

Durham Friends Meeting

“Quakerism 101”

A short course for interested members and attenders
Introducing the history and principle elements of Quakerism.

Class 2

Quaker History - Proud and Painful

In this session, we will consider:

1. The Broad Sweep of Quaker History
From the End of Persecution to the Present
Important Quakers
Defining Issues
2. Painful Schism – The seeds and Fruits of Division
3. Shared Heritage, Common Endeavors, and Healers among Friends
4. Positioning Durham Friends Meeting – Our Historic Roots

To prepare for class, please read the following short essays and excerpts. (Downloading and bringing them to class for reference is suggested.)

If you are inclined, you may also wish to read:

John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, Quaker Books, 1984 (pp 115-181)
H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers In Conflict*, University of Tennessee Press, 1986

JBH
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A Brief Quaker History

Introduction

In the first unit of this “Quakerism 101” series we have considered the early beginnings of Quakerism and the fertile political and religious ground from which it sprung. We have briefly visited with the principal founding personalities, and we ended our historical snapshot with noting the renewed persecution of Quakers during the English Restoration. We have looked at the “Inner Light” (and its implications) as a principal theological issue and its implications for religious universalism.

The following essay (excerpted and minimally augmented and edited from an excellent 2005 posting by Northern Yearly Meeting) will take us from the end of the persecutions through the Quietist period, into the Great Separation, and on into the 20th century. The intent is go briefly introduce the main outline of Quaker history for American Friends. Specific elements of that history will be starting points for more in-depth consideration of issues and are important to our present Quaker identity in Durham Meeting.

- John Hunter

Period of Quietism

The close of the seventeenth century brought an end to persecutions. Friends were strongly established in Britain and North America, and were the dominant religious group not only in Pennsylvania, but in other colonies including North Carolina. By then, a structure of meetings, from local to the national Yearly Meeting, had been established in Britain, with several yearly meetings in the colonies, which George Fox had visited. The testimonies of integrity, peace, equality, and simplicity were clarified and began to harden into rigid rules for which members could not only be “elderred,” but also “read out of meeting.” The period of Quietism had begun, and lasted through the eighteenth century. The plain clothes and plain speech, which had been powerful revolutionary symbols of equality and simplicity lingered on to be the peculiar ways of a peculiar people. Deviation from the prescribed norms became the basis for admonition and even “disownment.” One cause of “disownment” was “marrying out” to someone not a Friend. Naturally, this caused a decline in membership. Patterns of organization and membership originally developed as protections against persecution, became straitjackets to protect against contamination by the world. Schools were established to provide “guarded education.”

For those who were comfortable within the fold, this period of “quietism” provided an exemplary way of life, of loving communities characterized by simplicity and serenity. A fine example of this way of life was John Woolman (1720-1772) of Mount Holly, New Jersey. Growing up in a sheltering family and meeting, he learned tailoring and shopkeeping, as adjuncts to a deep spiritual life. When he found himself in danger of becoming a prosperous merchant, he cut back his activities to tailoring and his small farm, so that he would not be “cumbered” by possessions and would have time to follow the leadings of the spirit.

As a young clerk in a shop, he was asked to write a bill of sale for a slave. This traumatic experience led him to his life calling from God. He traveled by foot and horseback up and down the colonies, persuading Quaker slave owners to free their slaves. He also worked in the business sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to obtain the adoption of minutes against slave holding. As a result primarily of the efforts of John Woolman and others, most American Quakers had given up slave holding by the time of the Revolutionary War. Woolman’s Journal is a classic not only of Quakerism, but of American literature.

Friends were, with few exceptions, neutral in the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars; this cost them a great deal of membership and influence. This loss was compounded by a serious schism early in the next century.

The Great Separation

During the period of Quietism, British Friends in general had become converted to an evangelical Christianity that accepted orthodox Christian theological dogmas in an almost creedal form. This movement spread to America at about the same time as a general growth of Deism. Deists generally believed in a creator who did not intervene thereafter, and were skeptical of the historic authenticity of the Bible. Many of the American “founding fathers” were Deists. American Friends tended to drift in both directions, leading to serious conflicts over theological issues. British Friends came over to America to support their “true” orthodoxy against those Friends who held that the “inner light” was to be honored above the Bible and traditional Christian doctrines.

Prominent among the latter was Elias Hicks, a Long Island farmer and minister, who was widely popular as a preacher, not only to Friends, but to the general religious public. Hicks was a powerful speaker, emphasizing the primacy of guidance by the light within over all other religious authorities. Hicks became the principle target of the British evangelicals, some of whom followed him from meeting to meeting standing to rebut his message in an effort to overcome his influence.

The conflict came to a head in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827, where urban wealth had become allied with Christian (evangelical) orthodoxy and was almost exclusively represented in the clerkship and on the key committees holding the reins of power and authority. Rural simplicity was allied with the message of Hicks and was represented by the majority of yearly meeting members most of whom attended the Green Street Meeting or lived in the rural outskirts of the city. The sessions ended with two “Philadelphia Yearly Meetings,” one “Orthodox,” and the other “Hicksite.” The (often bitter) split moved on to New York, Canada, Baltimore, and the newly established Ohio Yearly Meeting. Individual meetings endured bitter splits and even families were sometimes torn over this issue.

