Friends in Deed

THE STORY OF QUAKER SOCIAL REFORM IN AMERICA

SUSAN SACHS GOLDMAN

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March 2013

Highmark Press

Highmark Press
ISBN: 978-0-615-58957-2

Front cover image: Edward Hicks (American, 1780–1849) *Peaceable Kingdom*, c. 1834. Gift of Edward William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington

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INTERIOR DESIGN: Judith Arisman, Arisman Design Studio

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This book was printed in the United States on 100% recycled paper.

For my mother, Betty Sachs, whose dedication to lifelong learning has been an abiding inspiration

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Foreword

In the research, scholarship, and writing of *Friends in Deed*, Susan Sachs Goldman has made a substantive, insightful, and transformative contribution to those Americans and others interested in understanding much more clearly and deeply the major contributions of both early and contemporary Friends to the evolving political, cultural, and moral fabric of the United States. Her authorship skillfully traces that impact from the late 1600s to the beginning edges of the twenty-first century. Susan Goldman was inspired by the experience of her three children at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC, where she served, as well, as the Clerk of the Board of Trustees. Her virtual daily and in-depth exposure to Quaker values, testimonies, and practices—from the joint perspective of parent and trustee—

gave the author a great respect for and fascination with the roots and legacy of the Religious Society of Friends. Her time and service readily revealed to her Quakerism's truly inordinate impact upon education and service, and her own long-standing immersion in Friends history led her to uncover how the faith's tenets have so widely shaped America as it grew from colonial infancy to nationhood and then to become a significant world power.

Perhaps the most striking phenomenon is how little is understood by most in the United States—even today—about the pervasive sway of the Religious Society of Friends on the evolution of American values and culture. For three and a half centuries or so, while very modest in total numbers and largely hidden from public focus, American Quakers have had a continuing impact on the evolving political and social fabric of their nation. They have been persistent advocates for peace and societal equity, deeply concerned about the humane and caring treatment of those most in need, and were early initiators in promoting relief, justice, and equality for the nation's most marginalized people. In this book, one finds ample evidence of the Quakers' influence on all the major social movements in our history: making continuing efforts toward positive and responsible relations with Native Americans; mitigating and then eliminating slavery; advancing women's rights; advocating pacifism and kindred nonviolent solutions to human problems; standing with African Americans in their quest for dignity and equality; honoring a broad and active commitment to civil rights and liberties for all; advocating for religious freedom; supporting quality education

and thoughtful scientific inquiry; promoting prison reform where punishment was thought to be secondary to rehabilitation; providing leadership in seeking sound care for the mentally ill and clear advocacy for the elderly, the young, and immigrants; and aiding the poor and the struggling of all sorts—here and abroad, "enemy" as well as friend.

These passions and actions have been distinctive in and of themselves, but perhaps all the more so because the faith of Friends did and does emphasize humility and commitment to act on principle without calling attention to one's self, group, or organization. As a Quaker, you must not simply hold values; you have the obligation to live them by "letting your life speak." Surely what you do speaks so loudly that what you say has vastly less relevance and consequence. Be who you are in the time and place in which you live, learn, love, and serve, and do that without concern for which individual or institution receives the credit or focus. Your objective as a Friend is to deepen and enrich lives so that justice and equity become the norms for all and not the sole benefit of a privileged few. The satisfaction is in the lifting up of all of humanity—"all of God's children"—and not in the aggrandizement of a particular self, sect, or society. This conduct, when fully grasped and understood, leads to a life of service and humility and to a graciousness to God and community well beyond self and self-interest. It is perhaps why Friends have been able to have this effect beyond their limited number, nominal social position, and somewhat constrained power and wealth.

The real power of Goldman's scholarship, from my vantage point, is that it was not written by a Friend, nor was

it actively requested or supported by any Quaker group or organization. Indeed, Susan Goldman was often questioned as to why she would undertake such a project by many of the Quakers she approached for perspective and underlying philosophy. Their sense was that good works and service were the point and not the chronicling or the giving of credit or praise. My spirit is much in that spirit, but I must say that I am concerned that the world we currently live in does not have nearly enough servants of the good and the just. I am writing this commentary for one purpose (beyond my respect for a wonderful parent and friend), and that is to see if expansive reading of this Quaker legacy of social action—in the service of all of humanity—can possibly do anything to expand the awareness of it and to bring more and more young people (and others) to the table of selfless human service. Our world is in great need of more equity and justice, and it is people and people only who can ultimately bring these values forward. We must lead more of humanity "to the Light," and how better to do that than through education and exposure to objective and unbiased scholarship? It is my aspiration to see that every Friends school and college, every Quaker Meeting for Worship, and every Quaker organization, such as the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and the Friends Council on Education (FCE), calls this informative book to the attention of those they serve. Perhaps if more people become aware of the work of Friends—and of those with whom they happily share their efforts—we can all revel in the satisfaction of a more just and equitable planet.

When you have finished with this excellent volume, pass it on to another; if you run a school, add it to your recommended reading list; if you are a member or an affiliate with a Friends organization, suggest the distribution of this work to your full constituency; and if you are connected with a Quaker community of worship, consider this thoughtful and informative piece as a reading for your fellowship. Additionally, I hope large numbers of non-Friends will come to know and appreciate the great significance of Quaker contributions to American and world culture through the power of this scholarship. The message of the work is a truly universal one, and it needs to be broadly understood, widely promoted, and eternally preserved.

Susan Sachs Goldman has given the world a gift by offering this solid piece of historical narrative for our exploration, reflection, contemplation, and action. Its message could well do a great deal to promote compassion and constructive conscience—not only in America but in virtually every corner of our shared globe. What a grand and gracious gift from a true friend of Friends!

Bruce B. Stewart
Retired Head, Sidwell Friends School
Washington, DC, July 15, 2011

Acknowledgments

As a member of another small religious minority that prizes social justice and has prevailed in the face of persecution, I have found a natural affinity for Quakers and their extraordinary record of social action in America. The modesty and humility demonstrated by Friends all over the world has meant that this inspirational story has not been fully shared with the rest of us.

I am indebted on many levels to the Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC. Entrusting the education of my three children to the capable and compassionate hands of the teachers at this school was a decision rich with rewards for them and for me. The examples offered them of service, respect for all, and academic excellence have remained with

them into adulthood. Bruce B. Stewart, Head of School from 1998 to 2009, became a dear friend and confidant and demonstrated for me again and again what it means to live one's life according to Friends values of compassion and generosity. Ellis Turner, Associate Head of School and history teacher extraordinaire, has been a friend and mentor throughout the years of labor on this book; his good humor and historical expertise have aided me in ways both personal and professional.

I am profoundly grateful to the individuals and the institution of the Board of Trustees of Sidwell Friends, on which I served for eleven years, three of them as Clerk. A more gifted, dedicated, and talented group of people I have not encountered before or since. As a trustee, I learned about Quaker values and process at the knees of masters, particularly Marion Scattergood Ballard, Ralph C. Bryant, Porter G. Dawson, Earl G. Harrison Jr., David Kendall, and Robert L. Smith.

My children, Alice Goldman Reiter, William Sachs Goldman, and Daniel Sachs Goldman, have provided me, as always, with the emotional ballast I needed through years of often solitary effort. Their encouragement has been personally sustaining. My son Bill, who is a professor of history, generously and consistently offered insightful professional advice and support. His pleasure in turning the tables on who edits whom is eclipsed by my own pride in his expertise and gratitude for his wise counsel.

I am personally and professionally indebted to Candy Lee, for her generosity, encouragement, and astute guidance throughout the course of writing this book, from the first spark of

an idea to fine details of publication. I am also grateful to Max Carter of Guilford College, who inspired me early on with his authentic Quaker ways and devotion to peace studies. I have benefited, too, from the wisdom and knowledge of academics from all over the country, most especially Jon Butler, Thomas Hamm, Rebecca Larson, and Jean Soderlund. This effort began as a documentary film, and the filmmaker with whom I worked, Daniel B. Polin, helped me begin to learn to focus my intellect and use my imagination. I am indebted to librarians at various Quaker institutions: Chris Densmore, Curator of the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College; Ann Upton, Quaker Bibliographer and Special Collections Librarian, and Diana Franzusoff Peterson, Manuscripts Librarian and College Archivist, at Haverford College; and Loren Ito Hardenbergh, Sidwell Friends School Archivist. I greatly enjoyed a picturesque and informative tour of meetinghouses in the counties surrounding Philadelphia with my excellent guide, historian and educator William Kashatus. Pat Harris' good judgment and sharp eye enhanced the accuracy and eliminated inconsistencies in the final text, and my technological challenges were mitigated by the patience and skill of Budge Harvey. *Friends in Deed* is much the better for the contributions of all of these people; any errors are my own.

As I have researched this book, I have had the good fortune of meeting hundreds of Quakers around the country. They, along with the many thousands who have toiled for more than three hundred years to make this world more equal and just, have inspired me to tell this story so

that more of us can understand and appreciate the singular contribution of Friends to the social and ethical fabric of this nation. We are all beholden to their compassion and commitment.

I

INTRODUCTION

1

The Friendly Persuasion

In his iconic painting *Peaceable Kingdom,* circa 1834, reproduced on the cover of this book, Edward Hicks depicts a scene described in Isaiah 11:6–9, cherished by Quakers then and now for its message of peace:

> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Between 1820 and 1846, Hicks, a Quaker preacher in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, painted nearly a hundred versions of this scene. He frequently included a cameo in the background representing William Penn respectfully treating with the Delaware Indians under the Shackamaxon

Elm, borrowed from a scene in a much earlier painting by another Quaker artist, Benjamin West. Hicks' painting portrays a utopian world of peaceful fellowship among human beings and animals, an iconic representation of a subject venerated by Friends' universal belief in equality and the achievable realization of peace on earth.

Most Americans probably associate Quakers with the smiling man in the broad-brimmed hat on the Quaker Oats box; some might be able to recall high school history class references to William Penn and early Philadelphia. But very few of us are likely to appreciate the extraordinary contributions that Friends have made to the settlement, government, conscience, and spirit of America.

Since their arrival in the New World in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Quakers have played a disproportionately influential role in this nation's social struggles. Grounded in their spiritual beliefs, the earliest Quaker settlers brought with them concepts of religious liberty, racial and gender equality, nonviolent conflict resolution, and strong moral concerns for just treatment of Native Americans, African Americans, the poor, and the insane.

William Penn's First Frame of Government, which established his "Holy Experiment" in the New World, embodied many of these beliefs and anticipated enlightened practices of later state and federal governments. It created a standard of religious toleration unique in the colonies and unmatched in the world at that time. The Frame guaranteed all Pennsylvania inhabitants a trial by jury, greatly reduced the punishment for serious crimes, transformed inhumane prisons into workhouses, and cre-

ated a group of arbitrators or peacemakers to settle disputes outside of legal formalities. For Penn and his Quaker colonists, the Holy Experiment was the first self-conscious effort to create a Quaker community that would embody religious principles and take them into practice in the public arena.

For 350 years, members of the Religious Society of Friends, although few in number, have been outspoken advocates for peace and social justice and have worked persistently to encourage humane and equal treatment of those in need. Quaker pacifists dissented during the French and Indian War and have continued into this century to seek nonviolent alternatives to social and political conflicts. Friends were early initiators of efforts to bring relief and equality to the disadvantaged. Quaker women, treated as equals within the Society of Friends, were among the earliest and most fervent pioneers struggling for women's rights in America. Friends were organizers and active participants in the Underground Railroad, and in the twentieth century they continued to march in the vanguard of the civil rights movement. Through vigorous relief organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, they have effectively carried their advocacy for equality and justice to the far corners of the earth. Despite their small numbers, they have had a disproportionate influence on all the social issues of our history. Friends have long labored to persuade the public at large to embrace their fervent promotion of social justice, and they have done so because they believe in a religious calling to work toward a world of equals in which violence and suffering have no place.

To be sure, their persistent social advocacy has often made them unpopular among their contemporaries outside of the Religious Society of Friends. They have been vilified for their efforts against slavery and on behalf of women's rights. They have endured attacks on their patriotism when they have espoused nonviolence during wartime. Friends have persisted, nonetheless, and remarkably, their positions are now part of our national agenda. Because of the influence of Quakers, our view of ourselves as Americans is immeasurably altered. Whether we realize it or not, Americans of the twenty-first century are a different people because Quaker beliefs and action have profoundly informed who we are and how we live.

People of the Light

The Quaker movement erupted in the north of England out of the social and religious ferment of the mid-seventeenth century. Amidst the maelstrom of the Puritan revolution, Quakers sprang up alongside Diggers, Ranters, Levellers, and Seekers, all of whom shared some combination of unorthodox religious and utopian ideas. In the 1650s, an itinerant mystic, George Fox, gathered together a group of "Friends" for whom the essential Truth in their belief was the indwelling Spirit of God; that this spirit, or "Inner Light," lived within each person; and that each person was capable of seeking and finding that Light within himself. This was an intensely experiential Christianity. For Fox and his followers, worship of God did not require an intermediary minister or priest. They practiced a form of silent, unprogrammed worship (that is, without a min-

ister) in which members sat quietly within a community of believers and searched diligently for that direct experience of God's Light.

Originally Puritans, Fox's followers were persecuted by Charles I for disrupting religious services and for rejecting all oaths and tithes. But early Quakers were alienated in the 1650s by persecution from the more conservative Cromwellian Puritans for many of the same objectionable practices, as well as refusal to recognize rank or to fight with Commonwealth troops. The frequent imprisonments and accompanying hardships endured by Quakers during the tumultuous English Civil War tested them in unforeseen ways. They were widely persecuted—religiously, politically, and physically. At first, they were beaten and stoned because they were Puritans, and after the break with Cromwell, they were imprisoned and deprived of political rights because they were not. Under the Commonwealth, Quakers were jailed for refusing tithes or oaths, specific acts of blasphemy, contempt of court, or disturbing the peace (because of the early Quakers' inclination to interrupt worship services of other religious groups). But after the Restoration of Charles II, the environment became grimmer still, as Friends' worship itself was banned, an infraction that incurred imprisonment or excessive fines. Between 1663 and 1668, thousands of Quakers were jailed, beaten, and tortured. George Fox was imprisoned almost constantly from 1663 to 1668, and at least 500 Quakers died in prison during these years. Without question, these persecutions, physical and otherwise, contributed to the growth of the stalwart sect, whose steadfastness underscored the

sincerity of their beliefs and attracted converts, and ultimately encouraged their emigration to the New World.

In response to these privations, a robust support network arose quickly within the Quaker community. Friends such as Margaret Fell provided food and succor to Quakers incarcerated in damp dungeons, cared for their families, and offered respite in various safe houses to aid their recuperation from their sufferings; her own estate of Swarthmoor became one such retreat. The situation was still more intimidating in the New World, where Puritans in Massachusetts used even more draconian methods to suppress the Quakers than had the Restoration Parliament. Friends endured horrendous suffering in England, but only in Massachusetts were they executed for their beliefs.

Their early maltreatment in England and the New World had rendered many of them poor, imprisoned, hungry, and perhaps on the verge of insanity. Having survived these early hardships, and accustomed to attending to the sufferings of their own, Friends developed a "tender concern for one another" and encouraged a tradition of mutual support. Among their first efforts in the New World was the establishment of almshouses to aid those Friends most in need.

Even the nature of their silent meetings underscored their sensitivity to suffering. The silent worship was highly conducive to probing introspection because the absence of distraction encouraged the worshipper to delve into the recesses of his heart as it opened to feel the promptings of the Inner Light. Not surprisingly, their own experience gave Quakers an exceptional compassion toward others,

which, together with their religious commitment to ameliorate the harsh inequities of the world, pushed them to action.

Salient examples of Quaker efforts to promote equality include their history of fair relations with Native Americans, the antislavery crusade, and the women's rights movement. Interestingly, while their tactics for the most part deemphasized office holding, private and public Quaker concerns for equality and disproportionate activity and leadership in the political arena were manifest. Over three centuries, they have insistently reached out to those in need, mediated, educated, agitated, and organized a variety of peaceful protests in order to persuade the wider community of the validity and worthiness of their objectives. Their successes as well as their methods have contributed enormously to the political and social perspectives of all Americans.

The nature and thrust of Quaker efforts to bring justice to the world have changed over time. Directly upon settlement in the New World, Friends set about righting society's inequities. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, their outspoken efforts at amelioration were largely "personal," in the sense that each Friend sought to reduce suffering within his own sphere. For example, Quaker governors of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and North Carolina sought to promote official peace with the Native Americans, and the early settlers used their own methods of individual kindness and fairness in treating inequities in their own particular vicinities. They strove to abide by their religious credo that it is the responsibility of each man

and woman to work as he or she can to improve the lives of those who receive unfair treatment. We will see that as the centuries progressed, other kinds of undertakings were added to the arsenal of peaceful efforts to promote social justice, and the outreach of Quaker reform and relief efforts expanded in both depth and breadth.

Quakers and Puritans harbored theological differences as well. Friends departed from Puritan belief in many ways. The immediacy and experiential quality of their search for the Light Within differed dramatically from the Puritan emphasis on predestination. Quakers rejected the wrathful, inscrutable God of the Puritans; instead, they were ardent perfectionists, believing that the Light within each of us brings the means for salvation to everyone who is awake to its existence. Unlike Puritans, they exhibited hostility to formal doctrine and never required obeisance to a particular creed. Contrary to Puritan angst over salvation and predilection toward doom, Quaker theology conveyed a sense of optimism about the world to come.

Quaker beliefs were and are embedded in a series of testimonies, practical expressions of three fundamental principles: equality, simplicity, and peace. The Testimony of Equality is perhaps the most fundamental. It informed Quaker attitudes toward gender, race, and class: if all men and women were equal in God's sight, it followed that all must be treated as equals on the earth. If all men and women were not equal, there was no hope for social justice. This principle lay behind the use of "plain language"—the use of the pronoun "thou" replacing the pronoun "you," which in the seventeenth century connoted social superior-

ity on the part of the speaker. Similarly, Friends eschewed flattering titles of address, all bowing and scraping, and the "hat honor"—doffing one's hat in the presence of superiors.

The Testimony of Simplicity required not only plain dress and speech but also plain living and simple integrity in all human relationships. Ostentation, useless ornamentation, and creature comforts were frowned upon. Quakers refused to take oaths because the practice implied a double standard of truth-telling. Quaker merchants set fixed prices and refused to negotiate, believing that the insincerity inherent in haggling demonstrated deceitfulness.

"Dwelling in the Light takes away the occasion of wars, and gathers our hearts together to God, and unto one another, and brings to the beginning, before wars were."[1] So wrote George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, and so began the Peace Testimony. Friends refused military service and removed themselves from all violent methods of social control and social change. Their Peace Testimony extended to include prison reform and the care of the mentally ill, where they pioneered nonviolent methods of treatment and rehabilitation. The brutality of the slave system violated the Peace Testimony, as did religious intolerance.

In England and America, Friends had no priesthood or official pastors. They eschewed a standard liturgy, preferring to wait and prepare in silence for the Light of God to become manifest in each worshipper. Quakers believed that the sacraments were purely spiritual, and therefore they did not take physical communion or undergo baptism, believing that the only true communion was the commu-

nity of worshippers who joined in the silent seeking of personally revealed Truth. Worship within this community sought a balance between the desires and leanings of the individual and the welfare of the community. Individuals, upon discerning an issue of personal significance, could move forward only within the unity of the meeting; the communal body could thereby limit or influence individual action and establish a common responsibility for any action. So crucial is the idea of the wisdom of this unity that Quakers do not take decisions by vote; instead they rely on the Truth to be discovered within the fellowship of the meeting. In this way, they strive to protect the balance of the individual and the community; they act only when they discern approval by a "sense of the meeting."

Friends further espoused a spiritual equality that countered the strict social conventions of seventeenth-century England.[2] Contrary to the Calvinist hierarchy, which established the preordained "elect" among believers, each Friend—man and woman—was capable of perfectibility, of seeking direct revelation of God's Truth. Fox and his followers believed in the literal truth of the New Testament injunction against fighting, and thus began the highly controversial strain of pacifism within the Quaker fold. Modern Friends retain these core religious beliefs; their worship and practice reflect their origins and distinguish them from other sects.[3]

Early Quakers organized themselves by means of a system of local worship groups, called meetings. Over time, these groups, originally established to deal with publication of Quaker tracts and the care of those suffering

persecution, expanded their responsibilities and became well-defined units: the monthly meeting, assembling locally once or twice a week; the quarterly meeting, overseeing a larger geographic area of monthly meetings; and the yearly meeting, responsible for several quarterly meetings and the publication of annual *Disciplines* applicable to those meetings under its auspices. Meetings for Business, Meetings for Sufferings, and Women's Meetings developed as the sect grew into a movement and required organizational and social structure to support its believers. Eventually, Quakers developed what David Hackett Fischer calls a "rigorous system of collective discipline" that exercised authority over marriage, sexual relations, business ethics, speech, recreation, and law and politics.[4]

Let Your Life Speak

From the time of George Fox, Friends have believed that man is not put on this earth merely to act as an irresponsible puppet, a soul whose existence is determined by outside forces, terrestrial and spiritual. There is a purpose to life and an authority responsible for that purpose, and that ultimate authority is God. In order to discern the purpose of God, one must seek an understanding of how the world works, and how it ought to be.

The world should and must be a place where men are free in every way—physically, mentally, and spiritually. People cannot be free if they are ill clothed and hungry, or if they live in constant fear of unemployment. Nor can they choose freely when they can be bought or sold, or when by virtue of their color or gender they are denied blessings and

opportunities granted to others. Jessamyn West described succinctly the Quaker imperative to integrate spiritual belief and political action:

> Friends, therefore, believe that we must overcome poverty, disease, fear, injustice and prejudice, and that to work for these ends is part of true religion. Friends believe, in short, that religion is something that has to be put into practice. It does not mean the repetition of certain acts or forms of words, but rather a sense that once we are sure that we know at least a part of God's purpose, then we must do something about it.[5]

And because Quakers believe that "there is that of God in everyone," they believe that each of us, if free and equal, is inspired to be confident in our understanding of right and wrong, and to act on it by virtue of the human instinct to aspire to the highest goals. Friends cherish the mutual responsibility for one another. Among Quakers, writes Margaret Hope Bacon, there is no synonym for the word "concern." "To have a concern means to feel from the Holy Spirit a strong leading to take action. Quakers believe that a true concern is divinely inspired."[6] It is this faith that enables Friends to follow their concern wherever it may lead them. The goal is to take the divinely inspired message into the world of political affairs and work to resolve the wrong.

Fundamentally, then, for Quakers there is no dividing line between the religious and the secular; on the contrary, Friends have worked to create an immutable bond between religious experience and social justice. They have tried to

translate into political action these abiding concerns with tolerance, equality, and peace, struggling throughout their history to adhere to these beliefs and to persuade a larger society that often does not share them. Their concerns and their determination to address them in the civic arena have led them to advocate difficult and unpopular public positions that have elicited painful scrutiny and derogation by neighbors, countrymen, and government authorities alike.

A Peculiar People

Theirs has been the dilemma of a "peculiar people." Having determined that they must be part of this world in order to work to ameliorate its ills, Friends have found that assimilation and involvement with the world at large elicit antagonism from non-Friends and often require compromise of belief.

From the French and Indian Wars of the mid-eighteenth century to the international wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Friends have been vocal advocates for peace, often provoking retaliation because of their perceived lack of patriotism. They suffered abuse for their antislavery activities and undertook significant personal risk in support of such activities as the Underground Railroad. More recently, Quaker humanitarians have sustained great hardship in their far-flung relief efforts all over the world.

At the same time, Friends have struggled internally over differing perceptions of how they should engage in the world. They have faced painful schisms as they endeavored to find a workable balance between spiritual

integrity and social and political action. Penn's Holy Experiment ended because of such internecine tensions, and, as we shall see, Nantucket Island's extraordinary success suffered an equally spectacular decline, in part because of that community's inability to live according to its loftiest precepts of toleration and peaceful conflict resolution.

Friends' determination to live in the "real world" while abiding by their stringent religious beliefs and maintaining their historical identity as a "peculiar people" has repeatedly thrown them into disruptive internal schisms that have been very much a part of the Quaker experience in America. But it is this very distinctiveness that Friends have frequently sought as a device to achieve unity; internal differences over the right balance between assimilating into the greater society and maintaining this distinctiveness have been at the root of the fundamental differences among Quakers from very early in their history.

Indeed, the achievement of these remarkable contributions to American life and to social reform has come despite extreme and long-standing friction within the Religious Society of Friends. For a group who so prize peaceful conflict resolution, the long and unhappy history of bitter schisms within their ranks is to them a stain of failure of enormous proportions. Monthly meetings, yearly meetings, and families have split over theology, organization, faith, and practice. The view of Quakers from the outside reveals a group that has achieved a remarkable record of social reform over three centuries; the view from within, however, is far more complex. Even as Quakers have under-

taken through social activism to use persuasion to right wrongs and resolve society's inequities, they have sometimes treated one another with far less toleration.

One might well ask how it is that Quakers have made such contributions over centuries in spite of ongoing internal turmoil. This book argues that it is because the shared determination to bring benevolence and reform to the world has been a sustaining unifying element in the Quaker experience in America. The serious divisions within the Society that began in the early nineteenth century highlighted different points of view among Quakers; their increasing focus on humanitarian efforts in the midst of these conflicts was, in part, a constructive effort to find unity in devoting themselves to the universally accepted goal of seeking social justice.

Friends are generally loath to draw attention to their good works because they see these endeavors as a responsibility of living, unworthy of special praise. Consequently, their story is little known, their accomplishments largely unheralded. The following chapters will illustrate some of the extraordinary contributions made by Friends over the centuries, contributions made against a background of disappointing divisions among their own ranks and achieved despite a long and frustrating journey. Some of the actors are well known, although their religious affiliation may not be. Many are not recognized, in part because of the belief that modesty is a virtue and in part because it is typical of Quakers to take the active role as an instigator of social reform—to set the wheels turning and then stand back in order that others might take the lead—or from a sense

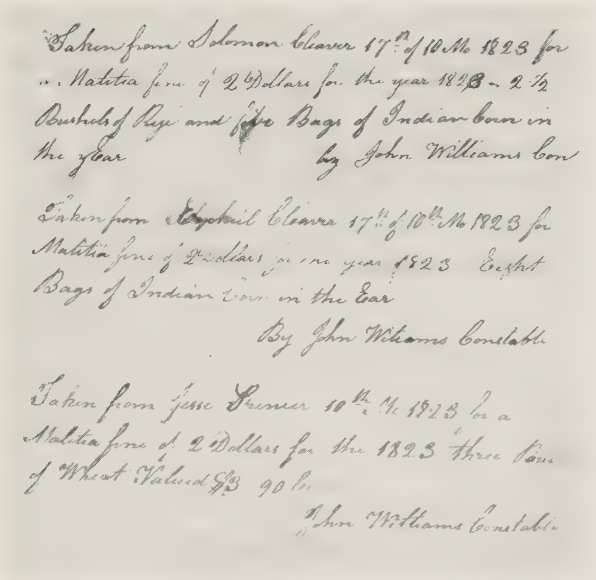
that their frequent role as "irritant" leaves them less effective front men and women than others whom they prefer to put forward.

We shall see that the story of Quakers in America is more complicated than the roster of their achievements, accomplished despite unpopularity, frustration, and disappointing examples of disunity. It is no surprise that the record of Quaker adherence to fundamental doctrines of pacifism and equality is flawed.

