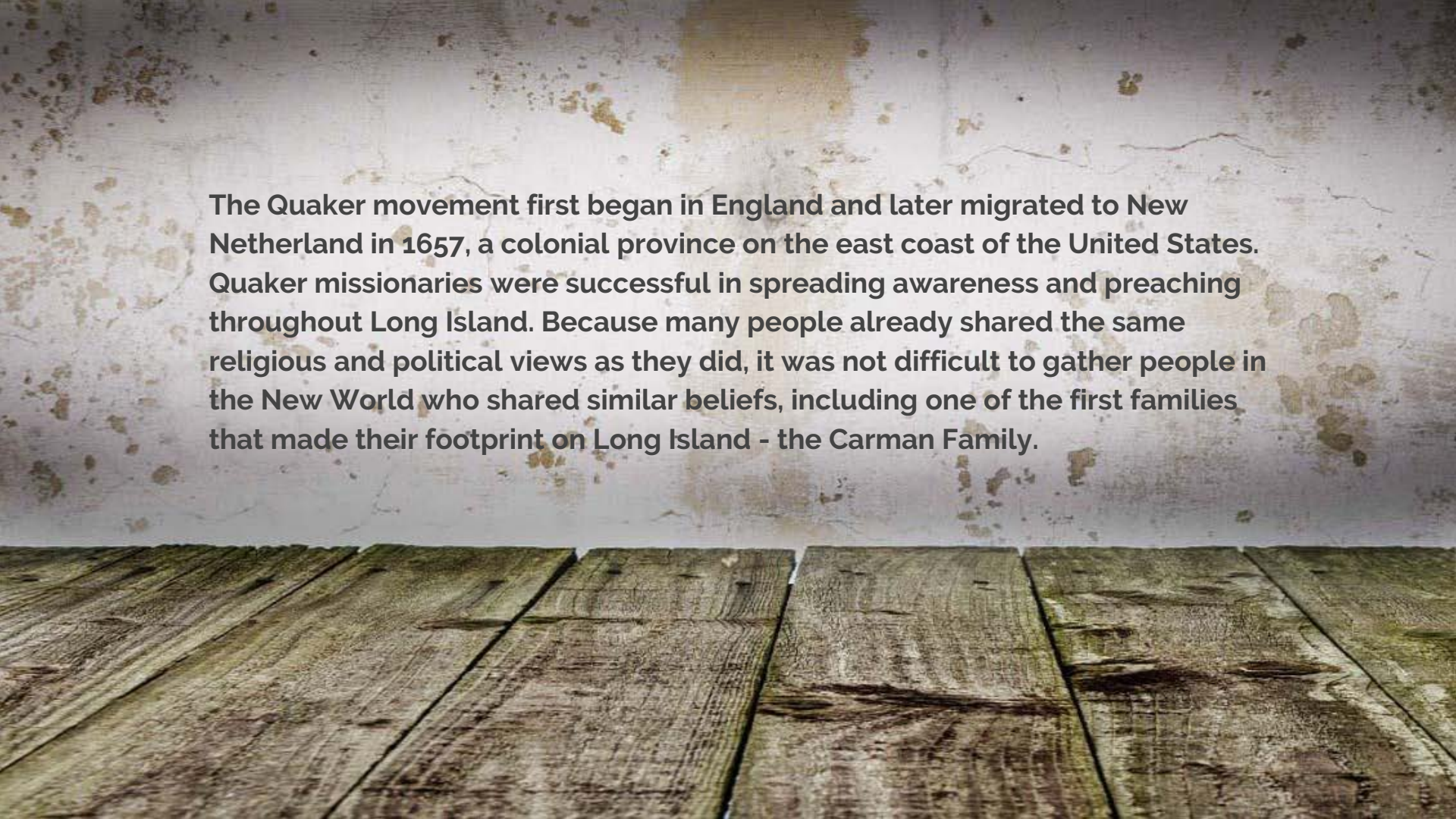
GEORGE FOX  
BORN 1624 DIED 1690





*From Lancashire, England to the New World*





The Quaker movement first began in England and later migrated to New Netherland in 1657, a colonial province on the east coast of the United States. Quaker missionaries were successful in spreading awareness and preaching throughout Long Island. Because many people already shared the same religious and political views as they did, it was not difficult to gather people in the New World who shared similar beliefs, including one of the first families that made their footprint on Long Island - the Carman Family.