Quakers were a part of the westward movement of European settlement across the continent. As Orthodox Friends continued to be influenced by evangelical movements in other protestant groups, they adopted many of the practices of these churches, including organs, programmed worship services, paid ministers, steeples on their churches, and missionaries. This also occurred in the eastern Orthodox yearly meetings in America, except for Philadelphia. In New England Yearly Meeting, this produced another split in 1845. John Wilbur, a Rhode Island schoolteacher, objected to these changes and took his case to the Yearly Meeting sessions. The resultant split produced a small yearly meeting (Wilburite) and a much larger one (called “Gurneyite” for Joseph John Gurney, the most prominent British Evangelical Friend). There are now three Wilburite yearly meetings in Ohio, Iowa, and North Carolina, officially called Conservative.

Nineteenth-century Developments

To avoid living in a slave culture, many Friends moved from the south to the Northwest Territory (which became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin). Established by the Ordinance of 1787, it was to be “forever free” of slavery. For example, large numbers left the Carolinas for Indiana. Substantial numbers later moved on to Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, California and Oregon. During the late 1860s through the 1870s a radical change swept over Quakers in the Midwest with the adoption of revivals and the preaching of immediate sanctification. Many Midwestern meetings took up hymn singing, paid pastors, led prayers, churches with steeples, and other trappings of evangelical Christian churches. Toward the end of the century, the Gurneyite movement split again, with the most evangelical yearly meetings separating from the main body of Orthodox. These evangelical yearly meetings now constitute the Evangelical Friends International (EFI).

Friends of all persuasions were active against slavery, founding antislavery societies, editing abolitionist papers, and playing an important role in supporting the escaped slave leaders of the “underground railroad” to help more slaves escape across the free but perilous northern states to Canada. Quaker women, first active in the anti-slavery movement, became the dominant leadership of nineteenth-century movements for women’s rights. Especially notable were Lucretia Mott and the Grimke sisters.

Friends also continued to struggle for fair treatment of Native American Indians, to the extent that President Grant appointed a Quaker as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Friends efforts at fair treatment were overwhelmed by the land-hungry anti-Indian sentiment. This sentiment supported the illegal settlers who invaded the Indian lands.

The Civil War was as traumatic for Friends as for the nation as a whole. Sympathies were sharply

against slavery, but the peace testimony was strong. Some enlisted and fought, but many Friends took advantage of the opportunity to “buy out” of the draft. In general, efforts at peacemaking were not well received. The Emancipation Proclamation was gratifying, but the freed slaves were in need of a great deal of help. Friends responded, as did others, by setting up schools for Negroes in the former slave states. Schools were also set up for Indians in Oklahoma, which produced an early missionary effort for American Friends.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, vigorous leadership in all branches revived Quakerism, which had hardened both in North American and in British Friends into virtual denial of one another’s existence. Hicksite and Orthodox Friends would not accept one another’s communications, and London Yearly Meeting refused to be “in correspondence” with the Hicksites. Even yearly meetings which agreed in theology, form of worship, and structure had little to do with one another except in the exchange of formal “epistles”—letters “to Friends Everywhere”—drafted by yearly meeting sessions.

George Fox had encouraged the setting up of Friends schools, as did William Penn. This had developed by the end of the nineteenth century into a network of boarding secondary schools in Britain and the eastern United States and high schools in Washington, New York City, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. These were followed by colleges in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, California, and Oregon.

Twentieth-century Movements

The harsh separateness of Friends in the nineteenth century was changed through the leadership of a remarkable group of young men on both sides of the Atlantic. The principal figure in North America was Rufus Jones, born in 1863 in the small Quaker village of North China, Maine, in the Gurneyite New England Yearly Meeting. He was educated in Quaker schools and Haverford College, with graduate study at Harvard. He had a long teaching career at Haverford. His central academic interests were in Quaker history, mysticism, and devotion. Jones was also involved in church affairs, and while quite young became the editor of the **American Friend**, the principal journal of Gurneyite Quakerism. He also was involved in the process which led to the organization of the Friends Five Years Meeting, (now the Friends United Meeting [FUM]), an association of Gurneyite yearly meetings formed in 1900. Jones was not a supporter of the Richmond Declaration of Faith, a strong statement of Christian orthodoxy prepared at a large conference in 1887, and was influential in preventing it from becoming the basis of association of the Five Years Meeting.

At this same time, a group of Hicksite leaders brought their yearly meetings together in the Friends General Conference (FGC). These two groups, though unreconciled to one another, were the beginnings of a movement for unity that brought all Friends closer together in the next century.

In response to the harsh treatment of conscientious objectors in the World War of 1914-1918, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was organized in 1917 to provide alternative service. Although located in Philadelphia, it was supported by Friends from many yearly meetings and was established as an independent corporation. Rufus Jones served as Clerk of the Board. The AFSC has followed the Quaker tradition of relief work, feeding children on both sides of the Spanish Civil War, and in Germany after both world wars. It has since grown into a very influential peace and justice organization, with programs in all regions of the world and a budget in the tens of millions. AFSC is supported by most U.S. yearly meetings, as well as many who are not Friends. In 1947, The Religious Society of Friends received the Nobel Peace Prize for its humanitarian work. The award was accepted by the AFSC and its counterpart in Britain.

At the end of World War II, the Friends’ Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) evolved from the AFSC to be the Quaker lobby in Washington. FCNL has been, and is, of great value to Friends concerned with right governmental action. It is supported by most U.S. yearly meetings, and is recognized as one of the most accurate and reliable sources of Washington information.