With few exceptions, for example, Friends resisted the pressure to sacrifice the Peace Testimony by supporting frontier wars against Indians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was in large part their refusal to fund these wars that led to the voluntary withdrawal of the Quaker majority from the Pennsylvania assembly in 1756.

Nor have Friends always acted as a monolithic entity, agitating unanimously for the same perceptions of equality and tolerance. While the Religious Society of Friends was the first religious group to call officially for an end to slavery, for instance, some of its members were slow to sell their own slaves. Even as many individual Quakers took the public stage early in the antislavery crusade, fed and clothed escaped slaves and freedmen, and worked diligently against slavery and inequality, some meetings refused to accept black members, and others, upon accepting them, relegated them to back benches.

The Friends' record of activism is not perfect on every level. In spite of their unusually high standards—indeed, perhaps because of them—every Quaker individual and meeting has not achieved an unblemished reflection. Belief



Taken from Solomon Cleaver 17th of 10th Mo 1823 for a Militia fine of 2 Dollars for the year 1823 – 2 ½ Bushels of Rye and five Bags of Indian Corn in the Ear by John Williams Con

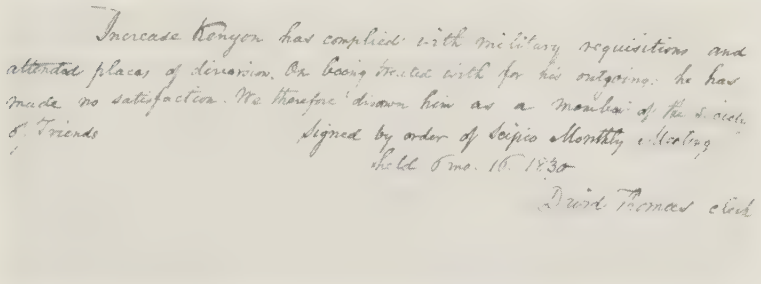
Taken from Obadiah Cleaver 17th of 10th Mo 1823 for Militia fine of 2 Dollars in the year 1823 Eight Bags of Indian Corn in the Ear

By John Williams Constable

Taken from Jesse Sumner 10th Mo 1823 for a Militia fine of 2 Dollars for the 1823 three Bags of Wheat Valued $3 90 Cts

By John Williams Constable

Recordings of fines levied upon Quakers for refusing to join the militia, Gwynned (Pennsylvania) Monthly Meeting, 1823. *(Sidwell Friends School Archives)*



Inercase Kenyon has complied with military requisitions and attended places of deversion. On being treated with for his outgoing he has made no satisfaction. We therefore disown him as a member of the Society of Friends

Signed by order of Scipio Monthly Meeting held 5 mo. 16. 1830

David Thomas Clerk

Official Scipio (New York) Monthly Meeting minutes recording an 1830 disownment from the Religious Society of Friends because of participation in the militia. *(Sidwell Friends School Archives)*

and practice have evolved over the centuries. Quakers are like the rest of us: they are influenced by the mores and customs of their contemporaries. Nonetheless, their example of political action on behalf of religious commitment to peace and equality is unmatched. Indisputably, Friends have achieved an extraordinary record of persistent and courageous effort on behalf of a more just and equitable world.

The story of their leadership in so many struggles for social justice in America is remarkable and inspiring; the effectiveness of their advocacy is evident; their success is measured by the fact that every one of the positions they have advocated throughout our history—at their own peril—is now firmly in place on our national agenda. It is certainly true that many other religious groups have been active social reformers. But for none of them is the tie between religious belief and advocacy of social justice so indelible.

We live in a world of terror and inequality, in which religious militants, at home and abroad, push their agendas for change in an intolerant and hostile manner, and where pressing for meaningful change feels ever more daunting, and threats to family and government harmony seem dangerously ubiquitous. Today, when the intersection between religion and politics dominates global affairs and defines much discussion in America about historical liberties and our role in the world, it is particularly instructive to explore the history of Quakers in America—a little-known religious group that has persistently and consistently taken its religious faith into the public arena to work for social justice.

Notes

1. Rufus M. Jones, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1976), 128.
2. Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 21.
3. There are indeed variations in Quaker practice among contemporary Friends in America. Many of them evolved from the Hicksite Separation of the early nineteenth century. There are today Quaker "churches" with steeples, pastors, music, and scripture reading, but most retain silent worship as the core of the worship service.
4. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 428.
5. Jessamyn West, *The Quaker Reader* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1992), 523.
6. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 127–128.

2

Quakers in America

"Keep Your Own Plantations in Your Hearts"

Major Quaker migration to America began in 1675, when the first full shipload of settlers disembarked in the Delaware Valley. These Friends settled in West Jersey, and by 1681 their numbers had been augmented by the arrival of 1,400 more. The following year, the ship *Welcome* brought William Penn himself, accompanied by 100 other Quakers. On their embarkation, George Fox had personally wished these Quaker emigrants well, offering a solemn admonition that resonated with them during their long, smallpox-plagued transatlantic journey:

> My friends, that are gone, and are going over to plant, and make outward plantations in America, keep your own plantations in your hearts, and with the spirit and power of God, that your own vines and lilies not be hurt.[1]

Penn and his shipmates were eager to join the Friends already settling in the Delaware Valley to establish a "Holy Experiment" in America—a society whose laws, customs, and social arrangements were to be based on tenets of Quaker

William Penn, after a painting by Benjamin West c. 1845. (*Sidwell Friends School Archives*)

belief and practice. Fox's words were prescient, for it was indeed this balance between the inward and outward plantations that would preoccupy Quakers in America for centuries as they recognized both the wisdom of Fox's guidance and the difficulty of abiding by it.

In the next three years, ninety shiploads of Quakers settled in Pennsylvania. From 1682 to 1685, Penn estimated, 7,200 settlers immigrated to Pennsylvania; in the next forty years, as many as 23,000 colonists followed.[2] Fairly quickly, they established homesteads up and down the East Coast and were among those who settled the frontiers of the fledgling colonies, moving westward with many immigrants of different persuasions. In the early eighteenth century, the number of American Quakers increased very rapidly—doubling every generation.

By 1750, there were about 170,000 Quakers in the Delaware Valley, including Pennsylvania, West Jersey, Delaware, and northern Maryland, numbers that established the Religious Society of Friends as the third largest religious denomination in the British colonies. After the Revolutionary War, the number of Quakers in British America continued to rise in absolute terms but began to fall relative to other religious groups. Among all American denominations, Quakers slipped to fifth place by 1775, to ninth place by 1820, and to sixty-sixth place by 1981. Today, estimates of the number of American Quakers range from 85,000 to 120,000.[3]

In 1766, Benjamin Franklin calculated the number of Pennsylvania Quakers to be between 60,000 and 70,000, and many more resided in neighboring colonies of West

Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Non-Quakers had begun to arrive in Penn's colony in 1716 and moved quickly to the frontier, so that by the time of Franklin's estimate, Quaker meetings were outnumbered by churches of other denominations in Pennsylvania and Jersey. Nonetheless, Quakers dominated the Delaware Valley long enough to imprint their culture and institutions throughout the region. Friends brought to the New World a culture of hard work, moderation, honesty, strong family ties, and avoidance of frivolous distraction that proved highly advantageous to them, both in the city and on the farm. Furthermore, the Delaware Valley boasted some of the most fertile soil in the colonies, and the port of Philadelphia encouraged thriving commercial enterprise. Quakers prospered quickly. They rapidly extended their settlement to Nantucket, which would become the Quaker-led hub of the global whaling empire, and to points north to New England and south to the Carolinas.

The Friends immigrants landed in America imbued with ideas of social welfare, taking great pains to care for those in need in their own community. Paupers, mentally ill persons, and those perhaps driven to distraction by the sufferings during English persecutions were all accommodated with compassion. This Quaker concern extended to their non-Quaker neighbors: Penn's utopian plan for his Holy Experiment was characterized by a determination to treat Native Americans with respect and to recognize them as human beings instilled with the ability to find the Inner Light. In 1739, an enviable record of amicable relations

was stained only after Penn's death, when his non-Quaker sons, who had become proprietors of the colony, undertook to cheat the Lenni-Lenape in an infamous land scheme known as the Walking Purchase. Notwithstanding this travesty, there developed in Pennsylvania a unique rapport and trust among the Quaker settlers and the Delaware Indians, to be tested severely by the strains of the French and Indian War in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1756, the Quaker majority, who had for years withstood increasing pressure to arm the colony against Native Americans during the French and Indian War, took the extraordinary measure of voluntarily withdrawing from public office en masse, rather than violate their precepts of respectful and peaceful interaction with the Indians.

The crisis sparked by the war over involvement in—indeed, control of—politics within the colony seemed consonant with concerns of creaturely interference with spiritual purity. At about the same time, Friends' antipathy toward violence aroused mistrust and accusations of treason when they refrained from choosing sides during the American Revolution. Their withdrawal from the legislature marked a growing inward focus as Friends considered the high cost of assimilation, political office, and the temptations and compromises of the world at large, and determined that spiritual reform within the Society was necessary in order to tend to the inward plantation.

Events at mid-eighteenth century had convinced most Friends that reform within the Society was necessary. The temptations of the real world, available thanks to the material

wealth acquired in the first seventy-five years of settlement, had proved difficult to resist, and many called for a renewed spiritual purity, which coincided with the voluntary withdrawal from the Pennsylvania legislature and the difficulties of upholding peaceful principles in time of war. Reform included tightening of discipline within meetings; there were many more frequent disownments for marrying out of the Society or even out of a particular meeting.

During these years, Friends became more interested in maintaining and preserving the Society and entered into a long period of introversion called Quietism. Quietists, through strict discipline and emphatic reversion to the teachings of George Fox and those of the first generation of Quakers, had reinforced the mystical elements of Quaker belief and practice: the importance of meditation and reflection; an emphasis on the immediate workings of the Inner Light on the soul; the plain life; and a deemphasis on preaching, reliance on scripture, or any external means to grace. Quietist Friends sought a gradual salvation achieved through acceptance of the Light Within, not a crisis experience of a single new birth but a continuing progress toward holiness.

Quietism emphasized that without God, humans are nothing. Fear of impurities of the spirit occasioned by "creaturely" distractions led many Friends to eschew increasingly any such activity as interference with the Inner Light. For some, education was deemed vain; even regular reading of the Bible was discouraged as Friends waited for a direct leading of the spirit in order to make any kind of decision.

Consequently, Meetings for Worship became very silent indeed as worshippers excessively scrutinized the validity of any leading. The extreme attention to spiritual purification encouraged in many meetings stiffness, repression, and rigidity.

While its introduction was perhaps most dramatic in Pennsylvania because of the accompanying withdrawal from public office, the Quietist introversion occurred throughout the colonies. From New England to the Carolinas, disownments for infringements on the discipline of the respective yearly meetings rose considerably as Quakers tried to recapture the spirit of the first generation of Friends through harsh discipline.

In the 1750s and 1760s, weighty Philadelphia Quakers such as Israel Pemberton Jr., John Churchman, Daniel Stanton, and others led a kind of revival among Delaware Valley Quakers. They sought with enhanced fervor to remove themselves from the enticements of the "outward plantation." The Quietist purification emphasized the plain life, avoided frivolous activities enjoyed by the outside world, eschewed public office, promoted a "guarded" education for Quaker children, and otherwise sought to use stringent discipline to encourage members to concentrate on the inner spiritual life. Strict pacifism, absolute devotion to the Golden Rule, enforcement of marriage within the meeting, and disavowal of worldly achievement became fundamental tenets of the reformers. They sought a firmer discipline and a clearer separation from worldly ambition in order to regroup, re-center the balance between worldly

and spiritual pursuits, and rejuvenate the distinctiveness of the peculiar people.

In this environment, young Quakers grew up with only a vague idea of basic Christian faith. In this cocoon, Quietist Quakers sought to distinguish themselves in a greater society that was increasingly tolerant of their existence. The persecutions of the seventeenth century, which had strengthened their separation from the world, were over. Consequently, they turned to a renewed emphasis on mystical teachings and reliance on inward piety to establish their distinctiveness. Attrition caused by the more frequent disownments was accompanied during this period by a marked lack of interest in building or keeping their numbers. This was particularly significant in light of the currents of change in other Protestant sects during this century.

Friends' determination to reform their own membership coincided with an intense flowering of religious activity throughout the non-Quaker colonial world. The enthusiasms of the Great Awakening, a religious revival that began in New England in the 1730s and moved down to the Middle Atlantic colonies in the 1740s and 1750s, characterized by the highly emotional preachings of itinerant English minister George Whitefield, occurred exactly at the time the Quaker reformers were taking action to purify themselves and return to their spiritual roots. Whitefield's enthusiastic style, his advocacy of spiritual revival beyond the boundaries of denominational differences, and his ecstatic message that salvation could be achieved through

good works brought many conversions and much controversy. Most Quakers were appalled by the almost hysterical style of the evangelical Whitefield, and the calls for immediate experiences of salvation sounded to Quietist Friends like a false shortcut to salvation. Nonetheless, his exhortations to purify the practice of religion and his advocacy of toleration for different beliefs did trigger a note of recognition in some Quaker hearts.

Many Friends participated in a much quieter, more deliberate Great Awakening of their own, led by an English Friend, Samuel Fothergill, who preached in the colonies from 1754 to 1756. By midcentury, an evangelical religious culture had begun to dominate Protestant sects in America as a revivalist enthusiasm swept through the country, particularly in the Midwest and West among frontier settlements, where feelings of isolation contributed to the attractiveness of this energized religious practice. Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists participated in this Second Great Awakening from 1800 to 1840, and in parts of the country, Quaker meetings were very much influenced by the trends in these more mainstream Protestant groups.

One of the tenets of these evangelical Protestants was an emphasis on missionizing. As evangelical Protestants sought to save souls and introduce instantaneous, ecstatic conversions, they also turned to social reform: missionizing among Native Americans, antislavery efforts, and other humanitarian initiatives. And here lay another challenge for Friends who sought separation from a corrupt world.

Over time, influences from that world, in terms of theology and practice, became more and more difficult to avoid.

Paradoxically, while Friends throughout the colonies endeavored to establish clearer boundaries between themselves and outside influences, they became more visible publicly, specifically with regard to social reform efforts. The reformation effort within the Society, initially a conservative movement intended to return attention to the inward Spirit in the face of the compromising distractions of the non-Quaker world, evolved, after the American Revolution and into the nineteenth century, into a progressive movement of heightened Quaker conscience and an accompanying distinctiveness from other Christian sects. The early emphasis on holding political office gave way to other means of advocacy. In the new nation, Quakers accelerated their public reform activism in areas traditionally important to them, now utilizing a larger store of peaceful methods. Put another way, their spiritual reformation promoted the beginning of the long Quaker tradition of relief work; their internal strife accelerated their reform agenda.

Ironically, then, even as many Friends sought to remove themselves from the world at large during this period, they continued to regard good works as one of the best signs of growth into holiness. Consequently, they frequently found themselves working alongside evangelical Methodists and Presbyterians as they labored on behalf of the needy. Friends were intent on disciplining their membership and uninterested in enlarging their numbers, but as they embarked after the Revolution on their remarkable humanitarian initiative, they eventually came into contact with

other, evangelical Christian sects toiling in the same fields. This exposure contributed to a great schism among Friends, the effects of which still resound.

The notorious and extremely bitter Separation erupted in 1827–1828 in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and it quickly spread throughout the country. An elderly Long Island Quaker, Elias Hicks, took great issue with the emergent interest in evangelicalism, specifically the emphasis upon the authority of scripture, the Trinity, and Christ's Atonement (suffering and dying for man's sins). These intellectual notions, he felt, undermined the crucial surrendering of the self-will to the Inward Light. Hicks saw himself as a reformer in the traditional Quaker mode. He preached against the aggregation of wealth by some New York and Philadelphia Quakers and urged Friends not to become overly fond of worldly indulgences. Friends continued to struggle with George Fox's admonition to balance the inward and outward plantations. How does one live in the world and remain separate from it at the same time?

Hicks' opponents, who became known as Orthodox Friends, embraced a less mystical, less Quietist view. Orthodox Friends felt themselves more in tune with other Protestant sects. Like evangelicals, they came to stress Christ's Atonement and found great inspiration in scripture. In Philadelphia, the intellectual and spiritual center of American Quakerism, tensions between wealthy city dwellers and rural Friends had been roiling for some time, and now their disagreements took on the coloration of the Hicksite-Orthodox dichotomy. Fifty years after Quakers relinquished political control of the colony in order to attend to their

spiritual integrity, reformers among Philadelphia Friends were once again urging on them attention to the neglected inward plantation, to correct the imbalance between worldly success and inward piety. In an April 1827 session of the Yearly Meeting, Hicksites, despairing of fair treatment by the Orthodox leaders of the meeting, walked out and set up a rival "reformed" Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Perhaps two-thirds of the meeting followed them, creating two separate—and bitterly antagonistic—Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. The split reverberated throughout the country. In some regions, such as New York and Baltimore, Hicksites were a pronounced majority; in the Ohio Yearly Meeting, they constituted half of the Quaker population. In Indiana and New England, however, few Friends endorsed Hicks. Southern Quakers lined up staunchly behind the Orthodox, as did the London Yearly Meeting. As the century progressed, and yearly meetings divided into two, perhaps 40 percent of American Friends sided with the Hicksites, with the remaining 60 percent identifying as Orthodox. The rift was rancorous and remained so for many decades. Both factions maintained yearly meetings in most regions of the country for more than a hundred years. Stained with increasing bitterness among Friends, the Separation spread throughout the country: quarrels over meeting property frequently resulted in litigation; in the Ohio Yearly Meeting, a physical fight broke out as one group attempted to bar the other from the meetinghouse; old friends and families were divided and refused to speak to one another.

A particularly tragic example of the Separation wrought disaster on the island of Nantucket. Under the leadership of David Gardner, a distant relative of Lucretia Coffin Mott, so-called reformers turned to disowning members from the meeting for infractions against the simple life, large and small, as the battle over the definition of spiritual integrity raged. Discipline in the meeting reached ridiculous proportions; hundreds of longtime Friends were thrown out for petty offenses by a small group determined to rid the Society of unhealthy influences. By the time of the American Revolution, when Pennsylvania Friends were withdrawing from the legislature, Nantucket Quakers were at the pinnacle of power. The vast majority of the islanders, perhaps 12,000, were Quakers, and under their leadership the tiny island was the hub of the global whaling empire, an enormous and profitable undertaking. Fifty years later, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the conflict between the inner spiritual life and the compromises required by the outside world had already taken their toll in excessive discipline and ultimate self-annihilation. In 1800, there remained 2,000 Quakers in a population of 5,600; by 1833, Quakers numbered only 450 out of 8,000 islanders. In 1900, Eunice Paddack, Nantucket's last surviving Friend, died. Quaker Nantucket was no more.[4]

The Quakers, fervent advocates of peace and unity, quarreled publicly like squabbling children. It was indeed a low point for American Friends. The fundamental aspiration to peaceful conflict resolution, so often put to good

effect in the public arena, suffered an ignominious and lasting blow among Friends themselves.

Not surprisingly, after the Separation took place, continuing factionalism marked Quakerism throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Ironically, the impetus toward humanitarianism and social reform, an indelible aspect of Quaker religious belief from the earliest days, continued as a contributing factor in these disagreements. In the milieu of the evangelical thrust in the nineteenth century, the escalating and outward-directed Quaker reform efforts regarding Native Americans, slavery, nonresistance, and women's rights influenced many Quakers to view themselves as part of a greater Protestant movement. They rejected the old desire for distinctiveness, and, instead of eschewing the corruptions of the world (including different-minded Protestant sects), some joined enthusiastically in the collaborative effort.

Conflicts plagued Hicksites as the century progressed. Some became radical reformers, following the examples of Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony. Others had split from the Orthodox in order to regain traditional Quaker exclusivity and, even in the struggle for social justice, judged alliances with non-Quakers to be threatening. Before long, Hicksites splintered into further factions, among them Congregational and Progressive Friends.

Orthodox Friends split as well, under the influence of a charismatic English Quaker named Joseph John Gurney. Gurney was a dedicated activist on behalf of prison reform and abolition of slavery, causes that brought him into

contact with evangelical Protestants. On a visit to America from 1837 to 1840, Gurney visited almost every Orthodox Quaker meeting, urging on them the value of an instantaneous experience of acceptance of God that must precede the traditional Friends concept of a gradual journey to holiness. He argued that the doctrine of the Inner Light could not compete with the Light imparted by the Bible. And finally, he exhorted them not to fear working with other evangelical Protestants on benevolent causes.

Some Orthodox Quakers were troubled by Gurney's message and, led by a Rhode Island public minister, John Wilbur, decried Gurney's evangelical zeal, his collaboration with non-Quakers, his devaluation of early Friends writings, and his devotion to the Atonement over the Inner Light. Again, yearly meetings divided, leaving Gurneyites the larger faction, constituting perhaps 50,000 to 60,000 of the roughly 100,000 American Quakers.[5] Wilburites sought to protect the unyielding commitment to the old ways, while Gurneyite Friends opened their doors to the larger American culture.

Division persisted among Quakers even as many became less and less distinct in the general Protestant population. The evangelical impulse that coursed through the nineteenth century continued to influence many Quakers; for some, particularly in the Midwest and West, worship came to resemble that of their Methodist and Baptist neighbors. Many meetings began to be held in Friends "churches" boasting reintroduced steeples, where instead of traditional

unprogrammed silent worship, services were pastoral, that is, conducted by a minister. Hymns and other music came to play an important role in these services, as did scriptural readings. In consonance with their non-Quaker neighbors, some midwestern Friends developed a more conservative political view. Nonetheless, the humanitarian ethos of Quaker life continued in strength.

By the time of the Civil War, Quakerism had been fractured in an unprecedented way. Differences concerning faith and practice, theology and worldview remained keen. But there were overlaps among the factions, particularly in their reform efforts. Both Hicksite and Orthodox Friends continued to work tirelessly for social justice—as if the imperative to advocate for equality in a corrupt world were the coin that could still bind together the fractious parties. The divisions may have diluted a single voice of the Quaker movement in America, but all factions found the energy and spirit to work for social reform.

Traditionally, Friends based their philanthropy on the family, and the extension to servants and slaves came quite naturally: in a Quaker home, they would have decent food and living conditions, more humane treatment, education, and inclusion in religious worship. But Friends reformers came to see that a return to the basic tenets of Quaker faith and practice must include an even more expansive understanding of humanitarianism, one that recognized as rubbish the justification of the benign slave master and identified a more universal moral and religious appeal—a crusade for abolition. John Woolman, Anthony Benezet, John Greenleaf Whittier, and others were instrumental in

extending the reach of Quaker humanitarian reform efforts by means of education, published tracts, and a stream of pamphlets and correspondence with international reform figures such as Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, John Wesley, and the Abbé Raynal.

For some Friends, then, the impetus to reform the Society from within, to strengthen discipline, to live a purer life less distracted by outside temptations coincided with a more universal humanitarian thrust. Paradoxically, as Friends turned inward, their social concern over slavery became a sign of their purification. At first, they worked only within their own Society in antislavery efforts; not all were prepared to work with non-Quakers, as were Benezet and Woolman. But eventually, in the nineteenth century, they came to cooperate with non-Quakers in abolitionist efforts as they boldly reassumed a public leadership role, a move fraught with its own challenges.[6]

As they reestablished barriers between themselves and "the world," they intensified activity on behalf of a humanitarian impulse they had long held, and which they now expanded. In this way, and not through their relatively dwindling members, the Religious Society of Friends assumed a role in American society greatly disproportional to their numbers. Notwithstanding a terrifically uncomfortable state of turmoil, Quakers united through the extension of their religious imperative to work toward universal equity and justice. Indeed, this book argues that it is because of this unanimously held conviction that Quakers were able to survive the Separation and become leaders in social advocacy throughout our history.

Friends had demonstrated immediately their enlightened and humane dealings with Native Americans, and this initiative continued unabated. Societies were formed by Friends to lobby for Indian interests with first colonial, and then state and federal, governments. Friends frequently attended treaty negotiations as advocates for Indian positions and to make sure that the Native Americans were not taken advantage of. After the Civil War, because of their reputation for fair dealing with Native Americans, Quakers were appointed to public positions of leadership, notably as Indian commissioners and superintendents of Indian territories. Education and training remained a basic element of Quaker interaction with Indians.

As public outcries over the "slavery" imposed on the colonists by their English masters grew, Friends such as Anthony Benezet eloquently decried the hypocrisy evident in those words coming from the mouths of slave owners or those who consorted with slave owners. Friends rose quickly to the forefront of antislavery efforts, particularly after 1750, and the words and example of John Woolman and others assumed a weight, within and without the Society, that ultimately led to the abolishment of slavery. Thomas Hamm contends that slavery's demise north of Maryland by 1800 was largely a Quaker accomplishment.[7]

During the antebellum period, Quaker antislavery advocates had assumed leadership roles in the Underground Railroad, petitioning legislatures, carrying out pamphleteering campaigns, organizing antislavery societies and speaking tours. After the Civil War, Friends con-

tinued to address the basic human needs of freedmen and initiated leadership in establishing schools in the South and North. We will see many examples of Quaker advocacy for the equality of all human beings in the face of hostility and controversy.

Quaker women had always held a unique position within the Religious Society of Friends; they were educated from the beginning alongside their brothers. And, more interesting, they were always encouraged to speak in Meetings for Worship. In fact, some of the most courageous and most active ministers preaching in the wilds of the colonies, as well as in Ireland and England, were women. Quaker women assumed an unusual degree of leadership and visibility during the antislavery crusade, and after slavery's abolition they continued their public efforts on behalf of their own gender.

As the scope and intensity of Friends' humanitarian efforts grew, as their attention turned increasingly from caring for their own needy to extending their compassion and their reach to non-Quakers, their distinctiveness and their efficacy expanded accordingly. As the twentieth century turned, both Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers continued to broaden their understanding of human need by participating in the settlement movement and in temperance efforts. Sensitized by their own experience in English prisons to the deleterious effects of imprisonment on the incarcerated as well as their families, Quakers formulated a more enlightened, rehabilitative approach toward punishment. Similarly, they worked tirelessly for the amelioration

of conditions for the mentally ill. As in England, Quakers in America pioneered a compassionate kind of care that offered treatment and hope to sufferers, instead of punishment and ridicule.

The Civil War provided another severe test for the Friends' Peace Testimony. There had been little societal tolerance for the Quakers' refusal to take sides during the American Revolution, and meetings tended to impose strict discipline on members who demonstrated preference for either side. While proportionately more Friends fought in the Civil War, there were also fewer disownments on that account. The evil of slavery consumed many Quakers, and the decision to fight or not became for many a battle between peace and equality. Another severe test came with the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914, and this time Quakers united to formulate a plan to work for peace rather than agitate against war. The birth of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1917, and its courageous humanitarian work at home and abroad, including during hostilities, discouraged the onus of accusations of disloyalty. Over decades of extraordinary effort, the AFSC earned Quakers a respected place in the national conversation about peace and war. During the twentieth century, the AFSC became the emblem of Friends service, and it remains today perhaps the most well-known Quaker endeavor.

Now, with some understanding of who Quakers are, what they believe, and what their experience has been in America, let us turn our attention to the story of their social activism. The subject naturally falls into a variety of themes,

and a part of the book is devoted to each. Part II examines Friends' relations with Native Americans through the centuries, beginning with the central importance of Indian relations in Penn's colony. Part III explores Quaker experience with African Americans, and Part IV examines Quaker advocacy by and on behalf of women. Part V discusses Quaker advocacy for many other groups of underserved Americans and examines Quaker humanitarianism at home and abroad. Finally, Part VI discusses the Peace Testimony and the culminating model of Quaker service, the American Friends Service Committee. We will see that Quakers have made an indelible imprint on American history. Despite frequent unpopularity, imprisonment, and physical danger, Friends not only have persisted in acting upon their beliefs in the public arena but also have assumed leadership in their social reform advocacy that is supremely disproportionate to their small numbers.