## *Ancestors of the Carman Family*

Nathan Birdsall was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1611. At the age of 21, Nathan and his father, Henry, were two of the first members of the Carman family to arrive to what was known as the New World in 1632. Both men settled in Boston, Massachusetts, for 15 years. Nathan then later made his way to Long Island where he relocated to East Hampton in 1657. Less than a decade later he moved again to Matinecock in 1666, a village located in the Town of Oyster Bay.

After Nathan relocated to Long Island, he purchased land in 1679 in the town of Jerusalem (now the hamlet of Wantagh within the Town of Hempstead.) This area is where many of his grandchildren settled and continued their lives.

Captain John Seaman is another early immigrant who arrived in America in 1630. John was born in 1603 in Essex, England, and died in 1695 in the Town of Hempstead after relocating around the Northeast for almost 20 years. He married two women throughout his life, and had a total of 16 children.

As a captain, he helped lead the voyage to America, co-operating with Captain John Winthrop, with a fleet of 10 vessels and 900 other immigrants.

Seaman landed first in Watertown, Massachusetts, but left to escape the tax conflict, after which he settled in Connecticut, and then later, Long Island.

For nearly 50 years he was one of the most influential men in the town of Hempstead.





John Garner is another descendent from a family that migrated to Jerusalem from Armagh County in Northern Ireland, in 1801. Both John Garner's and Nathan Birdsall's families formed relationships, either by intermarriage or through business relationships on Long Island. Both large families were hardworking descendants of Quaker missionaries.

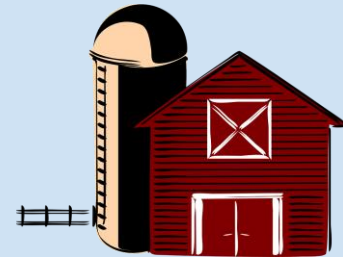


*Pictured to the left is a  
Garner Family group photo;  
**1889***

# A family of diverse backgrounds and various careers



- ☐ Farmers
- ☐ Merchant store owners
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Loyalist militia captains
- ☐ Mill operators
- ☐ Quaker ministers
- ☐ Quaker preachers
- ☐ Queens County representative in the House of Assembly
- ☐ Insurance businessmen
- ☐ Clerk of the Queens County supreme court
- ☐ Wantagh School District director



As an active family of Quakers on Long Island, the Carmans attended meetings at the local Quaker Meeting House in Jerusalem. There, members of the Society of Friends (another name for the Quakers) openly discussed religious freedom in a place to worship. Not only was the House a location for religious discussion, but it was also a place where Quaker men and women could freely pioneer equality for women in America.



One family member that attended college away from home was Caroline E. Garner.





# *Introducing Caroline Garner*

Caroline E. (Seaman) Garner was born on February 20th in 1829, and died in 1903, on May 13th. She lived most of her life in Jerusalem, NY, in Nassau County with her three siblings Ann, Mary, and Edward. After attending Sharon Boarding School, located in Sharon, Pennsylvania, she worked as a school teacher for many years. In 1852, Caroline married William Garner Sr., who was a farmer, and together Caroline and William had six children - George, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Annie, John, and William.