In education, the twentieth century brought residential adult study centers in Birmingham, England and suburban Philadelphia, summer camps for children, several yearly meeting retreat centers, and a new college in New York. The Earlham School of Religion was founded in the 1960s at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. It was designed to provide pastors for FUM Friends churches with high quality training and a strong background in Quakerism. It has also provided the same opportunity for many Friends of other backgrounds.

Other forms of closer association have developed over the years. In 1931, Fifty-seventh Street Meeting was established in Chicago, belonging to both Illinois Yearly Meeting FGC and Western Yearly Meeting FUM. Then, in the 1940s and 1950s, several yearly meetings which had split in 1827 and soon after, were reunited:

Philadelphia, Canadian, New England, New York, and Baltimore. All these belong to FGC and all but Philadelphia also belong to FUM.

During this time, Rufus Jones continued to be the most prominent Quaker in the U.S., speaking widely among Friends, lecturing on the prestigious ecumenical religious lecture circuit, writing constantly (history of Quakerism, mysticism, devotions), promoting unity among Friends, and teaching at Haverford College. His assertion that Quakerism was essentially a mystical religion brought him more into favor with Hicksite Friends and less with Orthodox Friends, despite his Orthodox roots and long affiliation with Haverford, founded by Philadelphia Orthodox Friends. In a way, this made him a bridge and furthered unity, since many Orthodox Friends continued to admire him.

In the middle of the century, there was new growth of Hicksite and other “liberal” Quaker groups in the U.S. In the following fifty years, there came to be a meeting or worship group in many university and college communities across the Mid West. A comparable growth occurred on the West Coast. Pacific Yearly Meeting, Hicksite in spirit though not affiliated with Friends General Conference, divided to add North Pacific and Intermountain Yearly Meetings. There has also been a substantial growth in the former California YM (FUM), which is now Southwest YM in the EFI. This expansion in the middle west and west occurred during a period of decline in numbers of Friends in Britain and the eastern United States (with the exception of some college or university centers.)

In 1920, a world conference of Friends was held in London, and a second conference in 1937 at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, resulted in the creation of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), which has grown in membership to include nearly all yearly meetings in the world. As its name suggests, it has no authority over its members, but is a catalyst, for Friends meeting together to share spiritual life and temporal concerns. It meets every three years in a different part of the world, with representatives from all member yearly meetings, and sponsors world conferences at roughly fifteen-year intervals. The FWCC is organized into Sections for Europe and the Near East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. These Sections hold annual meetings to maintain spiritual contact and consider issues in their regions. The FWCC uses its international character to qualify as the sponsor of the Quaker programs at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, but the actual work is done by the AFSC in New York and Britain Yearly Meeting, through its Quaker Peace and Social Witness Committee in Geneva.

The growth of the FWCC is a result in part of Friends’ missionary activities, since many of the new yearly meetings around the world are the result of missions. These were undertaken for the most part by evangelical Friends in both the FUM and EFI yearly meetings. The greatest fruits have been in East Africa, Central America, the Andean highlands of Bolivia and Peru, and Alaska. It is believed by some observers that Kenya has the majority of all Friends in the world; with an estimate running as high as 200,000 Friends. The other large mission groups number in the tens of thousands. Since there are slightly more than 100,000 in the U.S., less than 20,000 in Britain, and smaller numbers in other European and English-speaking countries, it is clear that a majority of Quakers world-wide are dark-skinned, poor, evangelical, and English is not their mother tongue. These newer groups are providing spiritual and practical leadership for world Quakerism through the FWCC.

300 Years of Notable Quakers

By John Hunter

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It is difficult to know what to call the Quakers who dramatically stand out in our history because of their importance to the development and definition of our Quaker heritage. Were they Quaker giants? -saints? -or were some political opportunists and rabble-rousers? The fact is, of course, that Quakers of significant historical importance came in all flavors, but given the theological basis of Quakerism and the early establishment of the testimonies (perhaps most importantly equality and integrity) we are left with a list of Quaker notables of whom we can be proud. In the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries there were plenty.

Quietist Reformers

The Quietist period for Quakerism is generally defined as occurring for the 100 years of the 18th century. In this time there were four outstanding American Quaker personalities: John Woolman, Anthony Bezenet, Job Scott, and Elias Hicks. Each one was an activist and pushed a reluctant Society of Friends to reject slavery and each was deeply rooted in the culture of Quietism which stressed waiting quietly in worship for spiritual guidance. We will profile Bezenet, Woolman, and Scott in this section, but save Hicks for the 19th century as he is best known for his role leading up to the Great Separation in 1827.

Anthony Bezenet (1713 - 1784)

Anthony Bezenet was the earliest notable American abolitionist. He was a French Huguenot who with his family migrated eventually to London to escape persecution. Becoming a Quaker at age 14, Bezenet was impressed with the anti-slavery movement mounted by Quakers in England (that influenced Wilberforce) and took these ideals to Philadelphia in 1731 as an 18 year-old. He was immediately active among Friends working to convince them that slave owning was against Quaker and Christian principles and should be banned.

In Philadelphia Bezenet first tried to support himself as a merchant, but failing in that endeavor, began a life-long profession as a teacher in 1739. Unlike Woolman, Scott, and Hicks who frequently traveled in the ministry, Bezenet made his career in the Philadelphia area teaching at a series of Friends schools, founding schools for girls and for blacks, and writing and agitating for emancipation and fair treatment of slaves.

