

Hubbard, Jeremiah ^[1]

Hubbard, Jeremiah

by Algie I. Newlin, 1988

13 Feb. 1777–23 Nov. 1849

Jeremiah Hubbard, educator and [Quaker](#) ^[2] leader, was born in Mecklenburg County, Va., the son of Joseph and Ann Crews Hubbard. He was the grandson of Hardiman Crews and his Indian wife, whose name has not been found. On several occasions tradition has depicted her as a [Cherokee](#) ^[3], but according to one reference she was a "daughter of the 'Dochees' "—"Dochee" (or related spellings) is said to be the name of an ancient or mythical Indian tribe of the Virginia [backcountry](#) ^[4]. She could have been from one of the small tribes of the Sioux family that inhabited the south central section of Virginia. In adulthood Jeremiah exhibited several characteristics that prompted his classification as Indian, and he and his four brothers were often referred to as "the big Cherokee boys." Hubbard "was tall, erect and straight as an arrow, being six feet two or three inches in height"; "he had a dark swarthy complexion, keen black eyes, high cheek bones, hair straight and black as coal, a large mouth and firm lips." With these features, he must have made an impressive picture as he presided over the large annual gathering of North Carolina Quakers in their spacious meeting house at New Garden. And he must have inspired the respect and awe of his pupils as he directed their intellectual training in the schoolrooms in Orange and Guilford counties and in Indiana.

Soon after the Revolutionary War, Joseph Hubbard moved his family to [Person County](#) ^[5]. It seems likely that he settled on the upper waters of Richland Creek, just south of the present town of Roxboro. Little is known of Jeremiah or his family during his childhood. Late in life he paid high tribute to his half-breed Indian mother for the care, discipline, and guidance she gave him. No reference has been found to his ever having attended school, although at the height of his career he was referred to as one of the most eminent teachers and most learned persons among the North Carolina Quakers.

In 1802 Hubbard married Margaret Butler in Dinwiddie County, Va. Between the time of their marriage and 1810 they moved from Person County to Hillsborough in [Orange County](#) ^[6], and in 1815 they moved to the Deep River community near Jamestown. On 15 May 1820, Margaret Hubbard died, leaving Jeremiah with eight children ranging from four to seventeen years. On 9 Oct. 1821, he married Martha Charles of Charles City County, Va.

Hubbard is remembered primarily as a leader in education, despite the fact that he had little if any formal training. He is known to have taught in two schools in [Guilford County](#) ^[7], and it is assumed that he taught while living in [Person](#) ^[5] and [Orange](#) ^[6] counties. While residing in the Deep River community, he became generally recognized as an outstanding leader of the Quakers in North Carolina. As presiding clerk of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends for sixteen years, he vigorously campaigned for the establishment of a Quaker-supported boarding school to train teachers, other Quaker leaders, and members of the general public. In this effort he was joined by [Nathan Hunt](#) ^[8], who became known as the principal founder of the New Garden Boarding School (later [Guilford College](#) ^[9]). Although the work of these two leaders was made more difficult by the economic depression of 1837, the response to their strong and extended appeal was sufficient to enable the Society of Friends to acquire a suitable tract of land, erect an adequate building, and launch the school upon its long history.

In February 1837, only a few months before the opening of the long-awaited New Garden Boarding School, Hubbard and his family succumbed to "Western fever" and migrated to Indiana. Jeremiah was well equipped for leadership in the rapidly developing society of that section of the country. There he continued his dual roles as outstanding teacher and minister of the Society of Friends. He was an excellent speaker, well informed, and energetic.

It is not known whether Hubbard ever sought political office, but he did take a firm stand on the burning issues of his time. He opposed slavery and joined the [Manumission Society](#) ^[10] to work for gradual emancipation. In view of his Indian blood, he would have been expected to support efforts to protect the lives and rights of the exploited Indians. When Chief Ross and a few others from the Cherokee Nation went to Washington, D.C., to appeal to President [Andrew Jackson](#) ^[11], they stopped at New Garden to ask Hubbard to go with them. They were aware of his Indian ancestry and knew that he was a friend of the president. One Sunday morning after worship, the Cherokees conferred with some of the prominent Quakers present in front of the New Garden Meeting House. As a result of this conference, Hubbard agreed to accompany them to Washington. There followed an unparalleled scene—the presiding clerk of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends riding out with a band of Indians, with whom he was united in blood, personal appearance, and sympathy, to seek assistance from the president of the United States. It is said that they obtained Jackson's support for a treaty that would prevent the sale of alcoholic beverages to the Cherokees.

Hubbard died in Richmond, Ind.

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