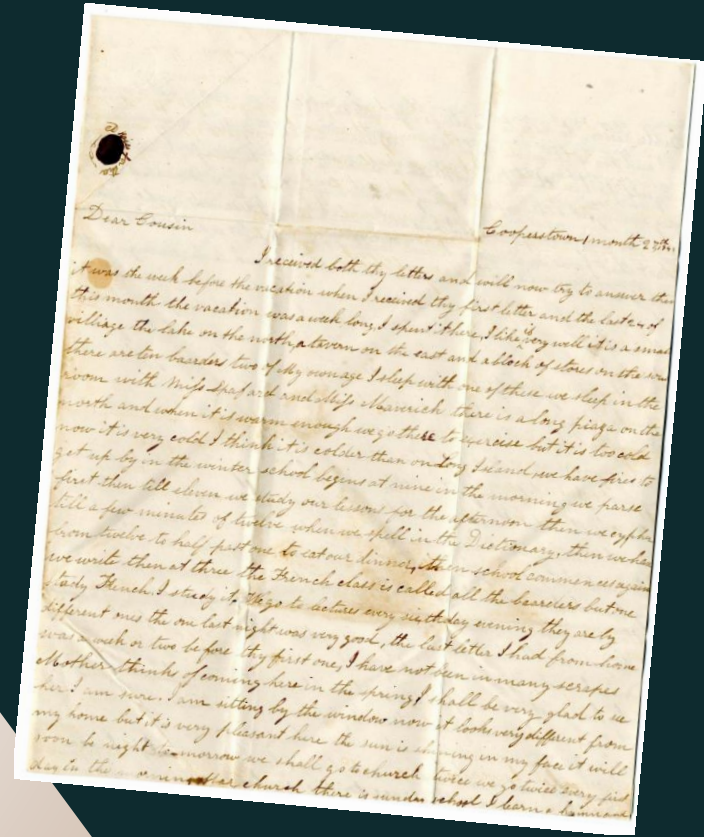
# Caroline's Education

Sharon Female Seminary was a boarding school that was first established in 1837 by two Quakers, a Minister named John Jackson and his wife Rachel, at their home in Darby, PA (now known as Sharon Hill, PA). John Jackson was a preacher, writer, land surveyor, and had a great interest in astronomy. The school's curriculum consisted of the liberal arts education of natural philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, and other various sciences, until its closing in the 1850s. During the time of the school's founding, there was an inequality between the education of young men and women, and the Jacksons strongly believed that it was important for young girls to receive an education that was equal to men's. Their passion for equality resulted in providing young woman with a learning environment to study the sciences and that also provided them with modernized and well-working equipment.



## Caroline Continued...

While Caroline was away at school in Pennsylvania, she would regularly send letters home to her family members in New York who she did not see often. Caroline would update her family, mostly her cousin Mary and her mother, on what she had been studying, the weather, asking questions about other family members, and explaining the various activities she did in her leisure time. When the weather in Sharon was warmer, she would try to get outside as much as possible to exercise and enjoy the fresh air. In the winter, she would have the fire burning to make waking up in the morning much more tolerable.





In a letter to her cousin dated January 1841, she explained her daily routine at college. Her first class would begin with a study lesson at 9 a.m. that would last until 11 a.m. She would then go to another lesson where she would learn how to spell from the dictionary, and following that would be her lunch break. After eating, she would attend her French class until 3 in the afternoon. Caroline's free time consisted of writing by her window, opening up mail she received from her family, writing poetry, and attending church.

### *The Watcher.*

*She wandered on the starlit shore,  
How Louis' bark was gone—  
Purchance he might return no more,  
But still she wandered on.*

*She dashed a tear-drop from her eye  
Escayed a hopeful smile;  
Her smile return, she said,— and I  
Will cheerful wait the while.*

*Once more she wandered on the beach  
'Twas said she loved to roam,—  
She gazed as far as eye could reach,  
But still he came not home.*

*She came no more; her wailing hope  
Sought refuge in the grave;  
She knew not that his vows he broke  
Beyond the cruel wave.*

1843

### *The Beach Party.*

*Our hearts were full of glee,  
Now were a clouded brow,  
The waves dashed madly  
Upon the vessel's prow.*

*Ah! it was thy tone  
That made the scene so gay;  
Dead when that charmer was gone  
Its light had passed away.*