Bezenet became personal friends with and made a close ally of John Woolman, and together they successfully pressured Philadelphia Yearly Meeting into banning slave ownership for its members with progressive restrictions starting in 1755 and disownment by 1774. (Quakers were the only sect to ban slavery for their members before the Revolutionary War.) Bezenet was a tireless correspondent for the abolitionist cause counting among his correspondents Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, and John Wesley, who many believe was stirred to his own strong anti slavery stand by the influence of Bezenet.

Bezenet's power as a pamphleteer and speaker in the abolitionist cause sprang from his deep involvement in the black community. He opened his own school for blacks in 1770 and convinced Quakers to sponsor a school for free and slave black children in 1773. Unlike many white abolitionists he spent considerable time among blacks and personally knew and was known by most of the black population in Philadelphia.

The website "Africans in America" notes: "When Anthony Benezet died in 1784 at the age of seventy-one, 400 of Philadelphia's black citizens turned out to mourn his passing. Known for his humility and tireless devotion to the education and uplift of the black population, this gentle Quaker was known as 'the single most prolific antislavery writer and the most influential advocate of the Negro's rights on either side of the Atlantic.'"

John Woolman (1720 - 1772)

Most present-day Friends know the story of John Woolman as the "quintessential Quaker." He is held up as an almost perfect role model for what a Quaker can aspire to be -and for good reason. By all accounts Woolman was able to seamlessly combine apparent opposites in his life and ministry. He was a wonderful

combination of personal gentleness and steely moral resolve; great spiritual depth and powerfully active witness; and he was able to effect a kind and non-threatening approach even while speaking bluntly to those whose ethics and life style he challenged. Woolman lived a life of exemplary Quaker simplicity while at the same time moving easily among the wealthy. His personal integrity and kind approach to others allowed him to carry his witness to a wide audience who might otherwise have shunned those whose human flaws were more apparent.

Woolman's early history (recounted above in the Quaker History essay) is one steeped in the Quaker Quietist tradition. Throughout his life he took care to simplify his circumstances so as to allow time for quiet worship and for active ministry. His ministry was both on a practical and theoretical level. He traveled extensively to personally engage with and witness to Friends and others. He also produced ground-breaking essays and expounded on the interconnectedness of a chosen life style to social and economic issues. His essay "A Plea for the Poor", written in 1763 (although not published until 1793), argues that the desire for more comfortable life styles leads inexorably to oppressive conditions for slaves.

Broadly, Woolman's ministry was focused on the fair treatment of all people. He tirelessly worked for the emancipation and better treatment of slaves and also took up a concern for native Americans. His anti-slavery work was primarily among Friends and he took over 30 journeys on horseback throughout the colonies. His style was not only to labor with slave owners and to speak in local and yearly meetings, but to also witness by gently refusing to stay in homes supported by slave labor, but instead to sleep outside. He also bore witness by wearing clothing free of slave labor which meant he was a strange sight appearing in undyed homespun woolen clothing. However, the ridicule and gawking that he received usually quickly ended once he was able to speak and interact with those at hand as they were won over by his sincerity and kindness even as his witness might make a hearer uncomfortable. The result of such "consciousness raising" was that Quakers were the first sect to ban slavery and were at the leading edge of the abolition movement moving the country toward emancipation.

Following in the Quaker tradition of writing journals (for ministers and weighty Friends published by their yearly meeting upon their death) John Woolman wrote a journal that has become a classic not only among Friends but in American literature. It is still in print and is studied both in academic and religious circles.

Woolman died at 52 in England where he had gone for a pastoral tour. Initially the yearly meeting, based on his strange appearance and outspoken reputation, would not allow him to visit meetings, but after being persuaded to hear him, they were won over by his spirit and for the first time in its history, included a statement condemning slavery in its Epistle and approved him to travel in the ministry among their meetings. He shortly died in York of smallpox.

Job Scott (1751 – 1793)

Job Scott is generally recognized as the second most influential Quaker of the Quietist period after John Woolman. Not coincidentally, his journal (1797) is widely quoted and is recognized as a classic perhaps only second to Woolman's.

John Punshon notes that Job Scott, like John Woolman, was nourished by Quietism. The emphasis on the inward struggle and waiting quietly seemed to be congenial to his spirit. However, as the evangelical influence spread among Quakers, his writings emphasizing traditional Quietist principles became contentious after his death as they became fodder for debate in the early 1800s leading up to the 1827 schism among Quakers. Larry Ingle credits Scott as a vanguard for Quaker reformation seeing in his writings a warning of prosperity and comfort that would lead to spiritual failure.

As much as Job Scott worked against slavery and advocated a spiritual and righteous life based on Quietist principles, like Woolman, he was personally inclusive and accepting. While his preaching could be hard hitting (his nickname in Philadelphia was "son of thunder") he seemed to approach individuals with tenderness and patience.

Scott traveled widely in the ministry and while there were many other notable Quakers traveling in the ministry at that time (Elbert Russell lists a dozen currently recognizable Quaker names) Scott seems to have been one of the most influential. His notoriety seems to be both on account of his powerful and effective

speaking style and his clear and provocative writings. Although not without some controversy, Scott seemed to be popular and was generally well received where ever he preached. From his home in Rhode Island, Scott visited nearly every meeting in the United States and later went to Europe to visit and preach in meetings in the British isles. He died in Ballitore, Ireland at the age of 42, like John Woolman 20 year before, of smallpox.