Notes

1. Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682–1763* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), 3.
2. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 421.
3. Ibid., 422.
4. Robert J. Leach and Peter Gow, *Quaker Nantucket: The Religious Community Behind the Whaling Empire* (Nantucket, MA: Mill Hill Press, 1997), 188.
5. Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 49.
6. Ibid., 32–33.
7. Ibid., 35.

II

NATIVE AMERICANS

3

Penn's Holy Experiment, 1681–1756

Perhaps the most familiar example of Quaker life is that of Philadelphia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1681, gifted with a land grant from Charles II, William Penn embarked on an ambitious undertaking in the New World—a "Holy Experiment." Believing that God had inclined the king to grant him the land, Penn developed a utopian vision for a colony that would inaugurate a new order, in which peace among settlers and between settlers and Native Americans would prevail, and whose success would presage the return of Christ at the end of the world. He did not intend his colony to be a retreat from the world. On the contrary, he sought to create a model for

emulation. The colony would be a refuge for the long-suffering English Quakers, who in turn would welcome to their colony any settler who embraced diversity and toleration. The keystone of Penn's colony was to be liberty of conscience; for him, religious toleration was a means to Christian salvation. He envisioned the colony as a "meeting in the wilderness" and believed that if he and the colonists followed the Light of Truth, God would bring peace, piety, and prosperity.

To that end, Penn's First Frame of Government, adopted on April 25, 1682, expressed ideals that anticipated the Declaration of Independence and offered a unique example of enlightened, humanitarian government. Not surprisingly for a seventeenth-century document, the Frame secured private property and virtually unlimited free enterprise (the colony was to be a moneymaking proposition, after all). But the structure of government for the Quaker colony included provisions far different from—and far more enlightened than—any organizational or government structure then known. In addition to the protection of private property, Penn ensured for his colonists religious tolerance, a free press, and trial by jury. The contemporary English penal code stipulated some two hundred offenses requiring the death penalty; Penn's First Frame of Government reserved this punishment for just two—murder and treason.

In other ways, Penn took pains to distinguish his colony from others in the Old and New Worlds by deliberately forging a society that embodied Friends testimonies. He urged women to become educated and to speak out as

men did. To discourage licentiousness and encourage social order, Penn included a strict moral code that prohibited gambling, drinking of toasts and oath taking, horse racing, and games. Quaker practices such as plain calendar dating and marriage without ministers were codified, and no provisions for colonial defense were included in the Frame.

Partially on account of the advertising materials Penn circulated throughout Europe to encourage settlement of his colony, European leaders and intellectuals commented most favorably on the utopian ideal of a Quaker colony. Czar Peter I of Russia was captivated by William Penn and Quaker beliefs and declared that "whoever could live according to that doctrine would be happy."[1] Travelers to eighteenth-century England frequently lauded the Religious Society of Friends, whose practices stood in stark contrast to the oppressive, authoritarian governments in their native lands.

The admiration of French Enlightenment intellectuals also raised awareness and appreciation of innovative practices in the Quaker colony. Voltaire devoted one of his *Lettres Philosophiques* to the depiction of Pennsylvania as a utopia in which religious toleration and equality prevailed, praising Quaker colonists as mild, peaceable, and gentle. He championed the Quaker model and was particularly impressed with the liberating, egalitarian notion that no man, no matter how humble, was obligated to remove his hat before a superior; that there were no provisions for arms, either offensive or defensive; and that religious toleration was prized. In his *Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu praised Penn by comparing him to Lycurgus, the

ancient Greek lawgiver who devised a constitution for the Spartans, a man greatly admired by the French political thinker.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Philadelphia had become the most populous city in America. Friends no longer represented a majority of the population, but the preponderance of wealth was concentrated in their hands. Ironically, the Quaker virtues of industriousness and moderation, a well-deserved reputation for fair dealing and upright ethics, and a strong connection with a widening global network of Quaker merchants in London and elsewhere had, by this time, created a generation of men and women whose wealth and privilege stood in profound contradiction to the social and economic philosophy of Friends. Rural settlers thrived as well; the rich black soil of the Delaware Valley yielded a remarkable bounty as these Friends, accustomed to hard work, reaped rewards beyond all expectations. Philadelphians and farmers alike thrived from the beginning of settlement, but it was the city Friends who created, in a few decades, a cultural and commercial center unrivaled in the colonies. These Quaker "grandees" lived in elegant mansions, dressed in "Quaker gray" clothing of only the finest wools, and drove in carriages with elaborate fittings and liveried drivers. Their work in the outward plantation had produced unparalleled success.

James Logan arrived in the colony in 1699 as William Penn's secretary. For fifty years, he managed the finances of the Penn family while acquiring a huge fortune of his own as a merchant and land speculator. Logan served as clerk of the Pennsylvania Provincial Council (1701–1717), chief jus-

tice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (1731–1739), and mayor of Philadelphia (1722). His magnificent mansion, Stenton, on the bank of the Schuylkill River housed one of the finest libraries in the colonies. A brilliant scientist, he engaged in experiments identifying plant gender and maintained a robust correspondence with European naturalists. Logan was reputed to be the most brilliant Pennsylvania Quaker and was surely more learned than most: in addition to his scientific endeavors, he produced translations of Cicero and Cato. Logan was a sporadically attentive Quaker, eschewing plain dress and living, advocating defensive war and the expansion of the British Empire.[2]

Far more devout than Logan were his contemporaries Israel Pemberton and his three sons—Israel Jr., James, and John—who were all important religious and political leaders of the colony. The Pembertons became the wealthiest family in Pennsylvania, profiting from trade, farming, and land speculation. Israel Jr. and James became long-standing clerks of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and John became a traveling minister. The family was known to advocate internal discipline in the Meeting, and all family members were staunchly in favor of strict pacifism and against slavery. James became a founder and then president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

The greatest landholder of the first generation was merchant Samuel Carpenter, one of William Penn's funders in the early days of the colony. Isaac Norris succeeded him to that title in the second generation after purchasing much of Penn's estate, Williamstadt, on the Schuylkill. Norris and Logan took advantage of international com-

mercial opportunities in the first quarter of the eighteenth century—wheat to Lisbon, rum to Newfoundland to be bartered for fish for the Portuguese or Spanish markets—and this global trade identified these men as a new class of merchant. Their lifestyles were emblematic of their worldly success, if not their Quaker tenets. A newly wealthy class of Quakers appeared in the early eighteenth century, for whom fashionable apparel and tastefully and lavishly decorated homes became important.

Quaker wealth and influence were augmented by intermarriage among the wealthy Quaker families; Isaac Norris married James Logan's daughter, Sally, and their daughter Polly married another extremely wealthy landowner, John Dickinson. Dickinson's mother, Mary Cadwalader, was the daughter of yet another wealthy Philadelphia Quaker, John Cadwalader.

Dickinson was master of large estates in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. He raised tobacco, and later, as the land deteriorated, he planted wheat that was milled into a superfine flour well known in the colonies. Dickinson was extremely active in prerevolutionary advocacy against Great Britain, penning the famous *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, but he ultimately refused to sign the Declaration of Independence, believing that the colonies were not yet prepared for independence. Despite his resulting unpopularity, Dickinson subsequently became president of both Delaware and Pennsylvania. In the latter capacity, he met the challenge of the Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783, a violent protest of Pennsylvania veterans who marched on

Philadelphia to demand that Congress pay them before they were discharged. Dickinson sympathized with the veterans, refusing Congress' request that they be met with full military action. As a result, Congress moved to Princeton, New Jersey; upon its return to Philadelphia in 1790, it was allowed to locate in that city for ten years only, until a permanent capital was found elsewhere.

Friends were preeminently involved in business enterprises in the colony. Some of those who prospered in this way were Sybilla Masters, who invented a method for weaving hats out of palmetto leaves and created a patented process for cleaning and curing Indian corn, and Caspar Wistar, who set up a glassworks.

But it was the iron industry that came to overshadow other forms of manufacture in Pennsylvania. It was said of the eighteenth-century iron industry that its story could be recounted without looking beyond the membership of the Society of Friends. Certainly the experience in Pennsylvania bore this out. Much of the capital that supported the mining and manufacture of iron had been created in Quaker mercantile endeavors. Friends Thomas Rutter and Thomas Potts established the colony's first blast furnace at Colebrookdale, named for the furnace of another Friend, the great English ironmaster Abraham Darby. Other Quaker entrepreneurs in this lucrative field included Samuel Nutt, Daniel Offley, and James Logan. Wharton, Drinker, and Strawbridge are familiar surnames of successful Quaker merchants, and members of these families belonged to the grandee class as well. Interest in promot-

ing colonial self-sufficiency in the face of increasing English restriction on colonial manufacture, combined with commercial acumen and an interest in devising new technologies, enabled Pennsylvania Friends to enhance the colony's finances as well as their own.

During the years before the American Revolution, as the fortunes of many Friends swelled, they demonstrated their cultural sophistication and civic consciousness by embarking on an unsurpassed philanthropic initiative that made Philadelphia the cultural center of the colonies. They took leadership in creating the Library Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Hospital, and the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery. Benjamin Franklin is often credited with the founding of the American Philosophical Society, but from its earliest iteration in 1727 as Franklin's Junto club until its reconstitution in 1768, its ranks were dominated by wealthy Quaker merchants. In other colonies, individuals including clergymen certainly contributed to the promotion of knowledge. But nowhere else in the colonies were so many men of business so committed to scientific inquiry as to sustain an organization dedicated solely to scientific ends. It is not a coincidence that Philadelphia was the center of colonial scientific inquiry. Even the great Franklin could not have established the first scientific society without the support of this group of wealthy and intelligent Quaker businessmen.

Penn's Relations with the Delaware

One of William Penn's fundamental goals in founding his Holy Experiment was to promote fair and equal treatment

of the various indigenous peoples already living in Pennsylvania when colonists began to arrive. Early Quaker writers, teachers and missionaries, including George Fox, were unanimous in urging peaceful, respectful relations with indigenous populations. Friends departed from conventional opinion about the Indians by refusing to see them as heathen savages. Contemporary Calvinists characterized non-Christians as depraved and less than human, and they resolved to take their lands by force and eradicate them. For Quakers, Native Americans were born with the same opportunity as everyone else to seek and find the Light of Truth.

Penn recognized that harmonious relations throughout his colony necessitated peace with the neighboring Lenni-Lenape (Delaware). Even before his arrival in the New World, he instructed his agents to deal fairly with the indigenous peoples. Legend holds that he initiated a meeting with them under a huge elm tree at Shackamaxon in November 1682 in order to personally establish an innovative treaty for the new colony. According to Voltaire, this was "the only treaty never sworn to and never broken." While that is perhaps an overstatement, it is nonetheless true that for more than seventy years there was peace between the Pennsylvania Quakers and the Native Americans. In an imperfect world, this was the single most outstanding accomplishment of the Holy Experiment.

Notably and uniquely among settlers in the colonies, Quaker Pennsylvanians treated the Indians as men and women deserving of respect. Quaker settlers scrupulously avoided introducing alcohol during their negotiations with

William Penn's treaty of respect with the Delaware, forged under the Shackamaxon Elm, 1682. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

the Indians, instead of taking advantage of them after first confusing them with liquor. As long as Friends were in control of the colony, they maintained a policy of paying the Indians a fair price for land and of negotiating with them, face-to-face, through skilled interpreters. Furthermore, Friends generally refrained from the practice, common elsewhere in the colonies, of enslaving Indians. Native Americans were tried before juries of whites and Indians, and they were offered the same dispute arbitration opportunities as

the white settlers. Such was the degree of mutual respect that Indians throughout the colonies frequently requested that Quakers be present at negotiations with various colonial governments. For more than seventy years, the Pennsylvania Holy Experiment achieved peaceful relations with the neighboring Indians, a record no other colony could approach.

Even during the bloodshed of the French and Indian War and their retreat from public office, Pennsylvania Quakers continued efforts toward peaceful relations with the Indians. They organized the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures. Association members collected money for the Shawnee, Delaware, and other tribes supporting the French.

Native Americans behaved in kind toward the Friends. In some instances, the tribes refused to treat with government officials without a Quaker witness. On the frontier, unlike settlers of other religions, Friends remained on their farms during times of particular friction, worked in their fields without firearms, and left their doors unlocked. Among frontier settlers, fewer Quakers were harmed by Indians. There are lively contemporary accounts of young Pennsylvania Friends leaving their children with Native Americans while they traveled, occasionally over great distances, to quarterly meetings, and there is a report of an Indian war party coming upon a Quaker Meeting for Worship in the woods and swiftly and quietly departing so as not to disturb the worshippers. Over time, as hostility escalated

between settlers and Indians, and as more and more non-Quaker Pennsylvania colonists insisted on raising a militia, Friends consistently maintained that if the colonists along the coast would adopt a more humane policy toward their Indian neighbors by treating them as equals, there would be no need for violence. As long as Penn was proprietor of the colony and Quakers dominated the colonial legislature, the founder's Indian policy prevailed. But long after his death, a terrible stain marred an otherwise benevolent and respectful relationship.

The episode occurred in 1737, long after Penn's death, when his non-Quaker sons had become proprietors of Pennsylvania. In 1686, Penn had negotiated an arrangement with the Delaware to buy a tract of land in Bucks County that stretched "as far as a man could walk in a day and a half," a parcel that came to be mutually understood to encompass approximately a thirty-mile square. Fifty-one years later, Thomas Penn, more interested in profit than in Friendly dreams of honest relations with the Indians, and frustrated by the reluctance of the Minisink Tribe of the Delaware to part with a certain parcel he desired, resorted to devious means by arranging for two athletes to make the "walk" at unusual speed. Boats ferried them across streams and rivers, underbrush was removed to facilitate speed, and supplies were hauled by horses. Not surprisingly, the runners covered twice the thirty-mile distance in the allotted time. This dishonorable venture, ironically called the Walking Purchase, was a shameful departure from Penn's Indian policy and became for the Indians and Friends a

synonym for wickedness and deception. Years later, its memory would cloud relations between the Quaker colonials and the Delaware, marking the beginning of the end of the Quaker peace policy.

The Walking Purchase occurred as tensions on the western frontier were mounting. William Penn's efforts to promote his colony and the toleration that characterized the settlement had attracted settlers of other peaceful sects—Moravians and Mennonites among them—as well as settlers from the English borderlands. These Scots-Irish settlers were hardly nonviolent and brought with them a feisty and belligerent worldview. The Philadelphia Quakers encouraged their settlement outside of the city; indeed, they moved quickly to the western frontier lands, so it was often these settlers, and not Quakers, who came into first contact with Indians. They constructed defensive forts, armed themselves, and concerned themselves far less with respectful relations with the Indians and far more with gaining land for themselves and security from the savages.

While Pennsylvania Friends had distinguished themselves by their respectful relations with their Indian neighbors, the rest of the English settlements along the eastern seaboard did not seek or earn the same reputation. In 1744, British demands to help wage the War of Jenkins' Ear (begun in 1739) escalated as the battle expanded into King George's War in America. By this time, the imperial rivalry between Britain and France over control of the Mississippi Valley had begun to adversely affect life on the western Pennsylvania frontier. Accordingly, the British raised the

temperature of their demands on the Pennsylvania General Assembly. As the French accelerated their alliances with various Indian tribes and violent outbreaks on the frontier increased, the British government was understandably eager for the colonists to contribute to their own defense. These events created a heightened dilemma for the Quaker-dominated Assembly.

For the Quaker majority in the Pennsylvania Assembly, these demands tested the depth of their devotion to their nonviolent precepts. For a while, crisis was averted by the legislative ruse of approving funds "for the King's use," which everyone, including the Friends in the majority, understood as a euphemism for military expenditures. But even as French and Spanish privateers entered the mouth of the Delaware River in 1745, the nonviolent beliefs of the Quaker assemblymen prevailed and the legislature failed to meet the military challenge. In frustration, Benjamin Franklin, who was usually in sympathy with Quaker positions, wrote *Plain Truth*, which castigated the Quakers for failure to defend their own lands. To fill the void created by the pacifist assembly, he created a voluntary "Association," in fact a militia, to provide defensive force. With very few exceptions, Quakers shunned the Association as Friends struggled to legitimize their nonviolent beliefs in a colony effectively at war. At midcentury, increasingly dangerous outbreaks along the frontier dominated center stage against a tense background of heightened political conflict: escalating power struggles between the Assembly and the governor and between the colony

and the king, and increasing dissatisfaction among rural Quakers as they watched the advantages of their wealthier city cousins grow at their expense. The denouement in this dangerous drama arrived in 1756, when the king demanded that Pennsylvania contribute to General Edward Braddock's attack on Fort Duquesne.

The escalating violence on the frontier, punctuated by the fall of Fort Duquesne, prompted the alarmed Assembly into far greater ethical compromise. While many Friends urged rebuilding of the broken trust with the Indians and blamed the emergency on shady treatment by European settlers, many Quaker assemblymen felt finally compelled to choose legislative responsibility and survival over religious testimonies of peace and equality and determined that they must finally address the most pressing issue before them—the protection of their own colony. To that end, and without instruction from Parliament, the Pennsylvania Assembly voted both a war tax to fund defense of the settlements and a law authorizing a militia—policies that had been eschewed since the First Frame of Government in 1682. The war crisis of 1755 divided Friends in Pennsylvania and ended the religious-political harmony that had characterized the Holy Experiment for seventy-five years.

The emergency of the Indian wars came as other conflicts within the colony were reaching a crescendo. Coincident with resentments building between city and country Friends were increasing indications among many Quakers of dissatisfaction regarding adherence to basic tenets of

simplicity and the quest for the Inner Light. Friends sought an elusive balance between living "in the world"—taking leadership in political life, enjoying commercial and financial success—and living a life free from frivolous distraction in order to find a spiritual purity. The crisis of the Assembly in 1756 pushed large numbers of Quakers finally to reassess their situation—individually and as a group. This perceived conflict between a "peculiar people" and assimilation reached crisis point; with the exception of a very few, Friends in the Pennsylvania Assembly voluntarily withdrew from public office.

Behind the painful decision to voluntarily relinquish public office and eradicate Quaker political control of the colony were continuing and increasingly vexing considerations among many Pennsylvania Quakers that the outer world had received far too much attention and that success in that world had encouraged too many compromises of the spirit. For many, the price for material success "in the world" was unsustainable.

In effect, Philadelphia Friends had achieved too much success, and the surfeit of their material trappings had come to compromise their spiritual integrity. For these Friends, the interaction between religion and daily life had become untenable. Faced with a crisis of spirit and the increasing internal schism, the grandees decided to withdraw from the world, to leave government, to simplify their lives, and to recall George Fox's exhortation to tend to their spiritual journey. The Quaker Party continued to dominate the

Pennsylvania Assembly, but it ruled henceforth without Quaker ranks, under the leadership of non-Quaker Benjamin Franklin. The Quakers' withdrawal from political prominence in Pennsylvania wrought a cataclysmic transformation in the colony and significantly changed the worldview of Friends for more than a century. Henceforth, despite frequent discord, Quakers would attempt to mind their inward plantation even as they extended the reach of their devoutly ordained benevolence into the world at large.

Penn's Holy Experiment had produced the most enlightened, humane government in the colonies. Now, after seventy-five years, it was over. Penn's original vision may have failed, but its defining legacies were religious tolerance, compassion, and a startling degree of pluralism, as well as the many contributions these Quaker colonists made to medicine, government, education, and reform. Penn and his colonists had indeed planted in Pennsylvania the seeds of the democratic ideals that would soon come to fruition in the establishment of the United States of America. The vicissitudes of their struggle to balance the inward and outward plantations notwithstanding, the gifts of the Pennsylvania Quakers are of immeasurable importance to the American system of beliefs.

Notes

1. "A Russian Czar's Visit to a Friends' Meeting," *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* 72 (April 22, 1899): 318.

2. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988), 348.
3. Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972), 60.

4

Beyond Pennsylvania

The experience of William Penn's settlers in their relations with Native Americans was replicated in other colonies as well. Public officials and Quaker settlers throughout the colonies took pains to follow George Fox's admonition, made during a 1672 visit to the colonies, to establish fair and equitable dealings with the Indians. In the late seventeenth century, for example, while Penn was successfully treating with the Lenni-Lenape, John Archdale, the Quaker governor of North Carolina (1695–1696), utilized similarly advanced and humane practices with Indians and achieved some success in making respectful treaties with neighboring tribes. Archdale established a special commission, for instance, to arbitrate differences between Indians and settlers.

The Shenandoah Valley was, of course, Indian country when the first white settlers arrived. The terms of a 1722 treaty between the chiefs of the Five Nations and the governors of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia called for the Iroquois and their allies to stay west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, leaving the eastern side to whites. Consequently, white settlers, including Quakers, who lived in the valley were trespassers on Indian land. By the 1730s, no tribes inhabited the valley; it was used by them primarily as a periodic hunting ground. The Indians recognized the Quaker settlers as the descendants of Onas—William Penn—whose good relations with the Indians in Pennsylvania had been part of Indian lore for generations, and they accorded them far better treatment than they offered non-Quaker settlers in the area.

In the decades leading up to the American Revolution, many Friends shared stories of experiences similar to that of the Hopewell Meeting, a community of Quakers on Virginia's frontier in the Shenandoah Valley. Just as Israel Pemberton Jr. and his Quaker colleagues were withdrawing from the Pennsylvania Assembly, and as the French and Indian War officially commenced, Indian raiding parties began to terrorize settlers throughout this Virginia valley. Alarmed, most settlers sought refuge in an English fort nearby. But eleven Quaker families refused to go into the fort, determined to stand behind their long-held policy of respect and nonviolence toward the Indians. Miraculously, none of them and none of their homes was harmed. Unlike their non-Quaker neighbors in the valley, Hopewell Meeting Friends remained for years on the frontier, tending

their farms and attending Meeting for Worship, without taking up arms against the Native Americans.[1] The Peace Testimony prevailed.

Shoemaker Joseph Carter and his family built a home beside a creek near Winchester, Virginia. Across the creek was a camping ground for two to three hundred Indians. One day a couple of Indians visited Carter's shop, and he saw one of them slip a pair of new shoes under his blanket. Carter retrieved the shoes but chose not to do anything about it. The episode was reported to the chiefs that night, and the culprit was severely punished. Upon hearing of this, Carter waded the creek and asked that the punishment stop.[2]

In 1768, when many Virginians were moving south along the Great Wagon Road to the Georgia and Carolina backcountry, a young Quaker couple, Henry and Mary Beeson, boldly determined to go west across the Alleghenies, where only a few whites had settled. One evening, when Mary, expecting her first baby, was alone in the house, she was surprised by the appearance of several Indians at her door. Mary was frightened, but she was reassured by one of the older braves, who explained to his comrades in gestures that Mary's husband was a "broad-brim," a Quaker, and the Indians did no harm.[3]

President George Washington surely knew of the tradition of friendship and respect between Friends and Indian neighbors. A plot of land in Philadelphia, at Broad and Walnut Streets, was the camping place for Indians who came to the capital to treat with the national government. Several influential Quaker families—Drinkers and

Zanes among them—were known to entertain visiting delegations. Washington had tried unsuccessfully to forcibly subdue Ohio Indians in 1790 and 1791; in 1792, he turned to the Quakers to constitute a delegation to negotiate with the Cherokee.

In 1793, he assented to a request from the Iroquois to send a delegation of Quakers to be present during negotiations between them and the federal government on the shores of Lake Erie in Sandusky, Ohio. Six Friends spent four months in Ohio that year. Ten tribes were represented. Among them, the Iroquois, Shawnee, Wyandot, and Delaware expressed satisfaction that the Quakers were witness to the negotiations, calling them peaceable and just men. Timothy Pickering, Washington's postmaster general, led the government delegation, and when the Indians asked for a promise to make the Ohio River the boundary line and remove whites settled on the western side of the river, Pickering answered that that was impossible, but the Indians would be financially compensated for the land. The Indians rejected this offer, and the negotiations continued the following summer at Canandaigua Lake, New York. Once again, the Iroquois requested Quaker participation. Perhaps the most important contribution by the four Quakers present was to ensure that the American envoys did not succeed in confusing Indian representatives by plying them with liquor before negotiations began. Once again, the negotiations were inconclusive.

In 1794, Washington returned to a policy of force; at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Major General Anthony Wayne

defeated a force of two thousand braves in Ohio's Miami River Valley, ruthlessly burning surrounding Indian villages. The following year, Wayne dictated the terms of the Treaty of Greenville, which opened the Ohio Valley for white settlement and effectively relegated the tribes to life on reservations.

In the eyes of Quakers, this violent conclusion was wrong, grossly unfair, and shortsighted, and in traditional fashion they determined to do something to ameliorate a shameful situation. Upon hearing of Wayne's crushing of the Ohio Indians, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting established an Indian Committee, which promptly sent funds to the Ohio tribes to be used for schools, husbandry instruction, and other relief purposes. At the same time, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting established a similar committee; it was determined that Philadelphia would aid the Six Nations in New York and that Baltimore would seek to help the Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot in Ohio and westward.

Almost immediately, in 1796, five members were dispatched from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Indian Committee to become familiar with the Ohio tribes. They brought with them a letter from Timothy Pickering, now secretary of state, which transmitted Washington's blessing to the Friends' effort, as well as a letter from the committee:

> We have sent our beloved brothers . . . to shake hands with you in your tents and to ask you if you wish to be instructed how to raise corn and

> wheat for bread on your own land as we do; and to get meat at home without hunting, and to weave baskets and clothes . . .
>
> Also to enquire whether you wish to have your children taught to read and write, and to do such other things as will make you live comfortably under the shade of the great tree of peace.[4]

By this time, various evangelical churches had begun missionizing among the Indians, seeking to win souls for Christ and to augment their denominations' memberships. Nowhere in this Quaker missive to the defeated Indians is there a hint of missionary intent. Quakers offered a respectful helping hand to a devastated people in the spirit of the Golden Rule. In this attitude they were unique.

Even as staunch promoters of social equity, Quakers were nonetheless citizens of their times. From the American Revolution well into the next century, some of the well-meaning and extensive Quaker efforts to treat fairly with their Indian neighbors were doubtless tinged with a patronizing attitude. Along with advocacy with the various colonial governments on behalf of Indian interests and efforts on behalf of Indians to hold the federal government to the terms of treaties, Friends frequently sought to assimilate Native Americans to white ways, gently "educating" them by encouraging them to become farmers and teaching Indian girls "housewifery" skills. Despite noble intentions and fair-minded aspirations, many Friends demonstrated an attitude that to us, in the twenty-first century, feels uncomfortably condescending but was common in

MEMORANDA

SOME OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

IN RELATION TO THE WESTERN INDIANS.

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting immediately responded to the devastating Indian defeat at Fallen Timbers in 1794. This 1869 memorandum recounts continuing efforts of the Meeting to ameliorate the conditions of western Indian tribes almost a century later. (*Sidwell Friends School Archives*)

contemporary society. All of these efforts should be seen as expressions of Quaker beneficence, from individual fair treatment to larger-scale initiatives.

Private and Public Aid to Native Americans

By the early 1800s, U.S. policies toward Native Americans had made inevitable their removal from ancestral lands. During this period, Quakers played an important role in offering succor and support to displaced Indians. They were generally well received among various Indian tribes because of their long history of fair dealing. Schools and Indian agencies on the southern plains were generally placed under the direction of Quakers, and many pioneering Friends schoolmasters who had studied at Quaker schools in the Middle Atlantic states and had been trained to focus on literacy and agricultural skills went to put their training to use with the Indians. Unlike other Protestant teachers in the territories, Quakers did not dwell on preaching the gospel and earning converts.

One such Quaker teacher was Thomas Battey, who worked among the Caddo Tribe in Oklahoma. Their repeated displacements from their homeland in Louisiana, through several stops in Texas to their ultimate destination in Oklahoma, rivaled the sufferings of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Sometimes teaching from a tent, enduring hardships himself, Battey was determined to reach disaffected, frequently violent students who had suffered terrifically in their young lifetimes. His particular approach was to impart Quaker precepts of gentle correction, solitary reflection, and penitence.

Quapaw Mission School, Oklahoma Friends Mission, late nineteenth century. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

In addition to teaching literacy and farming skills, Battey became a mediator between the Indians and representatives of the federal government. He was particularly successful in these endeavors because he utilized as partners tribal leaders. There is little question that Battey and hundreds of Quaker teachers like him worked altruistically with Native Americans whose circumstances would have been far worse without these efforts. But it must be added that the moral position of these Quaker workers was compromised somewhat by their acceptance of a system in which their political sponsor, the U. S. government, was empowered to direct and control the lives of—in fact, to

colonize—Native Americans.[5] Nonetheless, Battey's written descriptions of his long years of working with Native Americans are passionate homages to his deep commitment to the imperative to live a Quaker life by actively seeking justice for the downtrodden or ill-treated.

An example of avid participation in reform efforts by both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends later in the century was the Quaker role in implementing President Ulysses Grant's Peace Policy toward Native Americans in the West. Grant's ambitious plan aimed to "civilize" the Indians by accommodating tribal customs to white culture.

Friends established Indian schools around the country. Shown here is a student picture from such a school in Tunessasa, New York, circa 1880. (*Sidwell Friends School Archives*)

The tribes were uneasy and hostile because of their displacement by encroaching white settlements; to work toward peace with these tribes he sought the services of Friends, whose long-standing reputation of good relations with Native Americans was widely recognized. In his annual message to Congress in 1869, Grant said:

> I have attempted a new policy toward these wards of the nation . . . The Society of Friends is well known to have succeeded in living at peace with the Indians in the early settlement of Pennsylvania, while their white neighbors of other sects in other sections were constantly embroiled. They are also known for their opposition to all strife, violence, and war, and are generally noted for their strict integrity and fair dealings. These considerations have induced me to give the management of a few reservations of Indians to them and to throw the burden of the selection agents upon the Society itself.[6]

Grant approached both Orthodox and Hicksite branches to lead some of these superintendencies and to appoint Quaker agents throughout these territories. After deliberating, the Hicksites decided to accept the Northern Superintendency in Nebraska, while the Orthodox branch took on the Central Superintendency, which included Oklahoma. Both groups of Friends acted quickly, understanding the need for alleviation of Indian suffering and considering themselves well equipped to lead this effort. Grant later appointed other religious denominations to manage other reservation areas.

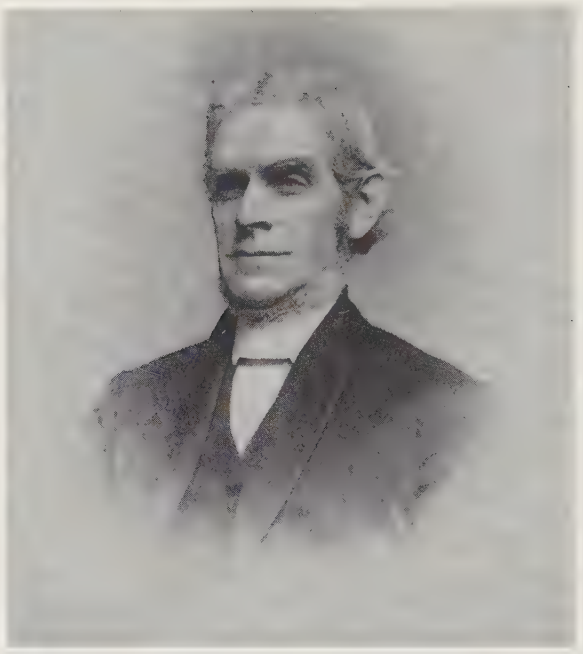
Thomas Wistar, commissioner for Indians in the Central Superintendency, seated with Kiowa and Sac and Fox representatives, 1866. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

Ten years later, President Rutherford Hayes appointed a new commissioner of Indian affairs who was hostile to the plan, and the Quakers found it necessary to withdraw from their official positions. In the years of their superintendencies, however, both groups of Friends had built schools and agricultural stations, and their work in these institutions continued for decades. The moral dilemma experienced by Quaker teachers such as Thomas Battey earlier in the century became even more pronounced in later decades. Some Friends criticized Quaker cooperation with a government authority that was interested in push-

ing Native Americans off their lands. As a result, Friends suffered some loss of respect among their Indian fellows. Nevertheless, Hicksites and Orthodox alike saw the ameliorating effect of these efforts for Native Americans, and both joined in leading them.

In 1929, President Herbert Hoover, himself a Friend, appointed two Gurneyite Philadelphia Quakers, Charles J. Rhoads and J. Henry Scattergood, to implement some recommendations on relations with Native Americans offered by the Brookings Institution. In 1883, a Quaker member of the federal Board of Indian Commissioners, Albert Smiley, had inaugurated the Lake Mohonk Conference, at

Friend Theodore T. Gillingham and interpreters with a group of Native Americans on a peace mission to Washington, DC, early 1880s. Gillingham was an Indian agent in Iowa and Dakota from 1881 to 1889. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)



Prominent Philadelphia Quaker Charles J. Rhoads. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

which Native Americans and whites met to discuss means of improving Indian life, and the conference met regularly until 1916. During the Great Depression years, the American Friends Service Committee established many work camps on Indian lands throughout the country, where Indians and young Quakers worked side by side in community improvement projects.

Friends' historical concern for just treatment of Indians persists to the present day, although the original con-

cern has evolved from that of early settlement. In William Penn's day, the goal was to cooperate with Native Americans, to treat them with respect and to negotiate fairly. In the complex colonial clashes of the 1750s, Quakers began to mediate treaties between Indians and non-Quaker whites. Today, Friends continue to advocate on behalf of Indian rights, but their strategy has shifted. No longer are Quakers involved in face-to-face mediation between Native Americans and the national and state governments. Today, through the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) in Washington, DC, their efforts focus instead on lobbying Congress—presenting memorials and issuing publications advocating on behalf of these disrespected Americans.

FCNL is the largest team of registered peace lobbyists in Washington. Founded in 1943 as a Quaker lobby in the public interest, it is the oldest and largest ecumenical lobby, and over the past sixty-five years it has activated a multi-issue advocacy that derives directly from Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, and social justice. In addition to efforts on behalf of Native Americans, it has advocated for many causes, including peace, nuclear nonproliferation, and civil rights.

FCNL's recent efforts on behalf of the latter are typical of its work over the past century. The committee is currently involved in legislative efforts to improve public safety across Indian lands, where the average crime rate is two and one-half times the national average. It has issued a report drawing connections between indigenous peoples and the environment. Global warming particularly harms people

who live from the soil; FCNL is encouraging these Indian groups to participate in efforts to ameliorate environmental conditions. For many years, FCNL has been lobbying hard for passage of measures to rectify, at least in part, the scandalous government mismanagement of Indian trust funds.

Notes

1. Jay Worrall Jr., *The Friendly Virginians: America's First Quakers* (Athens, GA: Iberian, 1994), 155.
2. Ibid., 130.
3. Ibid., 188.
4. Ibid., 258.
5. Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972), 119.
6. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 157.

III

AFRICAN AMERICANS

5

Early Efforts

Friends' advocacy on behalf of African Americans relied on the same ideas of equality and compassion as did their efforts on behalf of Native Americans. Although their record is imperfect, their actions over the centuries reveal an unrelenting and enlightened commitment. Early Quaker abolitionists believed that slavery and the Peace Testimony were incompatible. Slavery relied upon force and violence: in the capture of the blacks in Africa, throughout the gruesome Middle Passage, and in unpaid, forced labor without hope of freedom. Quaker religious belief espoused the fundamental recognition of the African American's humanity. As antislavery activists, Quakers responded to the spiritual imperative to bring to the attention of every citizen the Testimony's directive against possessing war prizes, the need

for humility in dealings with others, the desire for simplicity in standard of living, and the abiding equality of all of God's children.

The Religious Society of Friends was the first religious group in the world publicly to denounce slavery and the first to require all of its members to free blacks held in bondage, yet the extraordinary degree of Quaker antislavery activity is not widely appreciated. Some of the activists' names are recognizable to us today, but many are not. Such eighteenth-century Quakers as John Woolman and Anthony Benezet spoke out passionately against the slave trade, urging Friends and all lovers of equality to forgo products of slave labor and to disown from local meetings those who persisted in owning slaves. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, many Quaker activists, such as Elias Hicks and the Grimké sisters, Sarah and Angelina, had become outright abolitionists; others followed Levi Coffin and Thomas Garrett down a more radical path, willingly endangering their lives and the lives of their families by working as "conductors" on the Underground Railroad. Still others, including most notably Lucretia Coffin Mott, worked tirelessly to organize a variety of antislavery organizations.

In 1657, in an epistle titled "To Friends Beyond the Sea That Have Blacks and Indian Slaves," George Fox expressed concern about the spiritual welfare of Quaker slave masters. When Fox visited Barbados in 1671 and witnessed slavery firsthand, he again urged Quakers to mind their sins for holding men and women as property. In a famous sermon, Fox called on Friends to observe the Golden Rule:

> Consider with yourselves, if you were in the same condition as the Blacks are,—who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves; I say if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it hard measure. Yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And therefore consider seriously of this, and do you for them, as you would have them, or any other, to do unto you, were you in the like slavish condition.[1]

Fox's admonitions were the first by a religious leader and were frequently quoted by Benezet and other Quaker abolitionists. But Fox characteristically stopped short of urging all-out abolition because of a painfully learned tradition among Friends to avoid the appearance of antigovernment behavior. Fox's goal was not to stir up slave revolts; he concentrated on encouraging humane treatment of slaves rather than their emancipation.[2] In Quaker homes, he preached to slaves, instructing them in the fundamentals of a Christian life. Fox's exhortations to Quaker masters and slaves alike emphasized the Friends' belief in the equality of all men and women. Sadly, most slave owners were generally unmoved by this argument. And the government of Barbados soon outlawed the common Friends practice of preaching to slaves in their homes.

Fox's most extreme position advocated freeing white indentured servants, which in turn might open the way for emancipation of black slaves, perhaps after a given term of service, such as thirty years. His constant reminder of the Quaker testimonies of equality and integrity, coupled with aversion to sloth and violence, became the basis of much antislavery argument in the next century.

Traveling with Fox to Barbados was William Edmundson, an Irish Quaker who is thought to have been the first member of the Society of Friends to advocate the outright abolition of slavery. While in the colony, Edmundson echoed Fox's admonitions to slave owners and messages to slaves in Quaker homes, but as he continued his ministry after he left the West Indies, he came to emphasize that the emancipation of slaves was, for Quaker slave owners, a path to spiritual liberty. He first denounced slavery from Newport, Rhode Island, in 1676, as an unacceptable violation of the Golden Rule. Planters in Barbados and elsewhere viewed Edmundson's messages as a serious threat to peace and security. They engineered legislation banning Quaker itinerants from holding Meetings for Worship and prohibiting masters from allowing slaves to attend religious services of any denomination. Like Fox and Edmundson, William Penn disapproved of slavery and did not view it as a part of his Holy Experiment, but like them, his admonitions against slavery had little effect except, perhaps, to encourage Quaker slave owners to treat their slaves more humanely.

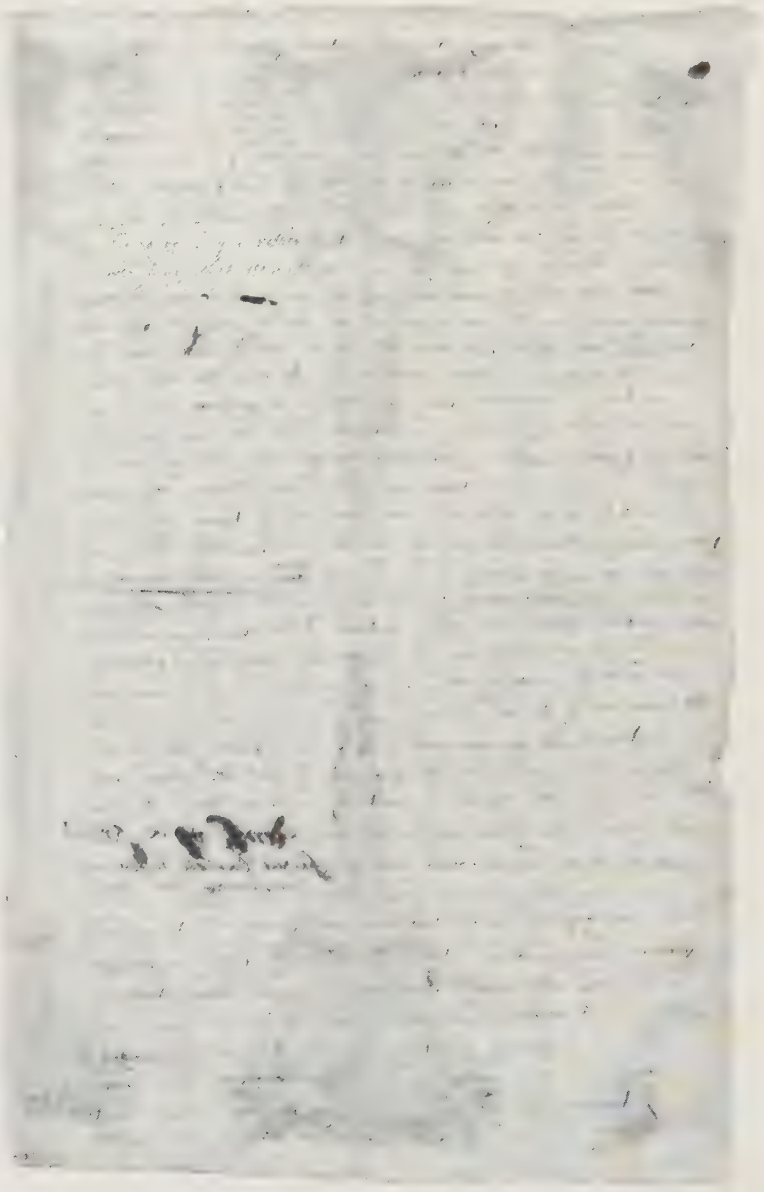
Others during the seventeenth century, Quaker and non-Quaker alike, spoke out against slavery but were unsuccessful in limiting its growth in the American colonies. Roger Williams insisted on a free labor system in Rhode Island, but a 1652 prohibition by that legislature against enslaving Indians, blacks, and whites proved unenforceable. It certainly failed to prevent Rhode Island from becoming the hub of the North American slave trade. Puritan ministers Cotton Mather and John Eliot and the

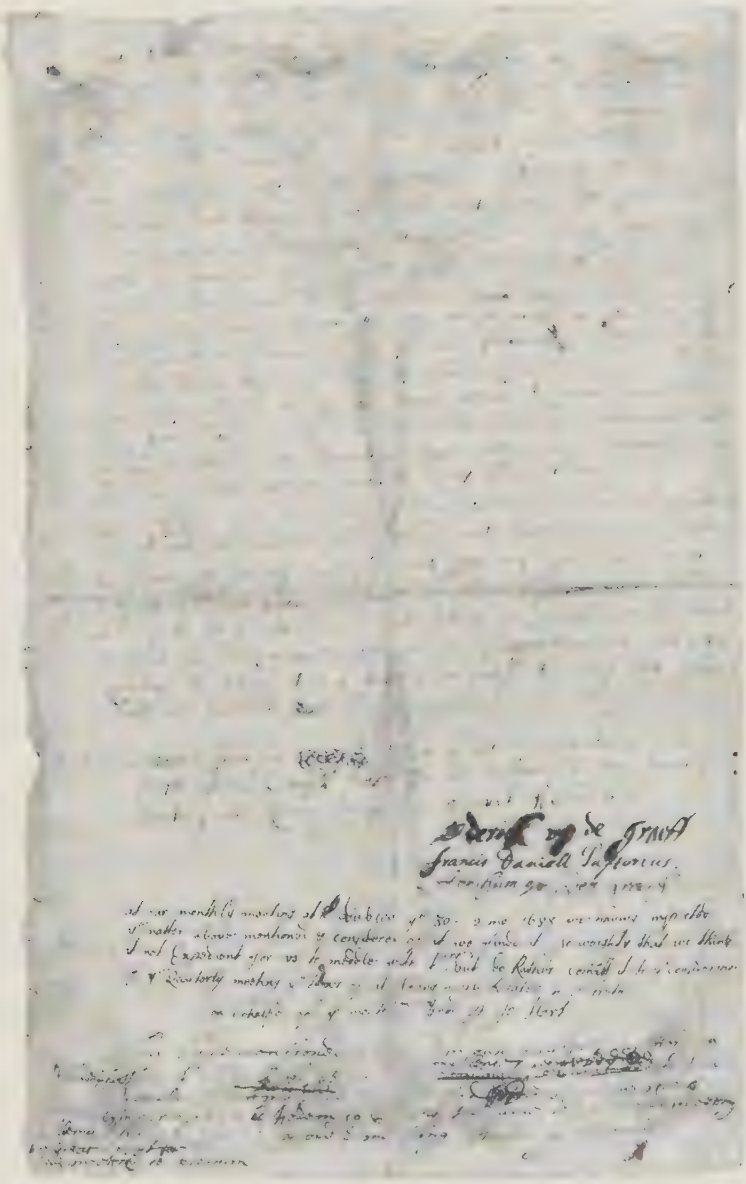
English Anglican Morgan Godwyn preached that masters were responsible for their slaves' souls. Richard Baxter, an English Puritan who had visited the colonies, decried owners and traders alike as offenders against Christian morality. In 1700, a New England Puritan judge, Samuel Sewall, wrote a pamphlet titled *The Selling of Joseph*, castigating a fellow Puritan who had bought a slave in contradiction of a contract freeing the black man. In the English-speaking world before 1750, these non-Quakers were the only voices to be heard decrying the institution of slavery.[3]

The first collective effort against slavery in the American colonies was initiated in 1688 by Friends in a petition submitted to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) urging all Quakers to free their slaves. It was a courageous gesture by four members of the Germantown Monthly Meeting, but it was tabled by the PYM because of its extremely controversial position and was thereafter forgotten for a long while. The petitioners, like individual Quakers before them, found the institution of slavery repugnant and in opposition to the Golden Rule. Furthermore, it was damaging to the Society of Friends because of the hypocrisy of proclaiming equality and nonviolence while at the same time owning persons as if they were cattle.

1688 Memorial from the Germantown Monthly Meeting calling for an end to slavery within the Religious Society of Friends. The petition was drafted by Francis Daniel Pastorius and three other Quakers from the Meeting. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

(See following spread)





But the PYM, whose members included slaveholders and merchants who traded with slaveholders, was slow to take action. In the face of increasing agitation against slavery from many monthly meetings, there followed for almost a hundred years a record of delay and procrastination as the PYM undertook to abide by the tenets of the Society of Friends in the face of potential economic sacrifice on the part of some of its members. Members of the PYM were also loath to advertise to the public the lack of unity within the meeting. The institution of slavery aroused enormous controversy; Quakers were not immune from the difficulties at play in the world at large, and, in the manner of Friends, the PYM followed a very deliberate and incremental journey to resolution of the question.

In 1796, William Southeby and Cadwalader Morgan, two weighty Quakers from the PYM, managed to persuade the Meeting to advise its members that they should avoid importing any more slaves and that current slaveholders should take care to Christianize the slaves and treat them according to the Golden Rule. To the likes of Southeby and Morgan and others of their persuasion, this response from the conservative PYM was unsatisfactory in that it had no teeth—their advice came without effective enforcement mechanisms. In 1711, the Chester Monthly Meeting formally petitioned the PYM to issue a ban on members' participation in the slave trade. This time, the PYM sent to the London Yearly Meeting for advice; the latter claimed it lacked authority, but three years later it echoed the 1696 admonition by the PYM to avoid the slave trade. The resistance to the increasing pressure to remove

themselves from the taint of slavery represented the fear of many members on both sides of the Atlantic that this corrosive issue threatened the unity of the Society. No doubt some members were already holding slaves and profiting from their trade, but in addition to a personal sacrifice, many Friends were opposed to the radical publication of their internal differences to an unappreciative outer world.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the discussion, public and private, quickly gained heat. Shortly before the Chester Monthly Meeting petition, the Scottish convert George Keith provoked a huge disruption among Quakers by making antislavery the central tenet of his efforts to reform the Society. Keith went further than both of the Pennsylvania Monthly Meetings' petitions by publishing his denunciation, which garnered his position much more public attention. In *An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes*, published in 1693, he argued that regardless of how or why a Quaker might have acquired slaves or participated in the slave trade, he or she was accountable for the violence at the heart of slavery. Quaker slaveholders were guilty of breaking the Golden Rule and of buying stolen goods. Keith published his treatise without the consent of Friends authorities, an egregious breach of Quaker discipline because it represented the taking of an action without unity of the meeting. For such a breach, he was disowned. Keithian arguments against an institution in which, along with their non-Quaker neighbors, Friends participated were hard to ignore, and the internal schism they provoked put increasing pressure on these slaveholding

Quakers even as their meetings disciplined Keith and his visionary colleagues.[4]

In 1729, incensed by the increase in importation of slaves into the colony that resulted from a reduction in the per capita duty, Philadelphia merchant Ralph Sandiford published, without authorization, a screed against Quaker participation in slave owning. Like his predecessor George Keith, he was condemned for threatening the unity of the meeting by publishing positions not approved by the PYM.

In the following year, the Chester Monthly Meeting reintroduced its concern in a petition to the PYM, urging that Friends be prohibited from buying imported slaves. After much discussion among the several monthly meetings in the Delaware Valley and between them and the Yearly Meeting, the PYM strengthened slightly its position against the buying of slaves, declaring slave owning "disagreeable to the sense of the meeting" and recommending that monthly meetings admonish and caution their members who persisted in doing so. Quakers may have been ahead of their peers in their outspokenness against slavery, but the PYM nonetheless remained stalled in a conservative protection of the financial rewards of the institution as well as a keen desire to promote unity within its membership.

Even the provocative tactics of a small hunchbacked abolitionist named Benjamin Lay failed to interrupt the influence of this group, although they may have encouraged those increasing numbers of Friends who were speaking out against the institution. Lay had been disowned by his meeting in Colchester, England, before immigrating

to Barbados. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1731, already despising the institution he had witnessed firsthand in the West Indies, and set about immediately to dissuade members of the Society of Friends to relinquish their part in the violent and inequitable slave system. Realizing that the PYM would refuse to authorize his fiery antislavery pamphlets, he published them anyway, and, like Sandiford and Southeby before him, was declared out of unity—and out of the Society—for doing so.

Undeterred, Lay kidnapped a Quaker child to demonstrate the agony of African families when their children were taken from them to be transported to America and a life of bondage. His most outrageous protest occurred in 1738 at a session of the PYM, when he arose out of the quiet, denounced slavery, and dramatically thrust a sword through a book specially equipped with a berry juice–filled bladder. "Blood" spattered nearby worshippers, dramatically illustrating Lay's point. Lay was subsequently strongly censured for this and for interrupting the worship services of other denominations to decry the evils of slavery. Shortly after the "bladder of blood" incident, he dropped from sight to dwell in a cave outside of Philadelphia, but he lived to see the PYM publicly denounce slavery in 1758.

Less provocative and arguably far more effective was Anthony Benezet, the son of French Huguenots who immigrated to America from London. He had become a Quaker at the age of fourteen, and for the rest of his life he acted on his belief that education is a right of all children. Benezet was an educator who espoused the lonely position that blacks could learn as well as whites. He had taught

Benjamin Lay at the entrance to his cave dwelling in Philadelphia. Lay was disowned by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and ostracized by many, but his provocative tactics contributed to the Quaker advocacy against slavery. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

black students in his home as early as 1750, and in 1770 he persuaded the PYM to open the first school for African American children, where he taught for many years.

Weighty Friends such as James and Israel Pemberton Jr., Henry Drinker, and Daniel Stanton were moved to join Benezet in establishing an African Free School, originally as part of the William Penn Charter School. Benezet wrote of his intentions in *A Short Account of the People Called Quakers* in 1780:

> Having observed the many disadvantages these afflicted people labor under in point of education and otherwise, a tender care has taken place to promote their instruction in school learning, and also their religious and temporal welfare, in order to qualify them for becoming reputable members of society.[5]

For many years, Benezet taught at schools for girls, acting on the Quaker belief that girls and boys were equal in God's eyes and ought to have the same opportunities.

While Benezet's vocation was as a teacher, he was equally zealous as an antislavery reformer. He is perhaps best known for the torrent of eloquent and fiery pamphlets and letters he wrote decrying the institution of slavery. He was extremely active in the transatlantic drive to abolish the slave trade. Among his most effective efforts was the first English-language history of West Africa, written as a result of his investigations of the invidious effects of the slave trade on traditional African cultures. In his groundbreaking 1771 tract, titled *Some Historical Observations of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce, and General Disposition of Its Inhabitants, With an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave Trade, Its Nature and Lamentable Effects,*[6] Benezet's real-

istic descriptions captured an eighteenth-century Romanticist sympathy for the barbarities and sufferings caused by the slave trade.

In 1765, as colonists vociferously decried their enslavement by the British, Benezet exposed the inconsistency of their claiming natural rights and liberties for themselves while persisting in holding others in bondage. He believed that slavery impoverished both races and that its oppression scarred the characters of white and black alike. On April 14, 1775, Benezet convened a meeting in a tavern in Philadelphia to which he invited ten men, mostly Friends, to act on the Friends' commitment to equality. While they advocated abolition and manumission, the Quaker attendees also were concerned with the assistance of free people of color. These convictions and Benezet's leadership resulted in the founding of the first antislavery society in America, the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage.[7]

John Woolman, "Quaker Saint"

Until the early eighteenth century, traveling preachers of both genders assumed most of the burden of convincing Friends to release their slaves. In 1754, traveling Friends ministers Mary Peisley and Catharine Payton wrote of their dismay at witnessing Quaker slaveholding in Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina, which they viewed as a breach of Quaker belief and an unpardonable violation of the Golden Rule.

The best known of these preachers was John Woolman, whose 1774 *Journal* is the story of one extraordinary

man's spiritual journey to open himself fully to the leadings of the Inner Light. Woolman's lifelong efforts to end slavery and to establish just relations with Native Americans were born of the purity of his Quaker belief that each of us is a vessel of God and is placed on this earth to bring justice to our fellows. Even in these cynical times, Woolman is often characterized as a saint, and without question he is regarded as a moral compass for Quaker and non-Quaker alike.

One of the few representations of John Woolman, whose life embodied Quaker values of equality, humility, and justice. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

Woolman's lifelong witness to end slavery first came to him as a very young man, when his employer in Mount Holly, New Jersey, asked him to draw up a bill of sale for a black woman. He was torn between the realization that doing so would be wrong and the fear of hurting the feelings of his kindly Quaker employer and the equally respectable Friend who was buying the woman. He complied with his employer's request, but not without remonstrating with both men about the evils of the transaction.

Woolman knew that defenses for his behavior—conscientiousness, duty to his employer, deference to the two older men, and perhaps a belief that the new Quaker owner might well treat the slave better than another owner might—were rationalizations, that nothing could or should excuse a wrongful act. This incident transformed Woolman's understanding of his place in the world and his lifelong purpose. Henceforth, he recognized his role as a religious missionary and sought out opportunities to draw attention to unjust practices and speak gently but forcefully to those who took part in them. Abiding by the highest standards of the Society of Friends, Woolman refrained from blaming slaveholders in his abolitionist advocacy. His many publications came only when and if the PYM publications committee authorized them; his consistent advocacy required patience, timing, and above all the compassion and strength to act on his purest moral understanding and respect for both unity and reform of the Religious Society of Friends. His ability to live his life according to his tenets and his constant but noninflammatory witness to

the unacceptability of slavery distinguish him from many other well-meaning abolitionists, even within the Quaker fold. His is a brilliant example of an individual response to the inexorable promptings of the teachings of the Religious Society of Friends to act within the public sphere to seek justice for all.

Woolman's lifelong determination to live as purely and nonviolently as possible led him to a life of self-abnegation. Firmly convinced that he must not support human misery through use of luxury items, he wore only undyed clothes produced by free labor; he often walked instead of using the stage, believing that the stage boys and the horses were abused in the interest of greater speed. He worried about using coins, sure that they had been manufactured from silver mined by slaves in dangerous and violent South American mines; in his mercantile role, he refused to carry molasses, rum, or dyed cloth because all were contaminated by slavery. He even worried over the kinds of adornments, such as ribbons and bows, he stocked for his customers in his dry goods store, fearing that he was encouraging them to distract themselves with frivolous and impure frippery.

Typical of Woolman's style was a mission to the South in 1757. Wherever he received hospitality at the expense of slave labor, he insisted on paying his host for room and board. With humility and sweetness of spirit, he deliberately engaged his hosts and others who disagreed with his strong concerns. He refused to use silver eating utensils, frequently refraining from eating altogether in the homes of slave owners, and ate no sugar because it certainly would

have been harvested by slaves. Throughout a lifetime of self-denial and nonaccusatory engagement with those who disagreed or who failed to perceive the evil they were promoting, Woolman pursued doggedly and relentlessly his quiet and persistent testimony against slavery.

When not traveling, Woolman came into contact with many of his neighbors in the Delaware Valley, often writing wills for them. In these documents, he refused to include any provisions for slave inheritance, explaining that he would write the will but could not include a clause furthering the bondage of human beings. In several cases, he persuaded his neighbors to free the slave in question. He once determined not to sail to a southern port to begin a ministry because the ship had been used for slave transportation. He worked patiently, by the example of his own behavior, to persuade those around him and those he met on his travels of the unacceptability of slavery. He recognized the global aspect of the trade and sought more and more a life free of its taint—in his clothes, in his travels, in the food he ate. And through his frequent writings, published under the aegis of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's publication committee, he worked to persuade his Quaker brethren to eliminate the taint of slavery from their lives.

The eighteenth-century antislavery and anti–slave trade efforts of Woolman, Benezet, and others first bore fruit in New England. There had been some antislavery advocates in rural New England and on the wealthy Quaker island of Nantucket, but powerful Friends in Newport, heavily involved in the slave trade, were harder to convince.

In 1766–1777, Woolman traveled through Delaware and the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay and saw marked success in persuading several slaveholding Quakers to manumit their slaves. These manumissions represented a virtually unprecedented breakthrough in the antislavery movement to date, and just as these private emancipations continued in Delaware and Maryland after Woolman's departure, the manumission movement continued up the coast.

Among the first to respond to Woolman's exhortations was Quaker Thomas Hazard of South Kingstown, Rhode Island, son of the largest slaveholder in the region. Upon his father's death in 1762, Hazard refused to accept the legacy of slave ownership. To the quarterly meeting in 1769, Hazard proposed that all Friends be "clear" of holding slaves. At first, the New England Yearly Meeting responded that Friends should grant freedom to any slave that is of age, capacity, and ability suitable for freedom. Finally, in 1773, the Yearly Meeting simplified the language and became the first Quaker council to require that all members be free of slaveholding. Nonetheless, many slaveholding Quakers remained unconvinced, having prospered commercially on the backs of slaves. Moses Brown, one of these extremely successful merchants, created something of a sensation in New England by manumitting his seven slaves. Four months later, he applied for membership in the Society of Friends, and he remained a stalwart and outspoken antislavery advocate for the rest of his life.[8]

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, having been reluctant to act since the first Germantown Monthly Meeting

petition of almost a century before, finally overcame its members' conservative arguments to protect the unity of the meeting, as well as the purses of some individuals, and in 1773 made slaveholding a disownable offense. For decades, it had issued increasingly stern warnings to its slave-owning members, but the new enforcement feature of removal from membership in the Society broke new ground in antislavery reform.

Meanwhile, monthly meetings in the Delaware Valley found many ways of freeing slaves and persuading others to do so. Various meetings created manumission books to keep a record of those freed so that they might never be enslaved again. And meeting members sent emissaries to exert pressure on recalcitrant slaveholding members. Meetings demonstrated a concern for the welfare of freed blacks, encouraging former slave owners to provide maintenance for freedmen and freedwomen who could no longer work. Some Friends provided restitution to their former slaves for their years of labor. In 1767, John Woolman's brother Abner asked the Haddonfield (New Jersey) Monthly Meeting to calculate proper monetary restitution for two black men his wife had inherited, because he wanted to pay them for their labor's financial benefit to his father-in-law's estate. When meetings could not persuade their members to provide financial support to former slaves, meetings themselves frequently stepped in. Subscriptions were raised to provide relief and education to former slaves. In this way, Quakers extended to African Americans their customary system of "caring and control," a fundamental unifying element in their community. Despite the fact that

these black men and women were frequently not members of the meeting, the humanitarian impulse of Quaker concern for African Americans came to include them in the well-established practice of caring for members.[9] By 1783, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting could lobby the new state legislature to outlaw slavery in Pennsylvania, confident that its own members had ended slavery and set an example for the nation.

Elsewhere, in the southern colonies, slavery was of course more firmly entrenched. In Maryland in the 1760s, members of the Third Haven Meeting on the Eastern Shore began freeing slaves. The Maryland Yearly Meeting established committees in 1772 whose members met with slaveholders to prevail upon them to free their slaves. The active members of these committees had freed their own slaves, giving significant weight to their encouragement of their neighbors to do the same. In 1778, most Quaker slave owners on both sides of the Chesapeake had freed their blacks, and the process was generally complete by 1780.

Farther south, in Virginia and the Carolinas, there were few Friends to advocate for freedom. Many of those who had migrated south had come from Pennsylvania, and their ties with the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting remained close. Surrounded as they were by a strong slaveholding culture, the Yearly Meetings in Virginia in 1766 and North Carolina in 1768 nevertheless strongly condemned the slave trade. Their campaign was made more difficult because both colonies had laws against manumission except under extraordinary circumstances.

North Carolina Friends began freeing their slaves between 1775 and 1777, but in 1777 the colony reenslaved freed blacks and passed another antimanumission law. Repeated attempts by Quakers to convince the legislature to change the law failed; ultimately, North Carolina Friends determined that the only way to circumvent the antimanumission law was to give title for slaves to the Yearly Meeting. The trustees of these slaves exercised some oversight and supervision, but essentially the slaves operated as free men and women. By 1824, the number of slaves owned by the North Carolina Yearly Meeting had reached 700. Officially, the Yearly Meeting "owned" slaves until the Civil War.[10]

For the North Carolina Yearly Meeting, ownership of so many slaves became increasingly intolerable; after all, this was an institution abhorred by Friends and not sanctioned by the Meeting. Strenuous efforts were made to free them by sending them off with visitors from the North or settling them with migrants to the slave-free territories in the Midwest. George and Delphina Mendenhall, members of the Jamestown–Deep Creek Meeting and holders of slaves whom George had inherited, designed a compassionate and effective way of liberating these slaves and placing them in a safe environment where they could sustain themselves. The Mendenhalls manumitted their bondsmen and, group by group, with attention paid to keeping families together, took them personally to Ohio and remained there with the freed men and women until they were settled and self-sustaining. Most Quakers were not in a

position to follow the extraordinary example of the Mendenhalls, but they continued to struggle with the logistics of their determined path of manumission until the Civil War.

As in North Carolina, a law in Virginia prohibited manumissions until 1782. Consequently, when the Virginia Yearly Meeting recommended to its members that they free their slaves, many Friends delayed until meetings could successfully lobby against the antimanumission law. Not surprisingly, most manumissions in Virginia occurred after 1782. Robert Pleasants, a wealthy Quaker planter, set an extraordinary example by freeing all of his eighty slaves at an estimated cost of £3,000, the bulk of his fortune. He settled the freed families on plots deeded to them on his Henrico County plantations. Pleasants was a formidable agent for emancipation, corresponding with Patrick Henry and other leading southerners to persuade them of the moral, religious, and economic benefits of manumission.[11]

Southern Quakers demonstrated a commitment to Friends' belief by emancipating their slaves around the time of the American Revolution. As difficult as it was for their northern brethren, the institution had become more and more entrenched in the South over time, and the actions of these Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina Quakers were courageous indeed. Elsewhere in these states, a few Methodists and Baptists preached emancipation, but their denominations soon made peace with slaveholding. Friends in the North and South proved equal to the imperative to live their beliefs in an environment increasingly alien to those beliefs.

The Confluence of External and Internal Reform

During John Woolman's years of continuing ministry against slavery, his writings and travels coincided with and mightily influenced the movement within the Quaker fold toward a reform of the Society. The spirit of the first-generation Quakers had been aggressive and dynamic; in the years since settlement, however, Friends' extraordinary financial and public success in Pennsylvania had introduced an unfortunate complacency. Woolman and others believed that this excessive attention to the outward plantation had made Friends too accepting of the evils of worldly pursuits and had cost individuals and meetings the purity of those original Friends. The urge to reform the Society had climaxed in the extraordinary discord among Quakers and between Quaker and non-Quaker colonists that had caused the Quakers' withdrawal from public office in 1756.

In 1776, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting denounced slavery as a disownable offense. It was the earliest such pronouncement by a religious group in America, and it marked the conclusion of a long and tortuous road that had begun with the 1688 Germantown Monthly Meeting petition against slavery. And its path was much influenced by the movement to reform the Society of Friends. The motivations of the various antislavery reformers varied. Some, such as Lay, Woolman, and Benezet, believed that slavery was wrong on humanitarian grounds, because it was based on

inequality and violence and therefore violated two basic Quaker testimonies. But others instrumental in the PYM's final antislavery pronouncement, such as Israel Pemberton Jr., John and George Churchman, and Samuel Fothergill, were more interested in purifying the Religious Society of Friends and its meetings of worldly contamination. For these men, abolition was another proscription to be strictly enforced after the internal reforms of 1755. The conflict among Friends between spiritual integrity and discipline and the outside world, so troubling to Quakers from the beginning of the Society of Friends, played an important role in finally achieving the antislavery position of the Yearly Meeting, which in turn promoted the humanitarian reform movement to follow.

Notes

1. Maurice Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 35–36.
2. Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Beautiful Soul of John Woolman, Apostle of Abolition* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 105.
3. Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 3n.
4. Slaughter, *Beautiful Soul*, 108.
5. Jackson, *Let This Voice*, 22–23.
6. Ibid., 248.
7. Ibid., 215.
8. Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 139–140.
9. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 178–179.

10. Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972), 98.
11. Jay Worrall Jr., *The Friendly Virginians: America's First Quakers* (Athens, GA: Iberian, 1994), 225–228.

6

Antebellum Agitation

The revolutionary spirit embracing Enlightenment claims of equality and humanism found a sympathetic audience in the Religious Society of Friends, already so inclined, particularly when so many men and women in the new states benefited from neither. The impetus for Quaker antislavery activity was not perceived by them as a battle against sin; indeed, Friends departed from the belief of many other Christian activists because for them, the question of African American equality was one of social justice. Once again, the enhanced reforming zeal of Quakers and the hopeful ambience of freedom encouraged humanitarian endeavor. And, as with other reform efforts, Friends of all persuasions participated enthusiastically.

As the nineteenth century progressed and the entire country became embroiled in the increasingly vituperative crisis over slavery, the intensity of antislavery agitation within the Quaker community grew apace. As with their efforts on behalf of Native Americans, the breadth of their reach and their tactics changed and grew, and during the antebellum period, Friends mounted an increasingly passionate advocacy on behalf of African Americans. Quakers now emerged from a period of relative Quietist obscurity, marking the national consciousness with their stubborn and consistent support for the abolition of slavery.

The period of Quietism, which had seen a withdrawal from the outside world and a more exclusive form of social reform, came to an end with the introduction of the abolitionist efforts of the 1820s. This movement, gaining adherents and enemies with increasing heat, became the Friends' reintroduction to persistent and outspoken public advocacy. Quakers jumped to the fore in antislavery activity, now working enthusiastically with reformers of other religions. Their methods were both institutional and noninstitutional. They reinvigorated extant antislavery organizations and started new ones; they tirelessly circulated petitions and joined sewing circles; they educated and clothed free blacks and built the Underground Railroad. Broadly published Quaker tracts urged Americans to heed the message

▶ This widely distributed broadside of Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier's famous poem "Our Countrymen in Chains," accompanied by its compelling illustration, is illustrative of the increasing Friends abolitionist activity in the 1830s. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

OUR COUNTRYMEN IN CHAINS!

By J. G. WHITTIER.

SLAVES—in a land of light a

Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war!
A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood—
A wail where Camden's martyrs fell—
By every shrine of patriot blood,
From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well!

By storied hill and hallowed grot,
By mossy wood and marshy glen,
Whence rang of old the rifle shot,
And hurrying shout of Marion's men!—
The groan of breaking hearts is there—

Slaves—SLAVES are breathing in that air
Which old De Kalb and Sumpter drank!

What, ho!—our countrymen in chains!—
The whip on WOMAN's shrinking flesh!—
Our soil yet reddening with the stains,
Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh!
What! mothers from their children riven!—
What! God's own image bought and sold!—
AMERICANS to market driven,
And bartered as the brute for gold!

Speak!—shall their agony of prayer
Come thrilling to our hearts in vain?
To us—whose fathers scorned to bear
The paltry menace of a chain;—
To us whose boast is loud and long
Of holy liberty and light—
Say, shall these writhing slaves of Wrong
Plead vainly for their plundered Right?

What!—shall we send, with lavish breath,
Our sympathies across the wave,
Where manhood on the field of death
Strikes for his freedom, or a grave?—
S and hymns be sung
For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning—
And millions hail with pen and tongue
Our light on all her altars burning?

feet, and against France,
By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrun's wall,

And shall the slave
Clank o'er our fields his hateful chain
And toss his fettered arms on high,
And groan for freedom's gift, in vain?

Oh say, shall Prussia's banner be
A refuge for the stricken slave,
Roman serf grow

And shall the w
Raise the iron hand of pride
And bid his bondmen cast the

And shall we scoff at Europe's
When Freedom's fire is dim with us,
And round our country's altar clings
The damning shade of Slavery's curse?

Go—let us ask of Constantine
To loose his grasp on Poland's throat—
the of Mahomet's
the struggling Suliote.
Will not the scorching answer come
From turbaned Turk, and fiery Russ—
'Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,
Then turn and ask the like of us!'

Just God! and shall we calmly rest,
The christian's scorn—the heathen's mirth—
Content to live the lingering jest
And by-word of a mocking earth?
Shall our own glorious land retain
That curse which Europe scorns to bear?
Shall our own brethren drag the chain
Which not even Russia's menials wear?

Up, then, in Freedom's manly part,
From gray-beard old to fiery youth,
And on the nation's naked heart
Scatter the living coals of Truth.
Up—while ye slumber, deeper yet
The shadow of our fame is growing—
Up—While ye pause, our sun may set
In blood, around our altars flowing!

t which wasted Egypt's earth,
d and fire above it ran.
no warnings in the air?

Up—up—why will ye slumber where
The sleeper only wakes in death?

Up now for Freedom!—not in strife
Like that your sterner fathers saw—
The awful waste of human life—
The glory and the guilt of war:
But break the chain—the yoke remove—
And smite to earth
With those mild arms of Truth and Love,
Made mighty through the living God!

Prone let the shrine of Moloch sink,
And leave no traces where it stood—
Nor longer let its idol drink
His daily cup of human blood:
But rear another altar there,
To truth and love and mercy given,
And Freedom's gift and Freedom's prayer
Shall call an answer down from Heaven!

He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

* England had 800,000 Slaves, and she has made them FREE! AMERICA has 2,300,000!—and she HOLDS THEM FAST!!!

Sold at the Anti-Slavery Office, 130 Nassau-Street, and at 67 Lispenard-St. NEW-YORK. Price THREE CENTS.

of equality and freedom, and speakers advocated in churches and public halls around the country.

The seeds of reawakening among Quakers could be said to have been sown the day before Paul Revere's famous ride in Boston. On an April evening in 1775, Anthony Benezet called together the meeting of Quakers in the Rising Sun Tavern in Philadelphia to consider the plight of a black woman, Dinah Nevil, who claimed she was free but was being held nonetheless as a slave. The group undertook her legal defense and formed a society with the ungainly name of the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. Interrupted by the American Revolution, the society regrouped in 1784, became more ecumenical, and renamed itself the (even more cumbersome) Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race. More commonly known as the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, the group was active in its early years in pressing both the state and national governments to end the slave trade. After slavery was outlawed in Pennsylvania in 1808, it turned more attention to establishing a school for African Americans in Philadelphia and providing legal help for free blacks who had been kidnapped and forced back into slavery.

Quaker antislavery societies and journals abounded. Benjamin Lundy, a Friend from Mount Pleasant, Ohio, formed an antislavery society called the Union Humane Society. Lundy contributed articles for *The Philanthropist*, an antislavery journal owned by Quaker Charles Osborn,

The Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, 1851. Standing, left to right: Mary Grew, Edward Davis, Haworth Wetherald, Abby Kimber, J. Miller McKim, Sarah Pugh. Seated, left to right: Oliver Johnson, Margaret Jones Burleigh, Benjamin C. Bacon, Robert Purvis, Lucretia Mott, James Mott. An example of Quaker leadership in the antislavery movement, this group was composed almost entirely of Friends (Grew, McKim, and Johnson were not). (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

and ultimately published a journal of his own, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*. In 1829, a young journalist from Boston, William Lloyd Garrison, moved to Baltimore to assist Lundy and ultimately joined with Friends in Philadelphia to found the American Anti-Slavery Society, whose goal was immediate abolition by nonviolent means.

Until 1833, most members of the antislavery societies that proliferated in the North were men; American women had traditionally limited their activities to charitable and religious societies, frequently directing their attention to education. The first women to participate in an organizational convention such as that of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) were Friends, long accustomed to speaking freely to mixed groups. Despite the fact that during the early eighteenth century, Quaker meetings were often conservative in terms of eschewing abolitionist advocacy for fear of threatening unity, Quaker men and particularly women played a prominent role in intensifying abolitionist agitation. By special invitation of the chairman, Friends Lucretia Mott, Lydia White, and Esther Moore spoke at the AASS convention in 1833, but custom prohibited them from voting on any of the proceedings, despite the fact that several suggestions Mott made in her speech were adopted as resolutions. Three weeks after this convention, Mott called together twenty like-minded personal friends, most of them Quakers and a few of them African Americans, to found the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

Lucretia Coffin Mott, one of a cadre of extraordinarily strong and reform-minded Nantucket Quakers, and her husband, James, were indefatigable antislavery advocates in Philadelphia. Mott, who was part of the more radical wing of Hicksites, brought to social activism a zeal for tangible, sometimes provocative, action. Her reform activities in her hometown of Philadelphia, nationally, and internationally were manifold; she mentored many Hicksite and Orthodox

Quaker women, such as Abby Kelley, Sarah Grimké and Angelina Grimké Weld, Sarah Pugh, and Lydia White. Her relentless efforts on behalf of abolition and women's rights were a testament to the formidable imperative for living according to Quaker values of advocating social justice. She set the bar high indeed.

The refusal to use the products of slave labor—sugar, rice, dyes, and cotton—grew into a major noninstitutional antislavery enterprise. An example of Quaker nonresistance, this effort, which came to be known as the free produce movement, had begun in the late eighteenth century when a few Quaker ministers, most notably John Woolman, determined to make a personal statement against slavery by eschewing products of slave labor. Elias Hicks, the traveling minister whose followers instigated the Separation in the 1820s, also refused to use such products. While a teacher at the Nine Partners Friends School in Millbrook, New York, Hicks had demonstrated a profound influence on many of his students, including the young Lucretia Coffin. Like Woolman, Hicks believed that each person was responsible for acting against the perfidiousness of slaveholding as he or she was able, and that the iniquitous institution was supported fundamentally by purchasers of the products of unfree labor. He espoused self-imposed restriction on consumption as a meaningful antislavery gesture.

Over time, the idea grew in power and its advocates grew in number. By the 1840s, free produce stores had sprung up in several areas—Boston, Wilmington, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Maine—

and particularly around Philadelphia, where the Motts became ardent supporters. Women were leaders in this effort. In a brilliant demonstration of Quaker nonviolent resistance, Lucretia Mott staunchly supported the free produce movement in her home by using no article made by slave labor, and despite financial sacrifice, James, an established textile merchant in Philadelphia, determined not to sell cotton from slave states, restricting his merchandise to different forms of wool.

Friend Lydia White, a member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, ran such a store for sixteen years, an impressive accomplishment, since procuring rice, dye, cotton, sugar, and coffee produced by free labor was difficult and the products were generally inferior in quality. White and others found nonslaveholding sugar suppliers in Puerto Rico and the British West Indies and reached as far as Manila, China, Mexico, and Java. Sugar supplies were always short. Mott's children, for example, were unhappy with the sweets produced from maple sugar or surrogates made from corn or potatoes; the cotton cloth, mostly bought from North Carolina nonslaveholding farmers, was coarse and more expensive. Nonetheless, at the height of the movement, there were twenty-six free produce societies throughout the country, organized to help stock the stores with products grown by free labor, to encourage antislavery advocates to make the effort and the sacrifice.[1]

Friends elsewhere in the country also worked against slavery. The extremely small minority of North Carolina Quakers struggled mightily in the years leading up to the Civil War. Most had given up their own slaves fairly

readily in the eighteenth century, which gesture, along with their constant lobbying on behalf of antislavery, did not endear them to their conservative, slaveholding neighbors. Each time they struck on a tactic to free the slaves of their neighbors, they were thwarted by a determined majority. For example, some meetings determined to buy slaves and send them north to enjoy their freedom; state legislation promptly followed forbidding such activity. North Carolina Quakers lobbied the legislature to allow for manumission of slaves in the state, but their efforts bore no fruit. We have seen that the North Carolina Yearly Meeting was uncomfortable in holding title to slaves, no matter how unfettered these slaves lived under their authority. After agitating consistently for decades, many North Carolina meetings ultimately gave up the struggle and acknowledged that they could not remain in the state, surrounded as they were by the inhumane behavior of their stubbornly proslavery neighbors. To avoid the violence and hostility of these neighbors, several meetings picked up stakes and moved wholesale to the newly established, slave-free Northwest Territory.

Many of these Quakers became leaders and active participants in the Underground Railroad, an informal and highly secret network of escape routes for slaves seeking freedom in the North. Operating exclusively by word of mouth, "conductors" on the Railroad courted great danger in their clandestine movement of slaves, but it was, of course, the slaves themselves who faced the greatest threat.

Friends participated on three major "lines" for escaping slaves: Philadelphia-Delaware-Baltimore; Mount Pleasant, Ohio; and the area northwest of Cincinnati. Philadelphia

Quaker Thomas Garrett and free black William Still developed a successful collaboration and helped hundreds of slaves along the route to freedom through Philadelphia and its environs. Perhaps their most widely known success involved the sensational escape of Henry "Box" Brown, a slave who had escaped Richmond in a railway car, crammed into a box three feet long and two feet wide, and arrived safely at the antislavery offices where William Still was a clerk. Brown was surely a little the worse for wear,

Henry "Box" Brown emerges from his packing crate at the offices of William Still, who stands behind him. His 1849 escape from slavery along the Underground Railroad was uncharacteristically heralded at the time. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

but there was no doubt that he was free at last. Still and Garrett then helped him further along the Underground Railroad to safety.[2]

In *The Underground Railroad*, published in 1872, William Still recounted his activities on the Railroad, asserting that fugitives were reasonably secure in Quaker areas. He emphasized the enthusiastic participation of female Friends on the Railroad. Quaker women disguised fugitives in their own heavy and concealing garb; nursed fugitives who had contracted smallpox; fed and clothed families of fugitives who arrived on their doorsteps in desperation and at all hours; brought them food, tucked under clean laundry being delivered to a place of hiding; and frequently walked beside them through public areas as the slaves moved to their next station. The deception and secrecy required in this effort, not to mention its illegality, troubled some Quakers, but the many Friends who supported the Railroad did so because they determined that God's Law outweighed that of men.

A distant relative of Lucretia Coffin Mott, Levi Coffin had moved with his family in 1823 from the New Garden Meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, to Newport, Indiana. There, he and his wife continued the work with runaway slaves that Levi had begun as a small boy in North Carolina and quickly began the operation of frequently used safe houses for slaves en route from the South to Canada, first in Newport and later in Cincinnati. He was well supported by his community and by his knowledge of slavery laws. Coffin was informally recognized as president of

Levi and Catherine Coffin, leaders of the Underground Railroad in Indiana and Ohio. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

the Underground Railroad, and dramatic stories abound of his heroic partnerships with fleeing slaves, thousands of whom traveled through his safe houses.

A dramatic scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* depicts a frightened runaway who seeks the help of Quakers because he knows their reputation as advocates of freedom. Another character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, Eliza Harris, the slave woman who crosses the Ohio River on drifting ice with her child in her arms, was based on a real woman taken in by the Coffins in Newport. Contemporaries believed that Coffin and his wife were the models for the virtuous Quaker couple Simeon and Rachel Halliday. Coffin always

maintained that Stowe's portrayal of the cruelties inflicted on slaves was not overdrawn.

Stowe maintained that a youthful encounter with Angelina Grimké sparked a lifelong interest in Friends and their efforts on behalf of abolition and women's rights, an interest that inspired the depiction of the Hallidays and other "good Quaker" characters in her writings. Angelina and her sister Sarah were indeed inspirational. They were pioneers in their insistence on a public role for women, and they were unique in their roles as southern abolitionists and as respectable women demanding a voice in public advocacy for the downtrodden. A good fit in the Friends mold, they were at once two of the most famous women of their time and among the most controversial.

Born into a wealthy plantation-owning Huguenot family in Charleston, the Grimké sisters became convinced Friends after their personal rebuke against slavery and the corrupt social system it fostered in their home state. They moved to Philadelphia, where they became active in Quaker circles, and began touring the North as witnesses to the horrors and inhumanity of slavery that they knew firsthand from their childhood. Their range and forcefulness expanded quickly, and they soon became among the most powerful speakers on the abolitionist lecture circuit. The Grimkés were frequently criticized by clergy and others who felt that their public crusade threatened the "female character." In the face of criticism, they became more and more radical, and increasingly in their writings the sisters began to advocate for the rights of women along-

side those of blacks. Undaunted by the vituperative criticism, they continued to advocate to larger and larger groups in the North and South. In 1838, Angelina was the first woman to address a legislative body when she spoke to the Massachusetts legislature on abolition and women's rights.

Apart from their gender, the Grimkés were highly provocative because they addressed "promiscuous" audiences, that is, gatherings of both men and women. Many in the antislavery movement were offended by this, convinced that the introduction of scandalous gender issues undermined the antislavery efforts. Even some Quakers were threatened by this practice and by the sisters' increasing insistence on women's rights as well as freedom for slaves. In 1838, Angelina married the non-Quaker abolitionist Theodore Weld and was disowned by her Orthodox Philadelphia meeting, as was Sarah for having attended the wedding ceremony. Nevertheless, both women continued to consider themselves Friends and maintained close personal and working ties with others in the Society.

As northern public opinion began to turn against abolitionists, the Grimkés and other speakers found it more difficult to secure meeting venues. In 1837, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society found itself with no alternative to convening in a stable. The timid were wary of proslavery riots; abolitionists were perceived as endangering commercial relations with the South and encouraging free blacks to compete with whites for jobs. The second national Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women was to convene in Philadelphia in 1838; for that occasion, reformers

raised the funds to build a hall of their own—Pennsylvania Hall—where free speech would be protected. But when the public learned that women and men, blacks and whites were to sit together at the conference, reaction ran dangerously high. As the first meeting was called to order, on May 15, 1838, Angelina Grimké gave a powerful speech despite the noise from the angry throng that circled the building. At the conclusion of the final day's program, the abolitionist women within were forced to brave a raucous mob as they departed the building and, in response, demonstrated a calm attitude of nonresistance. Lucretia Mott arranged for the delegates to exit in pairs—a black woman and a white woman arm in arm—all of whom followed her as she led the dignified and determined parade of women through the ranks of the threatening anti-abolitionist crowd. This proved too great a provocation, and the infuriated mob responded by burning the new building to the ground.

After Angelina's marriage to Weld, both sisters retired from public life as Angelina concentrated on raising her children. Sarah lived with the Welds, and both sisters continued their writings on behalf of abolition and women's rights. After the Civil War, they continued to champion equal rights for women.

Social Action Despite Separation

The impressive and broad-based Quaker advocacy on behalf of African Americans was carried out against the backdrop of the acrimonious internal divisions of the nineteenth century. Hicksite and Orthodox Friends often differed in

their style of activism. Some Wilburite Friends and some less radical Hicksites, as well, preferred that such social action take place in Quaker venues—in meetings and organizations separated from non-Quakers. For these Friends, the escalating agitation of some of their brethren—the Motts, the Grimkés, Anthony Benezet, and John Greenleaf Whittier, among many—was too public, counterproductive, and contrary to the spiritual integrity of the Religious Society of Friends. Furthermore, the collaboration with non-Quakers was deemed by some meetings as threatening to unity. In the emotional turmoil of the antebellum period, individual Friends and various meetings described in different ways the parameters of worldliness acceptable to the peculiar people.

The landscape of the Separation did not divide neatly along Hicksite-Orthodox lines as a defining indicator of humanitarian effort. For example, the Motts were leaders among the more radical wing of Hicksites, but the Grimkés and Whittier belonged to Orthodox meetings. All worked together aggressively on behalf of abolition. Differences among Friends regarding the speed of abolition mirrored those in the nation at large, and, obviously, the preferences of those advocates of more temperate, gradual reform did not prevent the activity of the more aggressive promoters of social equality. Most important, Quaker factionalism in the nineteenth century must certainly have preoccupied many Friends, but it certainly did not dilute social reform efforts. On the contrary, the public and private works of these nineteenth-century antislavery advocates served to connect the old parochial Quaker impulse toward equality with the growing repugnance of other Christian sects toward

all forms of slavery and, more important, strengthened a bona fide Quaker humanitarian and philanthropic spirit.

Friends were subject to the same familial rifts over antislavery activity suffered by non-Quakers throughout the country. Business partners and brothers John and Moses Brown, extremely successful merchants and ship owners in Providence, Rhode Island, fell out bitterly over the slave trade toward the end of the eighteenth century. John not only defended it but also broke laws intended to stop it. Moses, a convinced Friend, ended his lucrative involvement with the trade and became an ardent abolitionist and social reformer. Similarly, midwestern cousins Levi and Elijah Coffin split over abolition and the work of the Underground Railroad. These examples vividly demonstrate differences over style and tactics of reform, but not in the unity of endeavor of promoting the testimonies of peace and equality. Quaker antislavery work played a crucial and outsized role in the movement to abolish slavery.

The rift between Levi Coffin and his cousin Elijah Coffin, civic leader and Indiana Yearly Meeting clerk, spelled itself out in the factionalism of Orthodox Quakers in the mid-nineteenth century. As agitation over slavery heated up in the 1840s, the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting separated over the abolitionist activities of some of its members, including Levi Coffin. Several of the meeting's leaders were removed because of their antislavery activism, which was deemed by the majority to have endangered the purity of the Society because, in following the admonition of Joseph John Gurney, these Friends advocated their position in the company of non-Quakers.

The departing activists became known as Antislavery Friends. But even here, the lines of conflict were not clear. The Antislavery Friends, led by Charles Osborn, were willing to work with non-Quakers, but many in this group questioned some of the evangelical theology espoused by Gurney. And by 1850, Gurneyite Friends had forged a religious vision that was deeply charged by evangelicalism, including the supremacy of the Atonement and the critical importance of scripture. Influenced by the revivalist movement among non-Quaker evangelicals, these Gurneyite Friends, in Indiana and elsewhere, found energizing common ground with evangelical Protestants who also embraced humanitarian and reform impulses. This evangelical vision included theological positions that differed drastically from the old Quietist Quaker doctrine, but it was very much in keeping with fundamental Quaker espousal of advocacy for social justice. And Levi Coffin continued to work alongside Hicksite and Gurneyite conductors on the Underground Railroad.[3]

The participation of southern Quakers was essential to the success of the Railroad, for it was they who helped the slaves set forth on their perilous journeys. North Carolinian Delphina Mendenhall was well known as a courageous southerner who arranged both legal and illegal trips north. And when war came, southern Friends, who were torn between their antislavery convictions and their testimony against violence, often assuaged their conscience by aiding some of the three million freed blacks who remained displaced on southern soil.

Friends were by no means alone in the work of the Underground Railroad; on the contrary, increasing numbers of reform-minded evangelical Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists were also on the antislavery front lines. And hundreds of blacks risked a peril far greater than that of whites by embarking on this journey. But Quakers were surely recognized by contemporaries as leaders in the undertaking. Frequently, in interviews given after their escape, former slaves who arrived safely in Canada cited as common practice the judicious search for northerners wearing Quaker bonnets as those most likely to help them along the road to freedom.

Notes

1. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 111.
2. Judith Bentley, *"Dear Friend": Thomas Garrett and William Still, Collaborators on the Underground Railroad* (New York: Cobblehill Books, 1997), 48.
3. Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800–1907* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 32–33.

7

The Ongoing Struggle for Civil Rights

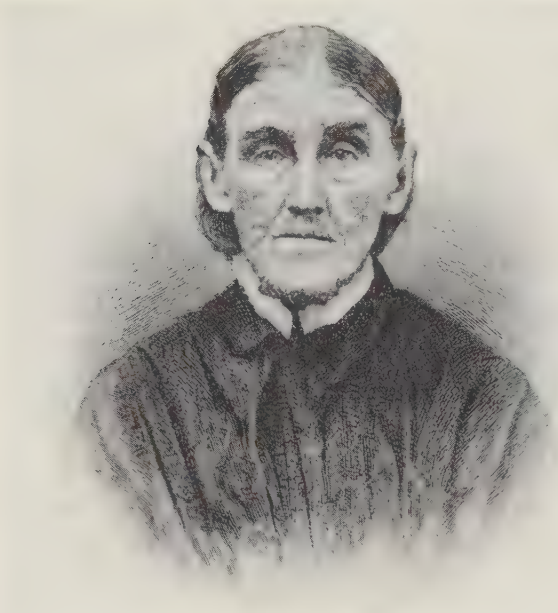
As the Quakers' conception of the needy expanded over time, their humanitarian concern swelled to include those who were discriminated against. Even before African Americans were freed, Quaker educators and others had turned their attention to their needs. As with Native Americans, Quakers have a long history of helping those in need to help themselves, and education has been a favored method. For example, in 1837, the will of Quaker Richard Humphreys created a school for blacks in Philadelphia. The Institute for Colored Youth became an outstanding school, offering young African Americans a classical education. During and after the Civil War, many of these students taught at

newly established schools for freed slaves. Eventually, the Institute evolved into Cheyney University of Pennsylvania.[1]

The story of Prudence Crandall's school for girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, attests to the activism and leadership of Quakers in reform efforts. In 1833, Crandall admitted a black student, Sarah Harris; when the town fathers objected to the integration of the races, Crandall dismissed the white students instead. Thereafter, through advertisements in *The Liberator* and other abolitionist newspapers, Crandall succeeded in attracting black students from many states. Angry townspeople reacted violently by throwing garbage on her stoop, breaking her windows, and fouling her well. Ultimately, she was tried and found guilty of violating a trumped-up Connecticut law forbidding the education of black students who were not residents of Connecticut. Years later, the state of Connecticut exonerated her and apologized for the outrages inflicted upon her.[2]

Both during and after the Civil War, Friends around the country worked together to ameliorate conditions for freed blacks in the North and South. During the war, many Quakers devoted themselves to caring for the "contraband," recently freed slaves who had gathered in large numbers behind Union lines. Women sewed clothes, men raised money for food and shelter, and many young Friends went to work among them, offering succor and supplies as they could. Hundreds of Friends traveled south to teach the newly emancipated blacks.

One of the less heralded pioneers of social reform was Hicksite Friend Cornelia Hancock. As a nurse during the



Prudence Crandall, a courageous Quaker educator determined to fight racial prejudice and promote education for African Americans both before and after the Civil War. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

war, she had worked to feed and clothe contraband blacks housed outside of Washington, DC. At the end of hostilities, she migrated to South Carolina, where she distributed clothing and tools to former slaves and founded a school in a ruined church; for the first lesson, she used charcoal from an old fire. After 1876, she returned to her home in the North and, with similar energy, resumed her activities on behalf of the needy of Philadelphia. She helped organize at least two social welfare agencies, one of which evolved

to become the Family Service Society and, ultimately, the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania.

Under the leadership of Levi Coffin, Indiana Friends organized the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, which shipped supplies to former slaves in Vicksburg and Little Rock. The Indiana Yearly Meeting established the Committee on Contraband Relief, which established schools and orphanages throughout the region. The New England Yearly Meeting concentrated on shelter and education in the Washington, DC, area. Beginning in 1865, Baltimore Friends set up many normal and industrial schools all over Maryland.

Throughout the Reconstruction period, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society continued its interest in black education. Philadelphia Friends, Orthodox and Hicksite, set up scores of schools, which were staffed by teachers supplied by Friends. By 1870, Orthodox Friends had established nearly fifty schools; by 1868, Philadelphia Hicksites had set up twenty-five schools in Virginia and South Carolina.[3]

The Schofield Normal and Industrial School in Aiken, South Carolina, is an excellent example of a school begun by a northern Friend, Martha Schofield, who sold her family farm in Pennsylvania and went south to the Sea Islands to teach displaced freedmen. In 1868, ill with malaria, Schofield moved to Aiken, bought two city blocks, and began a day school for African Americans, teaching basic academic skills and some industrial arts to the boys and home economics skills, such as cooking and sewing, to the girls. Over time, in typical Friends fashion, Schofield turned the administration of the school over to African Americans, continuing

Schofield Normal and Industrial School, Aiken, South Carolina, 1869. Founded by Philadelphia Friend Martha Schofield, it was the first school for black children in the state. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

By 1900, under the direction of African Americans, the Schofield School was thriving. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

to support it as she could. The school flourished and ultimately became part of the Aiken public school system.

In 1863, Philadelphia Quakers founded the Friends' Association of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity, for the Relief of Colored Freedmen, another organization whose purpose was the relief and education of newly emancipated African Americans. In 1873, it became known as the Friends' Freedmen's Association. In 1866, the association founded Christiansburg Institute outside of Blacksburg, Virginia.

A cobbling class at Christiansburg Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, shows one of many trades taught at this vocational school. It was established by Friends right after the Civil War to help freedmen and freedwomen take their rightful place in society. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

Farming techniques were taught at Christiansburg Institute along with other vocations. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

At Christiansburg Institute, women as well as men received vocational training, including basketry, ironing, and serving. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

In 1895, the association invited Booker T. Washington to supervise the school, which he did as a nonresident for the next twenty years. Under his stewardship, and consonant with Friends' commitment to equip the disadvantaged to help themselves, the school was transformed into Christiansburg Industrial Institute. Attended, taught, and administered by African Americans, the school flourished under the auspices of the Friends' Freedmen's Association, whose members supported it financially and served on its board of directors until its closing in 1966.

All students at Christiansburg Institute took both vocational and academic classes. As in other schools that Quakers founded for blacks, teachers and administrators were African American, and there was no missionizing. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

Other examples abound of a continuing Quaker witness on behalf of civil rights for African Americans. By the mid-twentieth century, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) had seen an opportunity to carry out energetic outreach and advocacy for African American civil rights and found many interesting and effective tactics for doing so. The AFSC arranged for notable black professors to address the subject of race relations at colleges and universities. It started up an employment placement office in Philadelphia, contributing to the establishment of a nationwide program of employment according to merit.

After *Brown v. Board of Education*, the AFSC turned its attention to aiding the black families who dared to send their children to formerly segregated schools. When the Fairfax, Virginia, school system chose to close rather than integrate, the AFSC found desegregated public and private schools for the black students to attend in the North. The AFSC also worked to desegregate housing, first in Philadelphia suburbs and then throughout the country. It enthusiastically supported the freedom marches in the 1960s; it was the AFSC that published Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Today, through programs as diverse as living theater companies in Baltimore's inner city and mentoring programs in Newark, the AFSC continues to teach, model, and encourage respect and equality among all men and women.

Typically and consistently, many Quakers in the twentieth century assumed leadership positions in civil rights advocacy. For example, Levi Hollingsworth Wood, clerk of the New York Yearly Meeting from 1926 to 1931, was a

founding member of the National Urban League, which he served as president for twenty-six years. Among his many reform efforts, Wood was also a founding member of the AFSC.

Staughton Lynd was a Quaker activist for civil rights and peace. Among many other undertakings in his long career, Lynd was the director of education for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi during the Freedom Summer campaign of 1964. There, his work mirrored the indefatigable efforts of Cornelia Hancock and Martha Schofield and hundreds of other Friends during and after the Civil War: he hired teachers, wrote curricula, located whatever classroom facilities he could, and taught reading, writing, and basic skills to illiterate black men and women.

One of the greatest twentieth-century activists on behalf of reform was Bayard Rustin, whose lifetime of service to the goal of racial equality was inspired by his Quaker belief in egalitarianism, tolerance of dissent, simplicity, and nonviolence. Rustin, a man of color whose experiences with segregation influenced his worldview, as did the Quaker teachings of his grandmother, worked ceaselessly for peace and racial equality. In the 1940s, as a young man, he worked for the interfaith Fellowship of Reconciliation, speaking throughout the country at colleges, Quaker work camps, and Civilian Public Service camps, asking why blacks should fight for a segregated America.

After America's entrance into World War II, Rustin worked with A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, to plan a major black march on Washington, DC. Along with pacifist A. J. Muste, they

Bayard Rustin, nonviolent activist for civil and human rights, speaking at a rally in New York City, 1965. (*Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*)

met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to urge an end to racial segregation and discrimination in war industry jobs. The proposed protest march was scrapped after the president heard their message and issued Executive Order 8802 (the Fair Employment Act), which banned discrimination in defense industries and federal agencies. After the war, Rustin and Randolph again joined forces to win a similar decree from President Harry Truman, ending segregation in the armed forces.

Rustin continued his pacifist efforts by joining the War Resisters League, and in 1965 he founded the A. Philip Randolph Institute. From these bases, Rustin became one of the foremost leaders of the civil rights movement in America and, as such, became one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s

chief advisers. He was the architect of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, at which King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. Rustin's world vision, which he developed during his thirteen years at Dr. King's side, sprang from a philosophy steeped in nonviolence. As black churches were being bombed in the South, Rustin persisted in pushing the civil rights advocacy from civil rights to voting rights, then on to issues of poverty, jobs, urban ghettos, and finally to opposing the Vietnam War.

Armed with his influence and energy and his insistence on uniting African Americans and liberals, Rustin helped to ignite the civil rights moment in America. His decades of tireless advocacy contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. An example of Rustin's typically nonviolent tactics was his successful effort to organize the New York City school boycott in February 1964, during which 450,000 students stayed home from school to advocate for integration of the city schools. Sadly, his legacy has been diluted by contemporary prejudice against his homosexuality, but he never stopped agitating for a united and equal nation.[4]

Notes

1. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 145.
2. Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972), 97–102.
3. Bacon, *Rebels*, 124–125.
4. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988), 413–415.

IV

THE UNITY OF THE GENDERS

8

Women in the Meeting

From its earliest days in England, women were important figures in the Religious Society of Friends, and over time they became among the most prominent American reformers. Unlike their contemporaries, Quakers educated their girls as well as their boys and established separate women's Meetings for Business. These parallel women's meetings were quickly standardized in colonial America; their task was to handle disciplinary matters concerning women. While the men's Meetings for Business dealt with financial issues, a unity of men's and women's business meetings was required for any action concerning practice or discipline.

Not only were women encouraged to speak in meetings, but they were frequently among the most persuasive "ministers," lay members of a meeting who were recognized as carrying a great deal of weight in their spiritual understanding and practice. While early Quakers accepted some social distinctions dividing men and women, the role accorded women in public preaching was unique among Christian sects. Margaret Fell, a Quaker follower of George Fox who later became his wife, held enormous influence, working tirelessly during the early decades of persecution in England to comfort those who suffered on account of their beliefs. She set up "safe houses" for their respite and restoration after imprisonment and deprivation.

Among the first Friends to arrive in North America was Elizabeth Harris, who traveled from England in 1656 or 1657 to the Chesapeake Bay region in response to a calling she felt to carry the message of the Religious Society of Friends to Puritans in Virginia and Maryland. In the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, scores of Quaker women braved awesome dangers in traversing the Atlantic and endured considerable physical trials, sometimes for years at a time, as they traveled into isolated and primitive settlements in the colonies, stimulating interest in the Society and shoring up remote communities of Friends. The persistent and independent behavior of these preachers was threatening to the prevailing mores of the time, which discouraged women from usurping men's authority by speaking in public, especially in religious services. Their ministerial role was born of the fundamental Quaker belief in equality between the sexes; indeed, there are hundreds

of references to the power and inspiration of these extraordinary preachers.[1]

Fortunately, because of the strong Friends tradition of journal writing, we have access to the very rich and dramatic narratives of these dedicated and fearless women. Stories abound of the inspiration and direction taken from the renowned preachings of such ministers as Mary Peisley and Catharine Payton, who traveled together through the colonies in 1753, and Jane Fenn, a maid in the home of prominent Philadelphia Quaker David Lloyd, who preached throughout the colonies in the early years of the eighteenth century. Susannah Morris continued her active ministry in Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Europe until she was seventy. Margaret Ellis, who was Welsh and reticent about speaking English, overcame her reluctance and assumed a special ministry to blacks and to laborers in ironworks. Undaunted by risk or peril, unmindful of crushing physical discomfort and emotional exigencies, these women followed a long tradition of carrying their vocation to Friends wherever they might be. When a group of female English traveling ministers arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1656, they were imprisoned, their Quaker books were burned, and they were expelled from the colony. One of these who defiantly returned to Boston, Mary Dyer, is one of four known examples of executions for Quaker beliefs. Friends were strenuously persecuted in England and parts of the colonies, but only in Boston were Quakers put to death for their beliefs. To Massachusetts Bay Puritans, as to many others, the active ministries of Quaker women were an enormous threat to social and religious order.

Many of these women preachers had families, in which case their lengthy journeys came at great expense to both husband and children as well as to themselves. But their families and their meetings considered their work of great consequence and contributed wholeheartedly to encourage their vocations. The example and the messages of these remarkable women were highly valued in the growing transatlantic Quaker world, and their experiences surely stood apart from those of any other women of the time.

Although traveling women ministers were an obvious and unique statement of women's role in Quaker life from the beginning of the Society, women made other important contributions to Quaker organization, discipline, and custom—contributions that augmented their equality and influence within the Society and without. One hub of great influence was the women's meetings, ancillary organizational structures advocated by George Fox and Margaret Fell and refined and enlarged in America. Women's meetings evolved into bodies interested in church governance, discipline of women, unity of the meeting, and human outreach. These meetings, while usually less financially secure than the men's meetings, still utilized authority to expand their role.

The first American monthly meetings were established in 1681, on the advice of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Women's Meetings for Business followed soon after. At first it was not clear what specific responsibilities these meetings would undertake, but gradually they assumed authority over discipline of women whose behavior was inappropriate, sent visiting committees to inquire after women

who were not attending meetings, and began to collect small sums of money to distribute to the poor. They were represented at quarterly and yearly meetings and participated in determining who might embark on public ministries with the approval of the monthly meeting.

Perhaps the two most important functions of women in American meetings were their support of the institution of marriage and their contributions to the unity of membership, both important means of safeguarding the integrity and stability of the meeting. Strict rules governed Quaker marriage: marriages had to take place within the meeting, and a certificate of good standing was required if one partner came from another meeting. It was generally the responsibility of the women's meetings to oversee the marriage process: committees interviewed the couple to confirm their intentions, to ensure that both were convinced Friends who would remain active and raise their families in the meeting. Women from the meeting attended each wedding to be sure that dignity and decency prevailed. Representatives from the women's meeting might also join committees established as necessary to visit members whose lax attendance at meetings or other demonstrations of un-Quakerly behavior required discipline.

It was also the women's meetings from which those in need might seek help. All such meetings collected funds for the poor and distressed; widows were tended with great care. Permission for widows to remarry was often sluggish. Both women's and men's meetings were eager to secure the first husband's estate in the hands of the children before a second marriage took place. This was clearly an attempt by

meetings to protect the children; it was seldom appreciated by widows wanting to marry again.

Because Quakers valued the equality of the genders and educated their girls as well as their boys, a far larger percentage of Quaker women were literate than was the norm elsewhere in society. Without this Quaker practice of educational equality, Nantucket women would have been ill equipped to support their families, run small businesses, and make financial and other important decisions in the absence of their whaling men, who were sometimes absent for two years at a time. There was a distinctly symbiotic relationship between the Nantucket whaling enterprise and the Quaker ethos. Unique among their contemporaries, the educated and empowered Quaker women of Nantucket were poised to contribute dramatically to its success.

Note

1. Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700–1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 3, 10.

Quaker Women in the Vanguard

In the nineteenth century, as American women began to look beyond traditional roles, Quaker women were particularly well prepared to join the professions and advocate for reform in the public arena. Despite the fact that members of the Religious Society of Friends by this time represented less than 1 percent of the U.S. population, the statistics are impressive: Some 22 percent of the first female doctors were Friends, as were 22 percent of female naturalists and 16 percent of female entrepreneurs. Among reformers, the numbers are even more telling and reflect Quakers' profound sense of equality of the sexes: 33 percent of all female prison reformers, 40 percent of female abolition-

ists, and 18 percent of those involved in the women's rights movement.[1] Four of the five women who called the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 were Quakers, and a few years later, in 1851, their leadership was amended to include another Friend, Susan B. Anthony. The dominant presence of Quaker leaders in the women's rights movement is further evidence of Friends' imperative to act to correct society's inequities.

The antislavery crusade dramatically introduced into the civic realm the fervor and efficacy of Quaker women. And out of abolitionist agitation, out of the rousing speeches and impressive organizational talent of women such as Sarah and Angelina Grimké and Lucretia Mott, came a parallel cry for women's rights. It was natural that Quaker women should spark this movement, since they had evinced considerable voice within their religious communities for two centuries. Their outspoken advocacy for rights and improved conditions for African Americans and other disadvantaged people inevitably broadened to embrace the rights of women. The criticism and vituperation directed at reformers of their gender for taking such a leadership role, for speaking and writing on behalf of the rights of others, led inexorably to their determination to make equal their own place in society.

In the drive for women's rights, Hicksite women were the most prominent advocates. Hicks' message emphasized the centrality of individual conscience that Mott and other activists understood to be strongly compatible with early feminist insistence on the equality in the moral natures of the sexes. After the Separation of the nineteenth century,

Hicks' followers were more attracted to radical feminism than were their Orthodox sisters and more interested in institutional reform, although, as usual, there were exceptions and examples of women from both factions working together. Lucretia Coffin Mott, one of the three Hicksite women among the five who in 1848 called the Seneca Falls Convention, was a central figure in advocating for equality for women, both in Pennsylvania and nationally. Hicksites were instrumental in women's rights reform in Ohio and Indiana as well. Congregational Friends, an offshoot of the Hicksites, were especially interested in legal equality for women. Susan B. Anthony, a Hicksite schoolteacher from Rochester, New York, quickly became central to the movement. After the Civil War, Anthony and non-Quaker Elizabeth Cady Stanton commenced a fruitful and enduring collaboration by forming the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Hicksite women helped establish the Female Medical College of Philadelphia in 1850 and were instrumental in the founding of coeducational Swarthmore College in 1864.

Orthodox women Friends took a somewhat different path toward reform. Wilburite Friends (who came to be known as Conservative Friends) showed little interest in women's rights until the end of the nineteenth century, and Gurneyite Quaker women tended to be less aggressive than Hicksites in their reform agenda. They largely eschewed efforts toward legal equality and chose instead the traditionally humanitarian reforms of old-line Quakers and other Protestant evangelicals. Many of these women worked for temperance. Rhoda Coffin worked for prison

reform in Indiana after the Civil War, while another Gurneyite minister, Elizabeth Comstock of Michigan, was known for her efforts in prison reform and for her relief work among freed slaves. The Orthodox Quaker colleges were all coeducational except for Haverford College, which after 1885 had a female counterpart, Bryn Mawr College. The second president of Bryn Mawr, M. Carey Thomas, was a pioneer in educational reform for women and became president of the National College Equal Suffrage League.

But the lines between Orthodox and Hicksite reformers were not brightly drawn. While it is true that Hicksites took an aggressive lead in advocating for women's rights, the Grimké sisters were members of the Orthodox Philadelphia meeting, and there were few more assertive female reformers than these two. So too, Sarah Pugh, one of the most stalwart Quaker women leading the feminist movement in Philadelphia as president of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society for most of the years 1838–1866, was affiliated with the Orthodox Friends. Despite differences in worship and organization, female reformers, as well as their male counterparts, frequently worked together for humanitarian ends.

From the 1830s, female Quaker activists increasingly joined the struggle for equality for African Americans and women, sometimes in speeches to crowds consisting of both men and women, an uncommon and controversial practice at the time. As we have seen, during the second meeting of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in 1838 in the beautiful new Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia, Angelina Grimké spoke eloquently to such

an audience. The uproar of an outraged and disapproving mob resulted in the burning of the hall and a violent march on the Motts' house, where disaster was averted only at the last minute when a friend of the Motts, pretending to be a member of the hostile throng, called out "On to the Motts!" and pointed in the wrong direction.

After this appearance, the Grimké sisters withdrew for several years, although their public advocacy of women's rights resumed after the Civil War. Ready to take their place as a formidable advocate of abolition and women's rights was Abby Kelley, a Quaker schoolteacher from Lynn, Massachusetts. Kelley became passionate about the antislavery movement after meeting Mott and the Grimkés. She embarked on a public witness against slavery that aroused both admiration and opposition from her meeting. Many of the members identified with her sympathies toward reform and understood them to be grounded in Friendly activism: a tradition of anticlericalism, of female preaching and speaking in meetings, and of opposition to slavery. But many others were threatened by her public and controversial agitation, fearing its divisive impact on the Society. Pained by the opposition of the Lynn Meeting, but undeterred, Kelley responded to a calling to lecture throughout Connecticut, thereby provoking the ire of various New England Protestant clergymen, such as Hartford's Horace Bushnell. In response to Kelley's provocative behavior, Bushnell arranged informally with his female parishioners to create a "sphere of influence" for them as passive, sentimental, domestic, and Christian, in exchange for an enhanced level of "prestige" within their

congregations. In other words, they were to shun the lectures and the arguments of upstart women such as Abby Kelley, and their reward was to be a verbal cushion of protection and patronization. Kelley refused to be cowed by the clergymen and continued her public confrontation of their antifeminist arguments. At a meeting of the all-male Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society in 1840, she was refused permission to speak on account of her gender. She objected strenuously to the unfairness of the minister in charge, who exploded in rage and excoriated her in front of the entire gathering. He refused to tolerate what he viewed as an outrage on decency and denounced Kelley for daring to "lord it over men in public assemblies." His tirade produced a vote of the assembled to silence Abby Kelley.

Silence did not suit her. In fact, Kelley's difficult struggle with the conservative, proslavery New England Protestant clergy encouraged her to combine her antislavery and women's rights advocacies. In the same year as her rejection in Connecticut, she and a Nantucket Quaker minister, Eliza Barney, were asked to sit on a committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, an organization Kelley had helped William Lloyd Garrison to integrate by gender. This unprecedented inclusion of a woman in a position of leadership incited the angry departure of the conservative clerical wing, who formed their own all-male American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which insisted on a clear division between agitation for abolition and for women's rights.

Shortly thereafter, in 1840, the World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London. Women were deliberately

denied invitations, but the New England and Pennsylvania antislavery societies, both by now open to both men and women, ignored the exclusion and sent female representatives anyway. In addition to Lucretia and James Mott, three Quaker women—Sarah Pugh, Abby Kimber, and Elizabeth Neall—accompanied by the Baptist activist Mary Grew, arrived in London only to be told they could not be seated as members. There followed a vigorous debate that failed to change the ruling. To no avail, Mott continued her efforts to persuade delegates of the fundamental injustice of this rule. In the end, the women were seated behind a curtain so they could hear but could not be seen. Moved by their dignity in defeat and the rightness of their cause, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, wife of delegate Henry Stanton, joined the women in exile.

The insistence of Mott, the Grimkés, Abby Kelley, and others that antislavery efforts go hand in hand with women's rights alienated some antislavery activists, who feared that the tactic would undermine the drive for abolition. Some Orthodox Friends found this coupling too aggressive. Nevertheless, they continued their energetic public advocacy on behalf of both abolition and women's rights.

On the last day of the London convention, new friends Mott and Stanton vowed that upon their return to the United States they would work together to organize a conference to advocate for women's rights. Eight years later, they made good on that promise. While visiting her sister in upper New York State, Mott arranged to meet with Stanton over tea at the home of Friend Jane Hunt. Also present at that gathering in the summer of 1848 were Mott's sister,

Martha Coffin Wright, and Mary Ann McClintock, a dissident Friend from Michigan who was dissatisfied with the recent conservative refusal of the Genessee Yearly Meeting to engage in the abolition and women's rights movements. Like Abby Kelley, these Quaker women were imbued with the religious spirit to reform; not even the conservative timidity of the Friends' organizational authority could deter them.

The result of the conversation that day was the Seneca Falls Convention. It was quickly organized and met with huge success. Thousands of Friends and others came from near and far, including a large contingent from Rochester, New York. Mott and Stanton spoke, as did Frederick Douglass; Amy Post, an eloquent Rochester abolitionist and feminist; and Mary Ann McClintock and her husband, Thomas. At the finale, one hundred persons, two-thirds of them women, signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The Rochester delegation invited Mott and others to a second convention in their hometown two weeks later. The organizational drive for women's rights had begun.[2]

Mott and Stanton enjoyed a lively correspondence over the ensuing years, but it was Stanton who was the driving force behind the fledgling movement. She was tied to her home much of the time, attending to her family, but she wrote most of the speeches and planned much of the strategy. Mott attended several events over the years and chaired some of them, but Stanton bore much of the labor. A real organizer was required, someone who could do the legwork that Stanton could not. A great and productive partnership was born when Stanton met Susan B. Anthony in

Susan B. Anthony (standing) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton forged a long-standing and effective collaboration on behalf of women's rights in America. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

1851. A Rochester Friend, Anthony, like many of her Hicksite sisters, was interested in legal reform. She and Stanton first worked on a campaign to revise New York's Married Women's Property Law, and she also took to the road as a Garrisonian abolitionist lecturer from 1858 until the outbreak of the Civil War. The two demonstrated complementary talents and between them kept the women's movement alive until after the war.

Anthony was frustrated with the reluctance of so many meetings to take radical stands on women's rights and abolition, but she continued to dress with Quaker simplicity, and she carried with her many Friends attitudes. She was not enamored of the concept of the "noble purity of womanhood": she sought equal opportunities and equal responsibilities for men and women. Though not an inspired orator, Anthony frequently made reference to the Quaker practice of women speaking in and out of meetings.

Suffrage

After the war, Anthony and Stanton together inaugurated the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which worked well into the twentieth century for the enfranchisement of women. One of Anthony's methods of protesting the voting inequity was to invoke the Fourteenth Amendment as legal support for claiming the right to vote. In her home congressional district, Anthony organized a striking demonstration: In a deliberate violation of the law, fifty women registered to vote in the presidential election of 1872; four of them actually showed up and voted at the polls. Anthony led the group, which included four

of her relatives and eleven neighbors, many of them Quakers. Hundreds of others followed suit in subsequent elections by voting illegally; still others, including Abby Kelley, refused to pay taxes until women won suffrage. Anthony and other Quaker women of different persuasions—including Gurneyite M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr College; Florence Kelley, a tireless worker for civil rights, child labor laws, and peace; Jane Addams, leader of the settlement movement and founder of Hull House; and Rachel Foster Avery, NAWSA secretary—continued to agitate aggressively on behalf of women's suffrage.

As a young woman, Alice Paul, a Hicksite Friend from Moorestown, New Jersey, spent a year in England, where she worked with Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the radical British suffragists. Jailed with these militants for her participation in various nonresistant but provocative protests, Paul returned to America determined to bring a more radical form of protest to the campaign for women's suffrage.

While a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, Paul joined NAWSA, and in 1912 she moved to Washington, DC, to organize for suffrage. Having learned her lessons well from the British suffragists, she immediately planned a publicity-worthy parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. On March 3, 1913, timed deliberately to coincide with the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson, the women began to march, led by glamorous socialite-lawyer-activist Inez Milholland, dressed in Greek robes astride a great white horse. The initially curious crowd of onlookers was generally appalled at the audacity of the

women to march in this fashion for an unworthy and scandalous cause—they grew rowdy and then physically violent while Washington police stood by in sympathy. As Paul had hoped and expected, the next day's newspapers carried news of the debacle throughout the country, making the topic of suffrage discussed everywhere.

Under the auspices of Paul's Congressional Union, these suffragists stepped up their nonviolent campaign. They staged demonstrations in front of the White House, were arrested, went to jail, and refused to eat. Ever the effective publicist, Paul arranged from her jail cell to circulate wide-

Women's Rights Parade, March 3, 1913, Washington, DC. (*Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*)

spread publication of the brutal force-feedings and other abuses endured by the prisoners. Strongly influenced by the nonviolent direct action strategy advocated by Mohandas K. Gandhi in his campaign for Indian independence, her methods were highly effective and are credited with contributing greatly to finally bringing the suffrage amendment to a successful vote in 1919 and to ratification the next year.

Alice Paul celebrated the ratification of the long-sought suffrage amendment in 1920 by continuing her effective leadership. In 1923, as part of the work of the National Woman's Party she had founded, she introduced into the House of Representatives the Lucretia Mott Amendment, calling for equal rights for women. Her voice was an important force in adding gender to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination in employment. Paul's single-minded focus on women's legal equality invited criticism from Friends who claimed she was insensitive to other problems faced by poor women and women of color, areas of major concern for Orthodox women since the nineteenth century. Never one to quit, however, Alice Paul continued advocating for women's rights in the struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment until her death, in 1977.[3]

A vivid statement of the fundamental nature of the religious impetus Quakers attach to work for social justice is the following resolution, agreed to by the Hicksite Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1914. In reading it, one is not surprised that so many of the leaders of the women's suffrage movement were Friends:

> In view of the fact that the Society of Friends, by reason of its inheritance and present organization, gives evidence of the advantage which results to the home, to the meeting, and the community, through a full recognition of the dignity of woman and her right to complete development, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends records its endorsement of equal suffrage as a principle of justice to women and an opportunity for more effective service. The Yearly Meeting recommends that monthly meetings be watchful for opportunities to influence equal suffrage legislation and encourage their members to give active interest in the accomplishment of this reform.[4]

The years just before and during World War II saw a lull in national activity on behalf of women's rights, and that included Friends activity that became less intense than it had been since the antebellum period. But the 1970s brought a resurgence of interest in women's rights, once largely the lonely bailiwick of Quaker reformers. Friends rejoined the rejuvenated effort, a legacy of Quakers, who since the eighteenth century have been pioneers in championing the equality of the sexes. Admittedly, some were impatient with the modern emphasis on language change, and some forgot that the contemporary desire for separate meetings was profoundly grounded in early women's Meetings for Business, which had, after all, been established originally to give women more weight in deliberations of the meeting at large.

Nonetheless, over time Friends rededicated themselves to the idea of women's rights and once again supplied leadership both within and without the Society. Women have led the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends World Committee for Consultation, perhaps the most influential public advocacy group among the Society of Friends. Women's Way, a philanthropic organization established in Philadelphia in 1977, promotes women's equality, education, self-sufficiency, and reproductive rights. With significant Quaker leadership, Women's Way gives an annual Lucretia Mott Award to an outstanding American woman.

From first settlement through the nineteenth century, members of the Religious Society of Friends remained in the forefront of advocacy of equality for Native Americans, African Americans, and women. Quakers have continued to act on the belief that in order to live in peace, there must be equality. Over the years, the issues have evolved—from insistence on equal treatment of women to promotion of women's suffrage to equality in the workplace; from recognition of the catastrophic injustice of black slavery to ardent effort on behalf of civil rights; from a religious resolve to treat fairly with Native Americans to advocacy on their behalf with colonial and state governments and, ultimately, major lobbying efforts in Washington, DC.

As the twentieth century dawned, the traditional thrust of Friends service on behalf of the underprivileged intensified as Americans' understanding of deprivation expanded. In a significant way, Quaker activity in

the many reform efforts of that century promoted the widening and deepening of this understanding. As in earlier times, Quakers—and particularly Quaker women—labored prominently and indefatigably to rectify all kinds of discrimination in American society. The means of persuasion have evolved as well, as Friends have continued their unyielding resolve to advocate nonviolently in the political arena. Their methods have included writing, voting, convening, speaking, marching, boycotting, starving, and testifying publicly. The bitter and disruptive schisms of the nineteenth century remained, leaving a diverse landscape of Quaker worship and organization, but the public reach of Friends and their leadership in many reform efforts continued into the new century. The Quaker commitment to the promotion of social justice continued inexorably in the line of George Fox, John Woolman, and Lucretia Mott.

Notes

1. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 160.
2. Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 44.
3. Ibid., 206–207.
4. Bacon, *Rebels*, 165.

VI

HUMANITARIAN REACH

10

The Long Arm of Compassion

As we have seen, members of the Religious Society of Friends have consistently undertaken a remarkable program of social reform toward Native Americans, African Americans, and women. But alongside these particular and major struggles and in keeping with their religious motivation, Quakers have initiated accompanying efforts to help others in need.

Prisons

Friends' compassion for the imprisoned clearly originated in their own unhappy experience in England. Having put in time in the Tower of London himself, William Penn was eager to inaugurate prison reform in the penal code of his

Holy Experiment. In place of the filthy and dangerous pits of despair in England, Pennsylvania jails were constructed in a single-cell design; the imprisoned were provided with food and occupation. A hardworking lot, Quakers saw amelioration and a pathway to the Light in useful employment of the incarcerated. The prison model included exercise, sunlight, and a humanitarian approach to the imprisoned. While Penn lived, Pennsylvania's prisons remained models of enlightenment, established not only to punish but also to rehabilitate.

In 1787, Quakers helped to found the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons. Ultimately it became the Pennsylvania Prison Society, which continues to this day, an ecumenical organization with a strong Quaker influence. As with other reform efforts, Friends' eagerness to ameliorate the prison system was motivated by the fundamental belief that there is God in everyone—even delinquents. Their confidence in the perfectibility of men and women led them to reject the contemporary notion that criminal behavior was inbred and to believe instead that by attending to the moral and religious welfare of the prisoners, even the most hardened criminals might be transformed.

Prison reform was supported by both Hicksite and Gurneyite Friends. Joseph John Gurney's sister, Elizabeth Gurney Fry, the famous English prison reformer of the nineteenth century, served as a model for many Quaker women who took the lead in America in devoting themselves to reform. In Philadelphia, Mary Waln Wistar read the Bible and offered sewing classes to incarcerated women

and started a home for juvenile delinquents and halfway houses for women prisoners. Elizabeth King advocated on behalf of female prisoners in Baltimore, from the installation of female matrons to establishment of libraries. Abby Hopper Gibbons set up the first halfway house for female prisoners in New York in 1851, the Isaac T. Hopper Home, which exists to this day. In Indiana, Rhoda Coffin established a reformatory (as opposed to a prison) in 1873 and chose Quaker Sarah Smith as its first matron. Throughout the century, many others, including Elizabeth Buffum Chace, Dr. Eliza Mosher, and Martha Falconer, worked ceaselessly to bring about prison reform. Friends continue today the long tradition of prison visiting in order to ameliorate some of the unnecessary hardships confinement creates, including overcrowding, the privations suffered by entire families because of the separation of prisoners from their children, and the scarcity of telephones. The fundamental Quaker aim remains to offer the inmates dignity, hope, and rehabilitation.

The Mentally Ill

With a similarly enlightened view, Friends pioneered reform in the treatment of the mentally ill. In 1669, George Fox urged special facilities for those who were "distempered." In Fox's day, the mentally ill were believed to be inhabited by demons; they were housed in appalling conditions and shackled to their beds. In English asylums as late as 1770, there was no treatment: patients were punished, mocked, and put on display for the general amusement of the public; the most infamous of these was Bethlehem Hospital, better

known as "Bedlam." Even before Fox's exhortation, Quaker John Godson had opened his home in England to those ill-treated distempered souls, and when he arrived in Philadelphia, he joined with other Friends to form an association to provide care for the mentally ill. In 1751, Pennsylvania Hospital opened—the first hospital in the world to offer medical care for the insane. Here, the fledgling methods were harsh, but the reformers insisted that their purpose was care, not punishment. In York, England, at the end of the century, William and Esther Tuke were determined to act on their Quaker principles and established an even more humane hospital. The York Retreat opened in 1796 and long remained a model for treatment of the mentally ill, where not punitive treatment but tenderness was employed to give the patients a sense of dignity and hope.

American Friends responded to the same desperate need of the mentally ill. In 1813, Philadelphia Friends established the Asylum for Persons Deprived of the Use of Their Reason, the first private mental hospital in the United States. Now called Friends Hospital, the asylum operated from the beginning on the conviction that principles of moral suasion were far superior and more effective in restoring health to patients than the use of physical restraints. A few years later, Quaker Thomas Eddy established the Bloomingdale Asylum in Westchester County, New York.

At about the same time in Philadelphia, Dr. Thomas Kirkbride assumed the superintendency of a new hospital for the care of the insane, an appendage of Pennsylvania Hospital. Dr. Kirkbride sought to employ the enlightened and benevolent treatments advocated by his fellow Quakers.

The Asylum for Persons Deprived of the Use of Their Reason, established in 1813 to treat the mentally ill in the compassionate and rehabilitative manner espoused by Friends. It exists today as the Friends Hospital. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

The Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane was a private, nonsectarian institution, even though Kirkbride, its head for forty-three years, and the Board of Managers were Friends. The hospital served all classes and all religions and was financed by a fee system in which the wealthy subsidized the poor.

At this time, many of the mentally ill were housed in jails, basements, or other inadequate and punitive environments. Kirkbride's contribution to the betterment of treatment for these unfortunates was "moral treatment," essentially a plan for building asylums in a humane and ameliorative design. Space, order, and fresh air, provided by design in large buildings with staggered wings and large

grounds, were intended to offer comfort and privacy to well-housed patients. For Kirkbride, institutionalization was a key element in the care of the mentally ill, removing as it did the unhealthy and inhumane housing and treatment of the insane. Kirkbride's humane approach sought an environment of a harmonious family, offering intellectual stimulation, entertainments in the evening, exercise, and a regular schedule.[1]

The first mental asylum built and run according to the Kirkbride Plan was in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1847. In 1891, an asylum in Baltimore, funded in 1853 by the generous gift of philanthropic Friend Moses Sheppard, finally opened its doors. The Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital continues today as one of the nation's most highly regarded psychiatric facilities, very much in the spirit of Sheppard, who, influenced by Thomas Kirkbride, wished for a hospital that would provide comfort, hope, and humane care to its patients.[2]

A Sophisticated Approach to the Poor

Quakers demonstrated an active concern for the impoverished. Upon their arrival in Pennsylvania in the seventeenth century, they had immediately established almshouses for their own in need. The persecutions in England had left many families impoverished, and their numbers increased in the face of the challenges of settlement. Before long, Quaker colonists had characteristically extended their compassionate attention to include non-Quakers, establishing the Friends Almshouse in Philadelphia and schools for the poor, all of them open to everyone in need.

Friends Almshouse on Walnut Street in Philadelphia, established by Friends in 1729. All in need were welcome. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

There are boundless examples of Friends activists who brought their Quaker humanitarian concern to the aid of the poor. Over time, they enthusiastically broadened their outreach to include more and more of those in need. In 1795, Ann Parrish organized a group of Quaker women as the Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, an organization that operated in accordance with the tenets of the Religious Society of Friends, that is, not simply to feed the hungry but also to equip them with the means by which they could feed themselves. The Female Society instituted workshops to teach poor women to spin flax and wool, and it set the older women to providing day care for the children of the young. This organization survives today as the

Philadelphia Senior Center. In New York City, Quaker Catherine Brown Murray established a highly effective organization with the unwieldy name the Female Association for the Relief of the Sick Poor, and for the Education of Such Female Children as Do Not Belong to, or Are Not Provided for by Any Religious Society (no known acronym). They operated a large school that was subsequently taken over by the New York City public schools in 1845. A year earlier, the redoubtable Lucretia Mott had helped to establish the Northern Association of the City and County of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of Poor Women. Like the Female Association in New York, Mott's organization provided workshops in which both African American and white women were taught self-sustaining skills; during the Depression of 1853, the Motts set up soup kitchens throughout the area.

The nineteenth century brought a great influx of immigrants who, in effect, represented many impoverished minorities whose deprivations were enormous. Recognizing the desperate need, Quakers became active in the settlement movement. Quaker Jane Addams' famous Hull House in Chicago attracted the leadership of other Friends—Florence Kelley, Grace Abbott, Martha Falconer, and others. In Philadelphia and elsewhere, Quaker women developed missions to feed, clothe, and otherwise help to assimilate immigrants from Poland, Germany, Italy, Ireland, and Lithuania. In this arena, as in many of the others, Quaker women worked alongside reformers of other faiths. Hull House embraced the familiar Friends practice of helping the needy to help themselves. Addams

offered to poor and alienated immigrants opportunities to learn American ways, to develop skills that would enable them to get jobs, and to enjoy friendship and community. The motivation was to provide not charity but the chance to learn to help their families flourish in this new world.

Out of her work at Hull House, Florence Kelley, a descendant of Quaker botanist John Bartram and a great-niece of abolitionist Sarah Pugh, became greatly interested in the women and children who worked in the sweatshops of the garment industry. She became a chief factory inspector for the state of Illinois and endured hardship and danger as she collected firsthand evidence against the sweatshop operators. Her goal was to press the legislature to curb sweatshop abuses, and in this she was only moderately successful. So, in 1896, she moved to New York City, where she became general secretary of the newly created National Consumers League. The League organized consumer boycotts to eliminate sweatshops, a protest vehicle derived directly from the free produce efforts of many Friends before her, including John Woolman, Lucretia Mott, and her aunt Sarah Pugh.

After her years at Hull House, Grace Abbott became head of the U.S. Children's Bureau and worked tirelessly for a constitutional amendment banning child labor. While this was never achieved, Abbott rejoiced at last when the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 created a partial ban on child labor.[3]

Some Friends directed their reform impulse toward temperance. Quakers had always affirmed a virtue in moderation and had disciplined excess within meetings. But

after the Civil War, as millions of impoverished immigrants arrived and the stresses of increased industrialization contributed to the alarming displacement of poor families, many Friends came to feel that the evils of alcohol and the damage done by its use to those who could least afford it—African Americans, Native Americans, poor women, the unemployed—necessitated complete abstinence. At first, advocates such as Susan B. Anthony joined the work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), although there are no records of Friends storming taverns behind the hatchet-wielding Carrie Nation. Ultimately they launched their own Friendly efforts. Quakers such as Hoosier Amanda Way; Dr. Mary Frame Thomas, one of the country's first female doctors; and Indiana abolitionists Laura Haviland and Elizabeth Comstock worked for temperance. As if to underscore the interrelatedness of many of these reform efforts in the Quaker mind, pastoral Friend Hannah Bailey inaugurated a department of peace and arbitration in the WCTU and became the organization's chief promoter of peace.

From the teachings of George Fox, the Religious Society of Friends has taken an affirmative view of life, believing that each individual is "perfectible" if he or she will seek the Light of God within. The Peace Testimony lay at the foundation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Quaker reform efforts. Penn's insistence on fair dealing with the Lenni-Lenape arose out of a desire for peace and equality among men and women; the nineteenth-century humanitarian impetus toward improving the lives of the less fortunate derived from the same fundamental belief.

In a myriad of forums and in a variety of ways, Quakers have expressed consistently and effectively their determination to take spiritual concerns for social justice into the public arena. The assumptions Americans bring to considerations of equality among races and genders were forged in response to the fires of discord and ignorance; to a remarkable degree, their acceptance by the vast majority of Americans is due to centuries of courageous effort by members of the Religious Society of Friends, who, despite the background of factionalism within their own membership, nevertheless have relentlessly and peaceably worked to make them real.

Notes

1. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988), 345–346.
2. The author is grateful to Dr. W. Byron Forbush, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Sheppard Pratt Health System, for his generosity in sharing the mission and history of the hospital.
3. Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999), 146.

VI

PEACEFUL REFORM

11

The Peace Testimony

Quaker adherence to the Peace Testimony is sometimes labeled pacifism, a term frequently misunderstood as resistance to evil. As we have seen, this could not be further from the truth. For centuries, Friends have persistently addressed wrongdoing and injustice, but their "arsenal" excludes violence, personal or institutional. They believe that violence begets violence, which begets more injustice and aggression. Quakers have sought instead a different means of confronting wrongdoing and solving conflicts, such as nonviolent resistance, moral suasion, and efforts to wage peace instead of war. Quakers have developed a creative and diverse menu of nonviolent options to conflict, from the most obvious—refusal to fight in wartime—to withdrawal from political

positions, refusal to pay defense taxes, and personal example. They have been active proponents of peace organizations designed to avert the resort to conflict, and on behalf of the poor, the sick, and the disadvantaged. For Quakers, the long, hard journey toward equality is the only real road to peace.

Indian Wars and Revolution

From their earliest days in England, when they stood fast to the principles of their Peace Testimony by refusing to join Cromwell's armies, Quakers have stubbornly refused to use violent weapons to solve problems. Their nonviolent resistance, particularly in wartime, has helped them to maintain their "peculiarity" among the population at large, but it has come at a painful price, notably suspicions of their patriotism by fellow citizens during highly emotional periods of national conflict.

We have seen that the Pennsylvania Assembly struggled for years against the British by refusing to levy taxes to contribute, financially or otherwise, to countering the growing belligerence between Indians and colonials on the western frontier of the colony. The Peace Testimony was very much part of the calculus that led the Quaker majority to depart the Assembly in 1756. For individuals, too, refusal to pay taxes was a radical means of nonviolence utilized by John Woolman, among others, who had come with difficulty to the belief that Quakers should refuse to pay taxes on account of the militaristic demands of the Pennsylvania and British governments with regard to the

violence against the Indians. It was, by this time, accepted Quaker policy not to directly confront government authority, but the reform spirit within the hearts of Woolman and other dissenting Quakers, as well as within meetings, persuaded some to break with that tradition and espouse the withholding of taxes.

Friends believed that they must be neutral during the war: they would not fight, and they refused to cooperate with the Continental Congress. Not surprisingly, the colonials perceived this behavior as unpatriotic and pro-British and tried on several occasions to insist that Friends sign oaths of loyalty to the American cause, a demand to which nonswearing Quakers would not acquiesce. Friends continued to refuse to fight or to pay the fines levied on them for this refusal and would not use the paper money issued by the new American government. Their loyalty to the new nation was tested up and down the colonies and found wanting by the American revolutionaries.

Quakers were harassed by both sides during the war for withholding allegiance to one cause or the other. The Quaker stronghold of Nantucket suffered terribly from assaults by both sides. The Americans viewed them as disloyal and cut off provisions; the British sank their merchant ships. In the end, Nantucketers almost starved. Just before the war began, one of the wealthiest Nantucket Friends, William Rotch, received a consignment of muskets and bayonets as payment for a debt. Instead of benefiting from their resale, Rotch threw the shipment overboard, declaring that since he would not personally use the guns,

he would not consider making money off them so that someone else might.

Elsewhere in the colonies, Friends sacrificed for their refusal to fight. Homes, farms, and meetinghouses were taken by the government in payment of heavy fines levied on those who would not pay war taxes. Quakers insisted, instead, on nursing the wounded from both sides of the conflict. Notwithstanding their unpopularity as they followed the course of nonalignment, Friends consistently sent support to those who suffered in their communities—to Friends and non-Friends, Americans and British alike. From North Carolina to Boston, meetinghouses and homes were utilized as hospitals for this purpose, initiating the long traditions of relief work in wartime.

Many Friends were disciplined by meetings for taking up arms in the conflict. Some well-known Quakers, such as General Nathanael Greene, Thomas Mifflin, and Betsy Ross, broke away to become known as "Fighting" or Free Quakers. Only six Quakers were disowned for joining the British forces; four to five hundred were disciplined for fighting with the colonials. The disownments were surely efforts by meetings to uphold the Peace Testimony in a highly pressured environment. But the rigidity of the discipline was also part of the reform effort within meetings, evidence of a desire to purify the inward plantation that had been so severely threatened during this period. The Revolutionary War accelerated this inward-looking reform process.

Clearly, personal and financial distress during this period encouraged Friends to draw more closely together and con-

tributed another rationale for withdrawing from the greater world. There is no question that the public anathema directed toward Quakers because of their adherence to the Peace Testimony during the American Revolution was a contributing factor to this withdrawal. Confronted with widespread enmity, they realized that the withdrawal from politics before the Revolution was not to be temporary—that there was, in fact, no place in public life for them—and they turned instead to purifying themselves from within and strengthening themselves as a "peculiar people."

The Civil War

Quakers had been leaders in peace advocacy for centuries; the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were no exception. Manifold expressions of nonresistant personal behavior characterized many Friends. Women activists frequently demonstrated personal bravery and a stubborn nonresistance as a form of protection when faced with aggressive audiences or hostile mobs. Too often, Abby Kelley was shouted down at lectures during her abolitionist tours and left the hall with a dignity far above the level of the epithets hurled at her. Lucretia Mott, calm and determined, safely led from Pennsylvania Hall a long column of pairs of black and white women while a furious mob spat and shouted at them. Lydia White and other Friends around the country followed the example of John Woolman and labored with remarkable success to establish the free produce movement, determined that consumers have real leverage on slaveholders. Susan B. Anthony led a group of women to vote illegally in Rochester, and Alice Paul marched and

effectively publicized her comrades' hunger strike and the violent force-feedings they endured. Many Friends, North and South, refused to pay taxes, including Abby Kelley and her husband, Stephen Foster, who lost their farm in consequence.

A hundred years after the test of the American Revolution, Quakers were again tried as the nation descended into another bloody conflict. After weighing the difficult balance between the fundamental testimonies of peace and equality, unprecedented numbers of southern and northern Friends took up arms in the war against slavery. Those who chose to fight in the Civil War far outnumbered those Free Quakers who had fought in the Revolution. Meetings throughout the nation were much more forgiving of those members who fought in the Civil War than they had been previously, for the most part withholding the discipline that would have been forthcoming in earlier times. Nonresistant abolitionists split over the war. Some thought the eradication of slavery a sufficiently noble cause to trump nonresistance; others, such as Mott and Kelley, could not support the war effort and turned instead to relief efforts and education and care for displaced blacks in North and South.

Early in the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln received a delegation of Quakers, including Eliza Gurney Fry, the great English prison reformer. Lincoln acknowledged the difficult trial suffered by Friends during wartime and voiced appreciation for their support and their prayers. In 1864, he wrote to Mrs. Fry of his understanding

of the awful conflict endured by these patriotic Americans who so strongly objected to war:

> On principle, and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war . . . Meanwhile, we must work earnestly in the best light He gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay.[1]

Throughout the war, both Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, the son of Quakers, endured criticism for being too lenient with conscientious objectors and deserters.

Promoting Peace in Time of War

As hostilities again erupted in Europe in 1915, American Friends recognized a familiar challenge and determined to abide by the Peace Testimony and confront accusations of lack of patriotism. During the Civil War, Quakers had attempted, mostly unsuccessfully, to create a legal status of "conscientious objector," and with the onset of war in Europe, they renewed their resolve to find peaceful work for those who could not, on principle, take up arms.

In January 1915, two Quaker women, Emily Greene Balch, an economics professor at Wellesley College, and Jane Addams of Hull House, sprang into action by founding an organization to promote peace during wartime. This

became the Woman's Peace Party, dedicated to encouraging mediation among the warring nations. Their efforts to press for peace negotiations were scorned by many Americans and denounced as "silly and base" by former president Theodore Roosevelt.

Nonetheless, Addams, Balch, and many others attended a conference at The Hague later that year in which fifteen hundred women from belligerent and neutral nations participated. The delegates took an optimistic and ambitious name for their group, the Women's International Committee for Permanent Peace, and drew up a plan of action that was a precursor to President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. The platform called for continuous mediation and for equal political rights for women.

After the conference, the delegates acted on an audacious plan. Determined to push their mediation agenda, they divided themselves into two groups. One group called on heads of state of belligerent nations, and the other visited the corollary ministers in neutral countries. Surprisingly, the delegates were received respectfully by twenty-one foreign ministers. They had quite literally gotten a foot in the door, but no action was taken by any of those they visited. Upon their return from these missions, Balch and Addams tried to persuade President Wilson to call a conference of mediation, but he declined, declaring that he had his own plan. Despite efforts such as this, the United States entered the war two years later.

For their outspoken leadership of such a controversial movement, both women sacrificed a great deal. Jane Addams

was expelled from the Daughters of the American Revolution, and, more important, Emily Balch was fired from her position at Wellesley. Having lost a vocation she loved, she devoted all of her efforts to peace advocacy for the rest of her life.

In May 1919, after a four-year hiatus and after the Treaty of Versailles had been signed, the Women's International Committee for Permanent Peace met again at Zurich. Here they renamed themselves the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and expressed disapproval of the treaty as being vindictive and apt to bring on another war. They called for a cessation of the Allied blockade and relief for the hundreds of thousands of starving victims of the war. On the last day, they elected Jane Addams as WILPF's international president and Emily Greene Balch as its secretary-treasurer.

Emily Balch moved to WILPF headquarters in Geneva to carry out her responsibilities, and while there, she became a member of the Religious Society of Friends. She had for many years found solace in meetings; she joined the London Yearly Meeting in order to avoid aligning with either the Hicksites or the Orthodox factions in America.[2]

Jane Addams regarded her work for WILPF as the ultimate achievement of a long career in reform. Addams became the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her long-term service with WILPF, and fifteen years later, in 1946, Emily Greene Balch received the same prize for her own efforts on behalf of international disarmament and arbitration.[3]

After World War II, Friends continued to find creative ways to work for peace. In their efforts to follow their religious mandate, Quakers have pressed for a synthesis of religion and politics that they view as essential to creating peace. Internationally, they have supported various legal and institutional organizations—the League of Nations, the International Court of Justice, and the United Nations—along with other attempts to establish a world federation based on world law. They have worked for disarmament and for arms control. At home, the Peace Testimony has led Friends to advocate for social welfare reform and equal rights for minorities and against the draft and universal military training. There has often been a dissonance between the proclamations of various meetings and the actions of individual members, but that discrepancy diminished during the Vietnam War, when meetings and individual activists finally found the same page. For once, Quakers seemed in sync with many non-Quakers on this issue: at last, being a pacifist was a good thing.

Notes

1. Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 563.
2. Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia, PA: Friends General Conference, 1986), 205–208.
3. Ibid., 208.

12

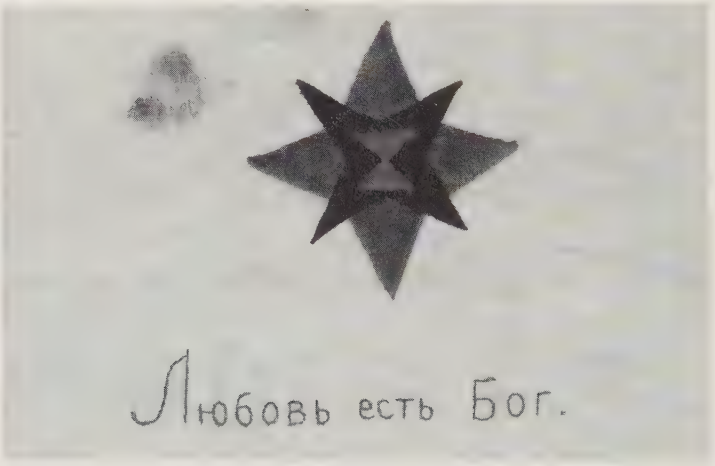
The American Friends Service Committee

In order to abide by the religious imperative to work for social justice in the world, Quakers have long realized that only a peaceful world brings equality. They have been determined and innovative in advocating for peace, and in the unprecedentedly violent twentieth century they elevated their proud history of relief efforts to create an institution emblematic of Friends' Peace Testimony, their expansive compassion, their leadership in reform, and the immutable connection among the three.

When world war ignited in 1914, Quakers recognized a familiar and unpleasant challenge. Once again, their countrymen defined patriotism as dedication to waging war, and,

as always, Quakers struggled to express their patriotism without compromising their Peace Testimony. At the same time that Emily Greene Balch and Jane Addams were finding their way with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Rufus Jones and other Friends were observing with horror an unparalleled maelstrom of violence, and Quakers acknowledged that they must do more than rail against war and instead seek a means of working effectively for peace. They sought to enunciate their response to William James' term the "moral equivalent of war" by finding an innovative way to work toward peace.

Their vehicle was the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker organization that offered bold and innovative opportunities to work toward peace in a world



A Russian American Friends Service Committee badge from World War I. The black and red Quaker star quickly became a well-recognized emblem of humanitarian relief. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

devastated by violence. The AFSC is the modern-day expression of the same positive pacifism evinced by Quakers for three hundred years: in the quest for social justice lies the greatest potential for peace.

The AFSC rose figuratively from the ashes of the war. It was created in 1917 as the Quaker response to the need for alternative wartime service for conscientious objectors. Serving its mission "to transform conditions and relationships both in the world and in ourselves which threaten to overwhelm what is precious in human beings,"[1] more than six hundred Quakers, identified by the red and black Quaker star, served during World War I in French hospitals and orphanages, building refugee housing and reclaiming war-abandoned fields.

An AFSC-sponsored feeding program in a Roman Catholic day nursery in Berlin during World War I. The AFSC's relief efforts followed the Quaker philosophy of aiding all in need, regardless of race or religion. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

Carrying hot food to Germans at an AFSC mission in Dresden during World War I. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

In the midst of hostilities, AFSC workers distributed food, clothing, and bedding for the scores of thousands of homeless. Nurseries were set up in France to feed and care for displaced children. In 1918, for example, the AFSC supervised the reconstruction of farms, houses, and schools in forty devastated villages surrounding Verdun. AFSC workers went to Siberia after the Russian Revolution to bring relief to those suffering from famine.

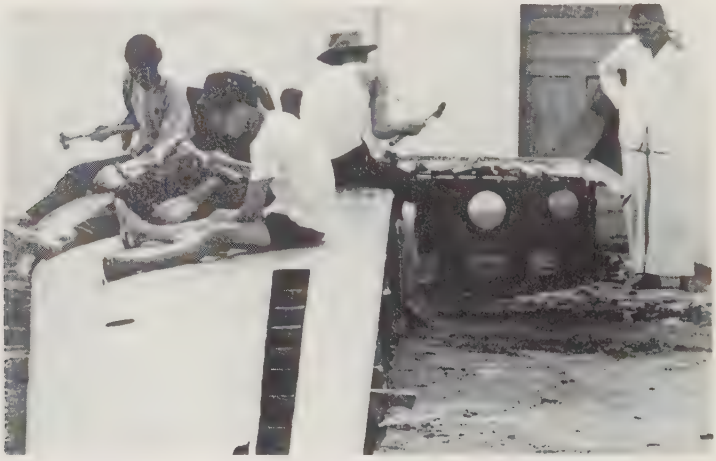
The AFSC's success in Europe prompted Quaker Herbert Hoover, chair of the American Relief Administration, to charge the organization with distributing food to starving German children. In addition to their robust relief efforts, AFSC delegates represented the only American church group to make a direct appeal to the Nazis to cease persecution of

Refugees returning to an AFSC-built house in Montfauçon, in the devastated environs of Verdun, France, 1919. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)

Jews. The effectiveness of their varied outreach efforts during this period earned the AFSC the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

After the war, the relief effort of the AFSC reached its zenith. Over time, AFSC workers had developed a characteristic three-phase approach to practical relief work: (1) a short period of direct relief that met emergency survival needs, (2) the launch of a self-help program among the local population, and (3) a training program to enable this population to take over the Quaker-initiated projects. For AFSC relief workers, the goal was a familiar one, grounded in a consistent tradition over the centuries to offer not only immediate relief but also subsequent training so that those in need could get back on their feet and take care of

The AFSC distinguished itself by providing food to starving Jews in Germany during World War II. Here, a meal is served to Jewish children at an AFSC mission in Berlin. (*Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*)



In an AFSC rehabilitation center in Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam, apprentice limb-makers dismantle a salvaged airplane wing for metal stock to be used in fabricating hinge and brace hardware, c. 1967. (*American Friends Service Committee Archives*)

themselves. Ann Parrish's 1795 Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor and many organizations like it were precursors to the greatly expanded and international programs offered by the AFSC. Their interest was not to settle in an area and dispense aid as a form of charity. Instead, as part of a service continuum, Quaker relief workers labored alongside those in need to reclaim a dam or rebuild a factory. Once the immediate crisis had been addressed, AFSC workers typically moved on, having prepared those formerly in distress to carry on themselves. Impressed by its success over time and by the model of relief workers laboring alongside the needy and the goal of self-sufficiency, President John F. Kennedy asked several members of the AFSC to serve on the advisory board that created the Peace Corps in the 1960s.

Scores of illustrations recount the very effectual relief efforts organized by the AFSC. In addition to the heroic efforts to bring relief and reconstruction to Europe after the war, the AFSC helped to resettle displaced refugees who had lost their homes in the fighting after the partition of India. The AFSC responded to need on-site in the Korean War and the Hungarian Revolution. It organized programs for child care and prosthetics for war-injured Vietnam civilian refugees and then extended its service to the North Vietnamese through gifts of medical supplies. For ninety-five years, at home and abroad, the AFSC has continued to organize innumerable projects to rebuild dams and hospitals, provide food and shelter for refugees from famine and war, and establish subsistence "homestead" communities for Americans suffering from emergencies such as mine closings, always working as a public advocate

for distressed people all over the world who might otherwise be forgotten. Its origins lay in the Quaker religious imperative to provide humanitarian aid for those in need, whatever their creed.

There is no missionizing role for the AFSC; it has never been intended as a proselytizing tool. Instead, following another long Friends tradition, its aim has been straightforward: to work against war by promoting peace through humanitarian relief for any and all. It was created as an expression of service whose purpose was to encourage social justice.

At its peak, the extraordinarily high level of activism in civic affairs garnered the AFSC a high political profile under the gifted and tireless leadership of Clarence Pickett. As a devout midwestern Gurneyite Friend, Pickett conceived of the AFSC as an expression of faith and a means of fulfilling in a practical way the spiritual responsibilities of Friends. Thanks to his dynamic and far-reaching direction, the AFSC became the embodiment of Quaker determination to work for peace by promoting social justice.

Pickett's twenty-year stewardship of the AFSC is an archetypal illustration of Quaker social action. For Pickett and many other Friends, the energy behind the AFSC served as witness to the centrality of the Peace Testimony and to the power of putting it to work in the public arena. It is noteworthy, too, that the Gurneyite Pickett, a devoutly evangelical Friend who had seriously contemplated taking on missionary service abroad after his education, carefully nurtured the original intention of the AFSC as a nonmissionizing organization.

The American Friends Service Committee reached the zenith of its global effectiveness under the gifted leadership of Clarence Pickett. (*Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA: Quaker Collection*)

He, along with many other Gurneyites, worked tirelessly and effectively for humanitarian relief in an organization that eschewed one of the basic tenets of Gurneyite faith.

In 1933, the paraplegic President Franklin Roosevelt replied to stinging criticism of his wife's travels to West Virginia to investigate firsthand the despair and desperation of hundreds of thousands of laid-off bituminous coal miners by insisting that his wife must go down in the mines, for

she was his legs. It was Clarence Pickett of the AFSC who had invited Mrs. Roosevelt down those mine shafts so that she might encourage the president to bring government aid to the relief efforts. The relationship between Pickett and Eleanor Roosevelt continued for many years; theirs was a partnership that provided her with excellent intelligence and practical solutions for daunting problems of war and depression and gave him the benefit of her influence on the president (as well as her relatively modest personal financial contributions). From the coalfields of West Virginia to subsistence homesteads at home and abroad, from feeding the starving children of Germany during World War II to mediating between Israelis and Arabs, from work camps for the young and old to service in war-ravaged Afghanistan, the vigorous efforts and wide-ranging accomplishments of the American Friends Service Committee have captured the interest of the public at large and influenced public policy by canny persuasion and worthy example.

In its early days, the AFSC drew volunteers and funds from both programmed and pastoral meetings. Its first four executive secretaries came from pastoral yearly meetings. Since World War II, however, much of its funding has come from non-Quakers impressed with the accomplishments and lofty ideals expressed in the work of the AFSC. Members of unprogrammed meetings have tended to predominate, many of whom believed that many American Friends had made too many compromises with the larger society and had not supported a sufficiently bold peace witness—shades of the familiar tension among Quakers over the inner and outward plantations.

In an effort to return to the radical first principles of Quakerism, the AFSC has seen a shift to the left in terms of the activities it supports. Since the middle of the twentieth century, it has concentrated more than it had in the past on domestic programs, including the civil rights movement and anti–Vietnam War activity. In recent times, it has embodied the fundamental Quaker vision of the ills of society and the need for nonviolent revolution to transform it. More and more it views its purpose as twofold: to provide relief and to empower the victims of social injustice.

Its work continues today, but the AFSC is no longer the "public face" of Quakers before the country at large. In truth, there appears to be a lessening of influence of Friends in the public forum. To be sure, many individual Quakers still labor to right society's inequities, but the public weight of the movement has eroded somewhat in recent decades. The number of Quakers in America is approximately the same as at the start of the twentieth century, but the numbers conceal diverse experiences. Former Quaker strongholds in the Delaware and Ohio Valleys have lost numbers, but other yearly meetings have grown considerably. Since World War II, dozens of new meetings, both unprogrammed and pastoral, have sprung up.[2] In our increasingly cacophonous political arena, it is now hard to discern a public Friends voice. Quakers persist in reform efforts nonetheless, and if the history of Quakers in America tells us anything, it is that a tiny minority group can make a loud noise. Surely the successful quest for social equality over the centuries has borne fruit, as Quakers and others have achieved aston-

ishing progress. All those positions that Friends annoyingly and persistently pushed on their neighbors and the nation—on behalf of Native Americans, African Americans, women's rights, the poor, the ill, the insane—are on the national agenda. There is work to be done by those who promote peace and justice. But it is expanded effort on these fronts that occupies Friends today. Quakers may not demonstrate quite the strength of leadership in some of the issues of the day because so many others have come along to join them. In other words, their success in promoting so many enlightened positions has left them less distinctive.

Perhaps the loss of Quaker distinctiveness plays a role here—as more and more Friends have come to worship and see the world as their Methodist neighbors do, they are less a "peculiar people," pitting themselves stubbornly against the corrupt world. They have certainly continued reform efforts—they have participated, they have provided leadership—but now there seems not to be one voice whom Friends and non-Friends can identify as distinctly Quaker. The AFSC's activism in the twentieth century was the most recent period of publicly unified leadership. Clarence Pickett had an extraordinarily powerful political voice for someone who was not an elected official. It is not surprising that his was not a theological but a relief organization.

Friends today look at the accomplishments of the past three hundred years with great pride: those with a more liberal view celebrate the universally acclaimed record of the AFSC, and more evangelical Friends point to the success of their missions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—the homes of the majority of the world's Quakers today.

Terrible rifts have burdened Quakers in America, rifts that carry with them the shame of failure to abide by a key testimony—peaceful conflict resolution. But while this factionalism has resulted in a dilution of the public weight of Quaker leadership, it has not compromised the enormous impact of Quaker social reform over the centuries. They have used a variety of approaches, but all Friends have maintained a spiritual resolve to provide humanitarian relief to those in need in order to bring to the world social justice and peace.

Notes

1. Mission statement of the American Friends Service Committee, http://www.afsc.org.
2. Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 151.

VII

CONCLUSION

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The Quaker Legacy

Quakers signify a great deal more than the smiling face of the Quaker Oats man. They are a tiny religious minority who have consistently demonstrated much that we take for granted as Americans. Their experiment of Quaker government in Philadelphia brought with it new and enlightened assumptions about toleration, pluralism, compassion, and democracy. Quakers have contributed tremendously to the fundamental egalitarianism that Americans of all persuasions treasure; our understanding of that basic concept of democracy comes in large measure from the self-conscious and conscientious model of the Religious Society of Friends. We can learn a great deal about civic responsibility from a group that has always recognized and acted

on the imperative that citizens must advocate for their fundamental beliefs in the public arena. Significantly, for Quakers, those values are profoundly religious. Theirs is an unrelenting public promotion of social justice in search of peace.

William Penn's First Frame of Government introduced now-cherished attitudes about religious toleration and sympathetic governance that were later incorporated into the Declaration of Independence and subsequent governing constructs. The attitudes and practices regarding humane treatment of Native Americans and African Americans, introduced by the seventeenth-century settlers and espoused to the present day, were anathema to most Americans and garnered derision, if not outright antagonism. The traditional equality of the genders, so unique in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is now more or less accepted by all Americans. Slowly but inexorably, Quaker values of humanitarian aid to the disadvantaged—the poor, the mentally ill, the immigrant, and others—have also gained a firm hold on Americans' worldview and have considerably contributed to the traditions of generosity and compassion of which Americans are so proud.

Today, Friends continue their labors. The enduring and formidable Quaker influence on all of the social issues in our history is palpable but little known. In the public arena, Friends endeavor to persuade without violence. The narratives of the small sampling of Quaker activists explored in this book offer a glimpse of the commitment, perseverance, and compassion demonstrated by Quakers throughout our history. Into the political arena they have

"pushed the envelope" on many social issues, consistently advocating for the needy or the ignored, always promoting the conviction that only an equitable world brings justice and peace.

Friends have certainly not always enjoyed popularity or even toleration by their contemporaries, but they have persevered nonetheless. There is, perhaps, more than a grain of the ornery in Quaker social activists. For centuries, they have urged their positions on contemporaries who do not share them; as in the early days, Quakers believe they have a role to play in society, and pushing it—frequently against tremendous odds—has kept the reform fires burning.

Perhaps most important, these Quaker efforts have earned extraordinarily constructive results. Their positions on social issues, however controversial at the height of a particular struggle, are now firmly in place on the national agenda. While not every American agrees with attitudes Quakers have espoused, all of these stances, so vigorously pursued, are now widely if not universally shared, and furthermore, they clarify our responsibilities as empathic citizens of the world, thereby significantly affecting our perceptions of liberty, justice, and tolerance in America.

Almost from their first settlement, American Quakers have struggled with the painful predicament of following George Fox's admonitions to guard their spiritual purity. The settlers embarked for the New World, where they flourished beyond imagination. They created a prosperous and benignly governed colony along the Delaware and developed productive farms and lucrative commerce. From tiny Nantucket, they fashioned a worldwide whaling

empire and reaped undreamed-of wealth. Moses Brown; the Logans, Mifflins, Mendenhalls, and Pleasantses; and many others prospered through hard work, moderation, honesty, and canniness. But as this "outward plantation" flourished, the more delicate "inward plantation" suffered neglect.

Again and again, Friends have encountered the dilemma of maintaining their spiritual integrity in the face of worldly success. Through the centuries, they have endeavored to right this balance by bringing spiritual conviction to the outward plantation. They have paid a painful price for these differences within their own organization.

The Religious Society of Friends was born in the turmoil of the Puritan revolution, and to the keen disappointment of many of its members, their path in America has been scarred by turmoil within their Society as well. The nineteenth century was a fractious time for all Protestants in America; Friends were no different and suffered what must have seemed an unendurable schism. Despite their highly valued aspiration to peaceful conflict resolution, frequently effectively urged on non-Quakers, they have been unable to devise a shared vision among themselves with regard to doctrine, organization, faith, and practice.

Sadly, despite the talents and efforts of a group experienced in avowing collaborative conflict resolution, American Friends themselves have been unable to come together from positions of entrenched differences that have since developed. Yet they have survived multiple and bitter schisms for almost two centuries. This book proposes that an important reason is that all Quakers, regardless of factional affiliation, firmly share a fundamental concern for

social activism, grounded in a common religious belief. Despite the internal turmoil, Friends have recognized a mutual understanding of the religious imperative to right the world's inequities, which for them trumps doctrinal and organizational differences.

Quaker leadership, perseverance, consistency, and effectiveness so elevate Friends' contributions that ignorance of their history inhibits our understanding of the American society we recognize today. Surely their experience offers us an illuminating lens on our own social history, which in turn helps each of us to learn something important about who we are and what we think as Americans. The example of public social advocacy alone, apart from its substance, encourages Americans to realize that there is a role for each of us in promoting social equality, the relief of suffering, and the treatment of all people with respect.

Their record of living up to the high expectations of their beliefs is flawed, and Quakers would be the first to agree. The story of their antislavery activity, begun in such promising and forward-looking fashion, hit some rough patches within their own communities, which persisted until some kind of operating consensus was found so that their effective advocacy of rights for African Americans could flourish. The stubborn refusal of Quakers to concede defeat in their rigorous quest for peaceful dispute resolution, even in the face of civil and world wars, is a precious legacy to a world that avers agreement but so often falls short of the challenge.

Curiously, there is a fascinating duality in the Quaker experience in America. Quakers are, to most of us, invis-

ible. To the extent that they are recognized at all, it is because of their works and not for their public pronouncements or self-promotion. The source of their religious belief is silence, out of which comes the search for a spiritual Light Within, the beacon of both self-awareness and public action. But their quiet and private commitment lays the foundation for a nonviolent but aggressive public advocacy. The Quaker experience demonstrates that there is a great chasm between quiet and reticence. Humility and moderation can indeed go hand in hand with bold and effective action.

Today we are surrounded by illustrations of religious groups who, like Friends, believe in espousing their convictions in the public domain. The Religious Right in America and militant Muslims abroad are two examples of groups who, like Quakers, believe firmly in the worthiness of their spiritual beliefs. Their methods, however, differ enormously from the Quaker model. Friends have devoted themselves not to political domination but to humanitarian causes; most do not proselytize; most of their relief work has not included missionary efforts. Friends believe in a very personal, experiential Christianity, but they claim no higher authority than anyone else. They are an example of a religious group that does not denigrate or point fingers or do violence to those who might disagree. On the contrary, they draw from a palette of respect and reconciliation as they work through social and political channels toward a just and peaceful world. In the Quaker vision, values and beliefs do not tolerate bifurcation into "us" and "them." Instead, Friends quietly search within themselves for the

leadings of the Truth and strive to carry that message into the world to seek the peace and equality that they believe all men and women deserve. With conviction, persuasion, and encouragement, Friends welcome the rest of us to join them in working toward that world.

As Americans, we are profoundly touched by the Quaker imprint on our nation's political and social history, as well as on our assumptions and interpretations of our relationships to one another and to government. Their positive worldview, their aspirations for a more benevolent and just society, and their stubborn insistence on peacefully promoting these aspirations in the civic realm have significantly influenced the American spirit. Sadly, theirs are largely unheralded contributions, but surely, their example is an inspiration.

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Susan Sachs Goldman's *Friend*
compact history of American Quaker
Indians, enslaved and freed Africans, and
she treats as well Quaker leadership in prison reform, mental illness, poverty, and especially peace and pacifism. Goldman's lovely book encompasses the caring that has typified American Quakers' humanitarianism since their first appearance in America. It reminds us of the simple goodness found within the Quakers' "inward light."

—*Jon Butler*
Howard R. Lamar Professor of American Studies, History, and Religious Studies, Yale University

Susan Sachs Goldman creatively documents the history of Quaker social action in America through compelling stories and underreported yet astonishing events, with insightful commentary on the intersection of religious belief and moral, civic action. *Friends in Deed* is a must-read for those with passion for American history and the nation's social struggles. Goldman reveals tales of action based on principles of religious liberty, racial and gender equality, nonviolent conflict resolution, and more than three centuries of moral stands for justice, highlighting the extraordinary contributions that Quakers have made to the government, moral conscience, and spirit of America.

—*Irene McHenry, PhD*
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Susan Sachs Goldman's long-standing interest in Quaker history and religion is illuminated through her experience as a parent and trustee at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC. A widely recognized lecturer on Quakers and the history of Quaker social reform efforts, she holds a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College and a master's degree in American history from Brandeis University. She divides her time between Washington, DC, and Martha's Vineyard.

$23.00
ISBN 978-0-615-58957-2
52300>
9 780615 589572

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