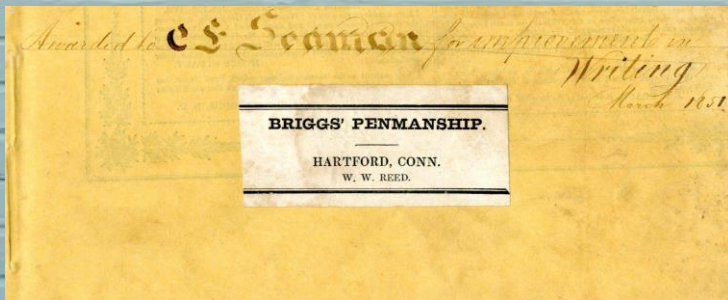
*To us from my heart  
The voice of hope will flee—  
Whispering "Is time or part,  
My song is done for thee."*

1844



Farmington fundamental fancifully fermentation um  
 Generalization germantown geometrically grammarian  
 Humiliation hymnally hiptophyllous hammerman  
 Innocently immense indetermination inconsistently in

Caroline was a hardworking student with a determined mindset during her education at Sharon Boarding School. Her teachers and professors believed her work performance was well over satisfactory and that she was a wonderful student. Sharon Boarding School was well known for its academic excellence and was a place where Caroline clearly was able to fit in, pursue her education, and stay loyal to her academic studies.



Statement of the progress in study, the conduct, &c. of  
*Caroline E. Seaman*  
 in Sharon Boarding School, for the 11 weeks, ending  
 3<sup>rd</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> mo. 18 44

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|                            |                                                |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Number of lessons recited, | 105                                            |
| Excellent,                 | 395                                            |
| Good,                      | 9                                              |
| Indifferent,               | 1                                              |
| Missed,                    | 6                                              |
| Application to study,      | Very Diligent                                  |
| General deportment,        | Watchful                                       |
| Success in examination,    | Very Satisfactory                              |
| Class of order,            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> place in 1 <sup>st</sup> Class |

JOHN JACKSON.

*Caroline merits approbation for the  
 active employment of her future time*

During the 18th century, educational institutions around the Philadelphia area (where Sharon was located) were among the most advanced technological institutions in the country - the Sharon Boarding School being one of them. The school was able to obtain an observatory, as well as a telescope that was imported from Munich, Germany. This was a major advancement in the school's resources at the time. After its closing, the school's property was purchased by a Reverend in 1867, who transformed the school into the Holy Child Academy.



# *Their Determined Path to Ideas*

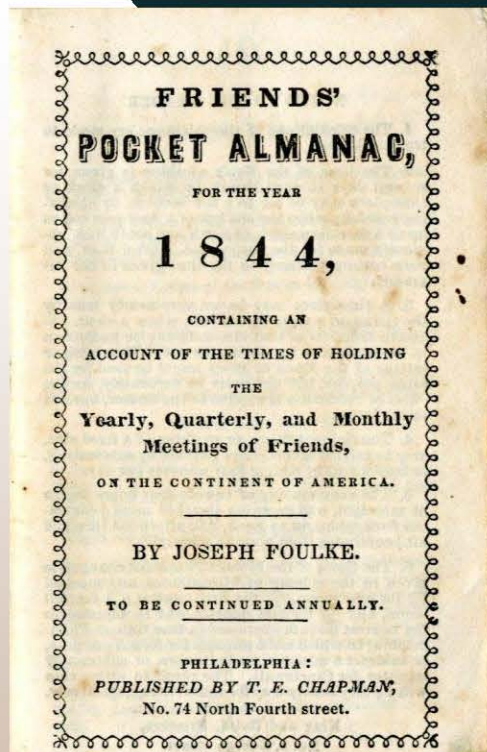
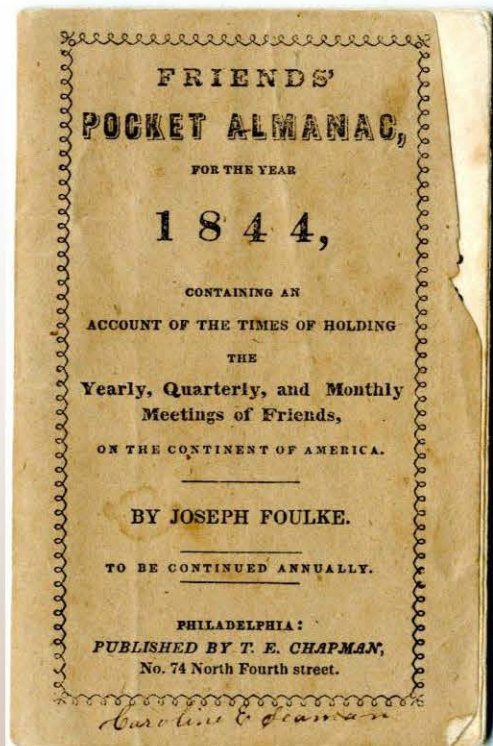
It is often documented that Quakerism was a strong spark to many ideas that influenced and changed the society that we live in today. Quaker missionaries were not only advocates and enthusiasts of spreading certain religious beliefs, but they also had beliefs in other areas that paved a path for trial by jury, equal rights for men and women, public education, and much more.

## **Fun fact!**

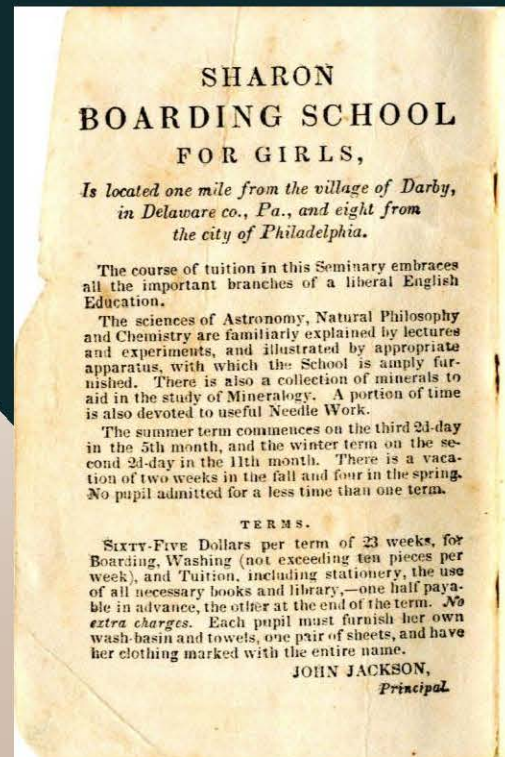
Even though a greater portion of the ministers during the Quaker movement were men, women also took great pleasure in serving as ministers. With a strong belief that the Inner Light of God resides within all men and women, they believed that ministers had a “special gift in the ministry” and greatly enjoyed preaching, as well as teaching.







Pictured above is the cover and the two following pages of Caroline's Friends' Almanac from Sharon; 1844





# *Flushing Meeting House*



It is commonly believed that Quakers are no longer active today, and people often correlate their relevance to the movement's history in the past; however, that assumption is incorrect. Meeting Houses on Long Island still exist today and serve the same purposes as they once did hundreds of years ago. They might not have the same influence as they once did, but these Houses still stand as places where men and women can attend meetings for worship every Sunday. Above are photographs of the Flushing Meeting House from 1695 and today.

The town of Flushing was settled by New Englanders and the Flushing Meeting House is the oldest Quaker meeting house on Long Island:

- ❑ Property was purchased in 1692
- ❑ Building arranged in 1693
- ❑ First Quarterly meeting held in 1694
- ❑ Members are believers in peace and social equality
- ❑ Today there are around 40 members that attend regularly

## FLUSHING MONTHLY MEETING of the Religious Society of Friends

137-16 Northern Boulevard  
Flushing, New York 11373  
718-358-9636

**Dear Visitor: We have a new website! Please click below to visit**

**[www.flushingfriends.org](http://www.flushingfriends.org)**

**And welcome!**

**Announcements and Calendar  
of Events**



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[About Friends  
\(Quakers\)](#)

[History of Flushing  
Meeting](#)

[The Flushing](#)

[Meetings for Worship:](#)

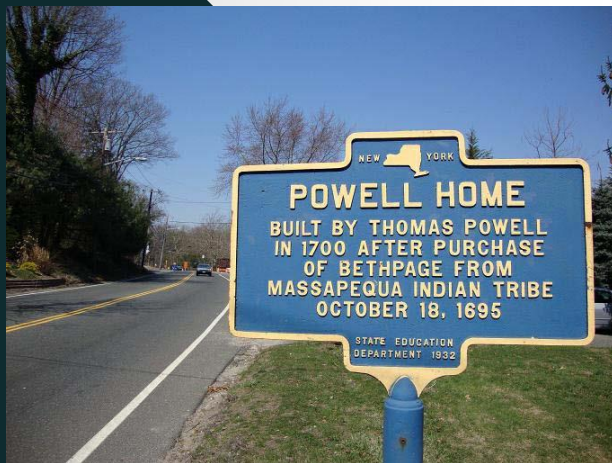
First Day (Sunday) 11:00 A.M.

Business Meeting second First Day (Sunday) of the month at 12:30 P.M.

# BETHPAGE

Another family member within the Carman Family is Thomas Powell. Thomas was born in 1640 and died on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1721. Both of his parents were Puritan Quakers who were involved in leading groups with a Reverend to settle in the New Haven Colony (present day New Haven, Connecticut).

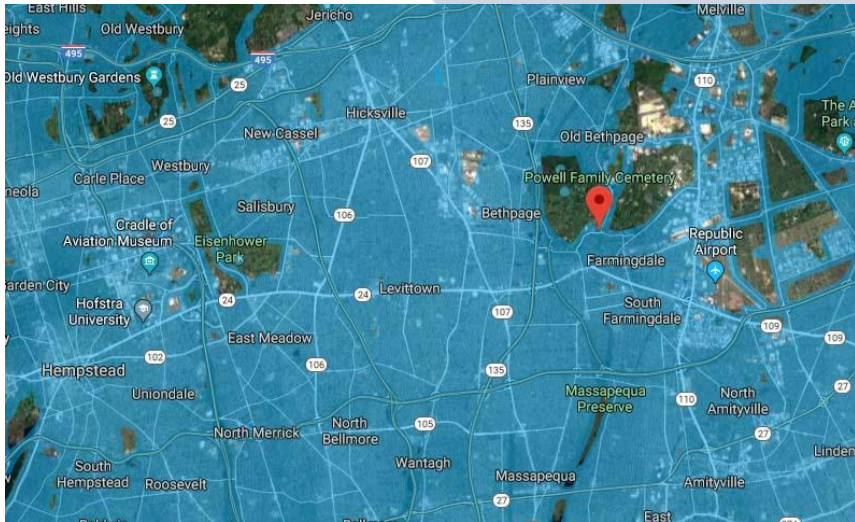
In the late 1690s, Powell purchased land from a local Native American tribe, naming the area after the Biblical town of *Bethphage* (which was located between the towns of Jericho and Jerusalem, in the Holy Land.) Over time, the second H was dropped, spelling it Bethpage, as we currently know it.



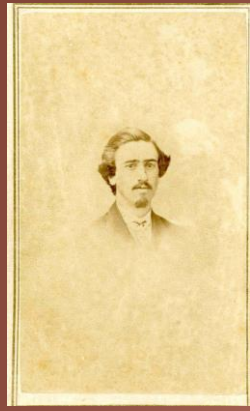


# History of the Powell Cemetery

The Powell Cemetery is located on Round Swamp Road in Farmingdale, NY. It is named after the many members of the Powell family that have been buried there and had helped evolve and develop the Farmingdale community. It is also located near by the Farmingdale Meeting House.



## *In Conclusion...*



The Carman Family has made a notable impact on the development and the creation of the Long Island community and its transformation over time. From when the first members of the family settled in the New World, progressing to the establishments of public schools for women, and moving forward to the present day, the family has aided in creating, spreading, and implementing landmarks in the area. The Friends Society that started out as an idea, spread to many other nations and has benefited a large variety of people. There are many sites throughout Long Island that are open to the public that offer more information about the Carman Family.