American Quakers in the 19th Century

The 19th century was troublesome for Friends. Quaker leaders of that time are today too often known for their roles in the various schisms that plagued American Quakerism. However, the 19th century also produced great Quaker leadership working in abolition, prison reform, and women's rights. Involved in bitter schisms were Elias Hicks, Joseph John Gurney, and John Wilbur, but working for social change were Elizabeth (Gurney) Fry, Lucretia Mott, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Levi Coffin. (There were many others involved as well, although there is not space here to profile each of them. There were scores of prominent British and American Quakers who played key roles in working against slavery and capital punishment, and there were also prominent Friends involved in prison and social reforms, as well as involvement in the American schisms. Perhaps Susan B. Anthony would be the most glaring omission here, but she was no longer active as a Quaker when she was most politically active and did not have direct influence on the Society of Friends as such.)

Elias Hicks (1748 – 1830)

Elias Hicks was a farmer from Long Island, New York who grew up in the Quietist tradition. He had a religious awakening in his mid 20s which resulted in serious study of Quaker history, theology, and practice and he began to speak in his meeting and was named a minister at age 27. For the next 53 years he divided his time between working on his farm and traveling in the ministry. He carried much of the burdens of the deeply divisive "Great Separation" among Quakers in 1827 and ended up with his name associated with a surviving branch.

Hicks became a powerful and lucid preacher and attracted a wide audience well beyond Quakers. His early focus was on slavery and he was the principal force behind a movement which culminated in the State of New York banning all slavery (coincidentally in the same year as the painful schism among Friends.) His preaching among Friends also consistently included the theme of "obedience to the light within," which he considered as the foundation of true Quakerism.

After the turn of the century, Hicks began to include in his preaching not only his convictions about the primacy of the inward light, but also admonitions about recent "theological verbiage and technicality" which he saw the evangelicals forcing on Quakerism and which he felt greatly crippled the practical value and authority of Christ's example to mankind. Among other things, he particularly rejected the introduction into Quakerism of the doctrine of Atonement and the elevation of scripture to infallibility (including the virgin birth of Christ.) His message was seen as provocative by many powerful and wealthy ministers and elders of the large yearly meetings who had themselves become persuaded of the orthodox tenets of the Christian evangelical wave sweeping over the country and were inclined to enforce them in an authoritative manner in their yearly meetings. As much as Hicks tried to keep in personal contact with the ministers and elders with whom he had closely worked and preached for 50 years, a theological split was inevitable involving much acrimony and heart ache.

The term Hickism was applied by Orthodox Friends as a disapprobation for what they felt were "unsound" doctrines promoted by Hicks and hard feelings among Orthodox Friends were associated with his name into the mid 20th century. As the schism among Friends was progressing through yearly meetings, Hicks began an ambitious speaking tour in 1828 covering some 2,400 miles. He was followed and frequently his messages in meetings were immediately challenged by Orthodox Quakers. He suffered a stroke and returned home to Long Island to die. Legend has it that one of his last acts was to become agitated when a cotton blanket had been placed upon him. When a wool blanket (not made by slave labor) was found, he relaxed and was at peace.

Joseph John Gurney (1788 – 1847)

Joseph John Gurney was the 10th of 11 children of a wealthy Quaker banker in Norwich, England.

Following his mother's death, Joseph Gurney (the John being added later to distinguish him from a well known cousin of the same name) was raised primarily by an older sister, Elizabeth, who herself would become one of the most revered Quakers reformers.

Young Joseph John was a bright student and attended Oxford University, although he could not graduate because he was a Quaker. He joined in his sister's campaign for prison reform and remains best known in England for this work and also worked with another sister, Hannah, on anti slavery issues. He was named a minister in his Quaker meeting and became a dynamic and effective preacher known nationally and in Europe for his advocacy of Quaker values. Through his association with Anglican friends, he became increasingly convinced of the need for Quakers to adopt a more orthodox Christian position. The Bible became his touchstone and he began to insist that Quakers should be clear that the Bible was primary over the Inner Light and should acknowledge belief in the Atonement, the virgin birth, and other traditional Christian doctrines. Gurney's views were well known among evangelicals in America and many of the traveling evangelical British Friends reported to him.

Gurney traveled to Canada and the US in 1837 for a 4-year speaking tour and was received enthusiastically. He preached among Quakers, but also in other churches and in secular settings and was invited to deliver a sermon to a joint session of Congress. (Some Quaker parents were so impressed with Gurney they named their son, born in 1836, Joseph Gurney Cannon who ended up having the representatives' office building in Washington, DC named for him.) Gurney's influence was so significant that when the Orthodox branch of American Quakers again split in 1845, the continuing more evangelical branch was called "Gurneyite."

John Wilbur (1774 – 1856)

John Wilbur was a school teacher from Rhode Island who became concerned with the increasing movement of the Orthodox branch of Quakerism away from what he considered traditional Quaker practice and theology. While by no means a Hicksite, Wilbur perceived that the Orthodox were going too far, especially in the 1836 London Yearly Meeting epistle, largely penned by Gurney, which proclaimed the adoption of an even more evangelical stance for Quakers.

Wilbur began to speak out against what he saw as the extremes of Quaker orthodoxy and its recent adoption in some quarters of paid pastors and the introduction of music and led prayers into Quaker worship. He also spoke against Gurney during the latter's tour of the United States. These activities eventually involved Wilbur in a charge of violating the Discipline (not accepting authority and working through proper channels) and his monthly meeting was asked to discipline him. The meeting refused and was then laid down by the Quarterly Meeting and its members transferred to nearby Greenwich Meeting. Greenwich then dis-owned Wilbur.

Wilbur persisted in interacting with Friends, and in 1845 New England Yearly Meeting, which had survived the 1827 separation intact, succumbed to the same issues and split into a "Wilburite" and "Gurneyite" division. By 1854 the Orthodox yearly meetings in New York, Indiana, Ohio, and Baltimore also had split, but in every case the Wilburites were in the decided minority. Although there was movement to do so, the Orthodox Philadelphia Yearly Meeting did not again split, but Iowa Split in 1877 and in 1904 a small portion of North Carolina Yearly Meeting broke away to join the Wilburite cause. Presently only small groups Iowa, Ohio, and North Carolina exist as Wilburite ("Conservative") Yearly Meetings.

Elizabeth Fry (1780 - 1845)

The third child of the wealthy Gurney banking family, 18-year-old Elizabeth took her religion seriously after the 1798 visit of the American Quaker minister William Savery. She adopted plain dress and plain language and in 1800 married Joseph Fry, another plain friend from a wealthy family. In 1813, Stephen Grellet, another evangelical American Quaker minister, visited and asked her to help with local prison conditions. She immediately responded and in doing so found her life's work.

In 1816 Elizabeth began to regularly visit in the local women's prisons and organized other local women to visit with her and make clothing and bring food, sanitation supplies, and instructional supplies for the children. In 1817 she formed a formal association to support her work thereby providing a school and supplies for prison industry. She brought her brother, Joseph John Gurney, into her ministry in 1817 and together they

began to petition authority and to do research, which resulted in a published study. In 1818, working through her brother in law, House of Commons member Thomas Buxton, Elizabeth was invited to testify about the horrific prison conditions (the first woman ever to testify in Parliament.) Elizabeth and Joseph John took up several more causes including capital punishment, homelessness, visitations to the poor, and a training school for nurses.

Today Elizabeth Fry is widely regarded as the social reformer who sparked the conscience of a nation and whose work set a pattern for proper treatment of the poor. She is celebrated in Canada and England and her image appears on the British 5-pound note.

Lucretia Mott (1793 – 1880)

It is hard to over estimate the contributions made by Lucretia Mott across most of a century (1820-1880) to the varied causes to which she was attached. She is widely regarded as the mother of American feminism and an activist for women's rights, a dedicated abolitionist, an active campaigner for peace, and a strong spirit-led member of the Society of Friends who fought relentlessly for reform of that body. Prodigiously intelligent and insightful, her seemingly boundless energy lent itself to a demanding travel and speaking schedule all the while attending to matters of family, accomplishing the usual round of Quaker committee meetings, and entertaining a long list of guests.

Lucretia was born into the Coffin family in the Quaker whaling town of Nantucket, Massachusetts January, 1793, and like many women and girls in Nantucket early learned independence and self sufficiency during the months or years that the men were away on whaling voyages. Lucretia was sent to the Nine Partners Boarding school in Dutchess County, New York (now Oakwood Friends School) in 1806 where she excelled as a student and was asked to become a teacher in 1808. In 1811 she moved to Philadelphia and married fellow Nine Partners teacher James Mott. She bore 6 children of which 5 survived.

Based on her speaking in meeting, Lucretia was named a minister in 1821 and she quickly developed great skill as an extemporaneous speaker. Her speaking at Quaker meetings about abolition and other social or women's issues soon attracted criticism and she was engaged in a struggle with the elders for 50 years including several attempts to silence or disown her. For theological reasons, she sided with the Hicksites in 1827 but was soon disappointed to find that many elders (male) in the new branch of Quakerism yet had reservations about her messages. As a reformer of Quakerism, Lucretia won the battle; finally being on the Philadelphia committee that allowed women to be on the representative body in 1876, and was also invited to speak to New York Yearly Meeting in 1872 which for decades had branded her as a heretic and several times sent representatives to Philadelphia seeking her disownment.

In this short profile of Lucretia Mott's life, it would be impossible to fully explain her contributions to the national debate on women's rights, slavery, pacifism and peace work, poverty, prison reform, and education. Nor would it be possible to detail all of her travels throughout the United States among Friends and in the service of other organizations where for her last 30 years, given her international reputation, she was in constant demand as a speaker. But here is a sampler. She was the principal organizer of the Seneca Falls Conference; Clerk of the Philadelphia Women's Yearly Meeting; President, American Equal Rights Association; Founder, Universal Peace Union; Founder, Philadelphia Female Anti Slavery Society; Founder, Swarthmore College; Founder, Philadelphia Female Medical College. On a routine basis, she visited in prisons, preached regularly in black churches, involved herself in relief of the poor, harbored escaped slaves in her home, and entertained a string of guests such as Sojourner Truth, William Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and many lesser known activists and Friends who routinely lodged at the Motts.

Lucretia Mott's statue, along with two women who she helped to mentor, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, sits in the Capitol rotunda.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 – 1892)

Whittier was once considered a national treasure; his birthday was a holiday in many states, and his verse was routinely memorized by schoolchildren. While Whittier's poetry is out of fashion today, some is still

included in modern anthologies (eg *Snow Bound* and *The Barefoot Boy*) and many verses have been extracted from his voluminous output to form over 100 well-know hymns.

Born to a Quaker farming family in Haverhill, Massachusetts, he achieved the equivalent of only two years of high school education before first being published as a poet in 1826. He then plunged head-long into the abolitionist movement working closely with his mentor William Lloyd Garrison. By 1832 Whittier had edited and contributed stories and poems to various newspapers and published two books. He attended the unpopular first National Slavery Convention in 1833 where he wrote about the eloquence and moral courage of the speakers and was struck with the speaking of the “finely intellectual” woman in attendance, Lucretia Mott.

In 1834–35 he won a seat in the Massachusetts legislature, he ran for Congress on the Liberty ticket in 1842, and was a founder of the Republican party. He traveled frequently with the notable Quakers of his day and worked staunchly behind the political scene to further the abolitionist cause and was an active antislavery editor until 1840, when frail health forced him to retire to his Amesbury home. From there he sent out more of the poems and essays that made him a spokesman for the cause. After the Civil War he turned from politics and dedicated himself completely to poetry.

In 1876 he was granted an honorary Doctorate from Harvard -belated acknowledgment that this rustic Quaker had proved to be in the same league as Longfellow and other great American poets of his day. Physical markers of Whittier’s legacy in America are in the form of his name being affixed to towns (in California and Idaho), a college, parks and bridges, and many elementary and high schools across the country.

Levi Coffin (1798 - 1877)

As an example of the consuming commitment that some Friends made to the abolitionist movement, the Orthodox Quaker Levi Coffin stands out above all others. He dedicated his life to personally help over 3,300 slaves escape to freedom, managed a store that sold only goods made by free labor, and after the Civil War went to Europe as a fund raiser for the Western Freedman’s Aid Society, an organization in which he was a principal leader raising over \$1 million dollars in a single year (over 110 million dollars in today’s money.) He also worked to set up an orphanage and for education for freed slaves and supported many in the establishment of their own businesses.

By age 15 he worked with his Greensboro, North Carolina Quaker family to assist runaway slaves, and at age 23 he opened a free school for slaves, but it was forced to close by slave owners who organized not to allow any of their slaves to attend. In 1826 Levi followed many family and friends to eastern Indiana as part of the Quaker migration from North Carolina. He settled in Newport (now known as Fountain City) near the Quaker center of Richmond, Indiana and set up a successful pork processing business. He and his wife Catherine built a large brick house which in later times was dubbed the “Grand Central Station” of the Underground Railroad. In the 20 years they lived in Newport, over 2,000 slaves were hidden in the Coffin home some staying as long as two weeks if necessary. None were captured and all were sent healthier and more rested on their way to Canada. Small wonder that his supporters nicknamed him the “President of the Underground Railroad.”

The Coffins moved to Cincinnati in 1847 where Levi continued his leadership in anti-slavery activities. He managed a store for free labor goods that had been funded by Quakers and he continued to personally assist 1,300 more slaves crossing the Ohio River at Cincinnati in addition to his many other activities (mentioned above) including welcoming his Hicksite cousin Lucretia when she came through in 1853 on a speaking tour.

American Quakers in the 20th Century

Twenty-four notable Quakers of the 20th century come to mind -each one worthy of study. First on the list is Rufus Jones, undoubtedly the best known Quaker of the 20th century. For while he had an international reputation in religion, philosophy, and peace work, most of his time was devoted to work within the Society of Friends. Alice Paul took up the mantle of Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the other 19th century feminists to finally gain suffrage for American women. She is recognized in American history, but since leaving her Quaker family she was not active among Friends. Perhaps Henry Cadbury should

be profiled for his great service to Quakers, and maybe Herbert Hoover who remained an active Friend throughout his presidency. But what about the trio of notable Quaker women authors Elfrida Vipont Foulds, Jessamyn West, and Elizabeth Gray Vining, and the peace workers and activists Clarence Pickett, A.J. Muste, and Bayard Rustin? Then there is the “other Quaker President”, Richard Nixon, or the “other” Quaker mystic Thomas Kelly, or even Durham Meeting founder Elbert Russell who was highly influential among Friends in his time. And how could one leave out American Quaker apologists D. Elton Trueblood, Howard Brinton, and Douglas Steere? There are even more names such as Raymond Wilson, Elise and Kenneth Boulding, and Elizabeth Watson, and any historian would absolutely include Emma and Walter Malone and Jack Willcuts. So look up and study as many as you would like, but we’ll look at the first four!

Rufus Jones (1863 – 1948)

From the perspective of three generations hence, Rufus Jones looms as the most influential and recognized Quaker of the 20th century. His influence was profound among Friends, he was a key leader in peace and relief work, and he was internationally acclaimed as a writer, editor, and speaker. He was prolific, penning 57 books in addition to thousands of papers and articles. He was well known to the international religious public and was called in a British newspaper editorial, “the greatest spiritual philosopher living in America since William James”

Rufus Jones was born into an old Quaker family in South China, Maine. In 1885 he graduated from Haverford College in Pennsylvania, and stayed on to earn his M.A. there in 1886. From 1893 to 1912 he was the editor of the Orthodox Quaker organ, *Friends' Review* (later called *The American Friend*). In 1901 Jones received another M. A. from Harvard. He also began teaching philosophy and psychology at Haverford in 1893 and continued to do so until retiring in 1934. He helped found Bryn Mawr and was in its board from 1898 to 1936.

Rufus Jones had the gift of gentle charisma in that most everyone who met him seemed to feel that they had been in the presence of an extraordinary and positive personality. A simple conversation was often credited with buoying spirits and awakening spiritual connections. (Our own Cal Geiger remembers such an encounter with Rufus Jones in the 1940s.) This ability to interact personally in such a positive fashion was a real strength in his life-long dedication to healing the rifts among Quakers. While his original efforts as editor of the *Friends' Review* focusing on reigning in more extreme holiness tendencies of some Orthodox leaders led to his vilification, he found that if he could travel and meet directly with Friends, they found it much harder to oppose his more moderate views because they liked him so much personally.

In 1917 he helped found the American Friends Service Committee and in 1927 he traveled to Asia on a YMCA mission. He spent time in China, Japan, India, and the Holy Land. While in India Jones visited with Mahatma Gandhi. This trip helped Jones formulate a new more modern approach to missions--that of giving humanitarian aid to people while respecting other religions and not aggressively converting people to one's own religion. In 1938 he went with two other Quakers on a mission to meet with the Gestapo to try to find a peaceful way of dealing with the Nazis on behalf of Jews. While they were able to impress the officials with whom they met, the war intervened and future contacts were abandoned.

Rufus Jones wrote extensively on the topic of mysticism, reviving on new terms a key part of the Quaker faith. He distinguished between negating or negative mysticism (making contact with an impersonal force) and affirming or affirmative mysticism (making contact with a personal being). He upheld that God is a personal being with whom human beings could interact. He wrote in *The Trail of Life in the Middle Years*, "The essential characteristic of [mysticism] is the attainment of a personal conviction by an individual that the human spirit and the divine Spirit have met, have found each other, and are in mutual and reciprocal correspondence as spirit with Spirit."

Alice Paul (1885 - 1977)

Alice Paul is widely recognized as one of the key figures responsible in 1920 for the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US constitution granting American women the right to vote. (“Susan B. Anthony Amendment”). She was a relentless worker for the cause and a strong organizer, although her tactics were at the

time considered radical and she was imprisoned during her campaign for the amendment.

Alice Paul was raised as a Hicksite Quaker, attended Swarthmore College, and worked at the New York College Settlement while attending the New York School of Social Work. She left for England in 1906 to work in the settlement house movement there for three years, returning to get her PhD. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1912. (She would obtain a Law degree and another PhD degree from American University in 1928.)

In England, Alice Paul had taken part in more radical protests for woman suffrage, including participating in hunger strikes. She brought back this sense of militancy to the U.S. and began organizing protests and rallies and ended up being imprisoned three times. While in prison she participated in hunger strikes and wrote about the horrors of being force fed. Also while in prison, in order to discredit her, government officials purposefully sleep deprived her and tried to trap her into incriminating statements and to have her declared insane, but she was able to survive these tests. (The 2004 film “Iron Jawed Angels” starring Hilary Swank documents Paul’s campaign.)

After the 1920 victory for the federal amendment, Paul became involved in the struggle to introduce and pass an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The Equal Rights Amendment was finally passed in Congress in 1970 as the “Lucretia Mott Amendment” and sent to the states to ratify. However, two thirds of the states never ratified it within the specified time limit and the Amendment failed. Alice Paul also founded the World Women’s Party headquartered in Switzerland, but had to move it to New York due to Nazi advances in World War II. Paul also was active in the Peace movement, stating at the outbreak of World War II that if women had helped to end World War I, the second war would not have been necessary.

In the 1970s, Paul was forgotten, living in a Connecticut nursing home in reduced circumstances. An old admirer who had known her in Switzerland found out about her plight and had her moved to a better facility in New Jersey (that her family had endowed many years earlier) where she died in 1977.

Henry J. Cadbury (1883 – 1974)

Henry Cadbury was born in Philadelphia from a long lineage of Quakers on both sides dating back to the 1600s.. His distant cousins were the Cadburys of chocolate and social service fame in England, and his mother’s ancestry included John Bartram, the noted Quaker botanist.

Educated in Quaker schools, he pursued an academic career teaching at Westtown, then at Haverford and Bryn Mawr in addition to stints at Temple University and Drew Theological Seminary. His final post was at Harvard where for 20 years he was Hollis Professor of Divinity. He authored numerous scholarly books and other materials principally on Quakerism and the New Testament and was chosen to be one of a select group of scholars to re-translate the Bible for the Revised Standard Version.

Henry Cadbury was also extremely active among Friends at meetings for worship and at the monthly meeting level, but principally with the American Friends Service Committee which he helped to found in 1917. He went with AFSC relief teams to Germany in 1918 and remained extremely active in the leadership of AFSC into the 1970s. It was as AFSC Board Chair that he was chosen to go to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the AFSC and Friends in general.

He remains one of the most widely read Quaker authorities on the Bible. Orthodox Quaker historian and current Earlham College professor Thomas Hamm calls him “one of the most influential Friends of the twentieth century.” Curiously, some of his writings can be taken to indicate he actually was a non-theist, although he consciously took great care not to impress the weight of his personal and private views on anyone while encouraging students and others to find their own spiritual paths especially in a Christian context.

Herbert Hoover (1874 - 1964)

Born in 1874 in the (Orthodox) