

## **Courtyard**

The courtyard, located between Flounder House and the Education Building, serves as the Royal Street entrance space of the Meeting House churchyard. It assumed its current configuration, with two major components — a brick-paved reception area and a play area covered with wooden chips — in 1993. During the school year this entire space is charged with the energetic buzz of children from the Meeting House Co-operative Preschool whenever the children receive "outdoor time".

From the time that the Flounder House was constructed in 1787 until the Education Building was erected in 1957, this space served as the yard of the parsonage and was enclosed by a white picket fence on its Royal Street side — the current red brick wall was installed in 1932 — and a wooden fence on its east side separating it from the burial ground. When it served as a yard for the parsonage, this space accommodated all sorts of out-of-door functions associated with household economies during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, including the drying of the week's laundry (depicted in the photograph of Flounder House during the 1920s); providing a household garden — Rev. Muir notes in his 1805 diary that he planted corn here (Muir 2009); space for a family cow; and a privy. It was a private space serving residents of Flounder House.

It was not until the re-establishment of a permanent congregation at the Meeting House in 1949 that this space came to be transformed from the private yard of Flounder House into its current uses. In 1952, a walkway was installed that connected the Royal and Fairfax sides of the churchyard for the first time — it passed to the south side of the Meeting House. This brick walkway included a walk to the steps of Flounder House, which had just been restored and renovated into offices. Adjustments to these churchyard walkways were made when the Education Building was erected in 1957 and again in the 1990s.

When a weekday kindergarten program for four and five year olds was established in Flounder House in 1954, a demand for outdoor recreation space emerged, and portions of the courtyard were given over to a play area. Subsequent alterations included erection of the "Little House" in 1975, which was attached to the west end of Flounder House as a creative play space of its own and is now used to store play equipment. The Little House honored Phaedra Ann Lewis, young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. Ray Lewis; Ruth Lockwood, long-term leader in the kindergarten and day-care programs; and Oliver N. Maechtle, late husband of Louise Maechtle, who established the kindergarten program. Minor reconfigurations of the courtyard space ensued until it was divided into separate brick-paved reception and play areas in 1993.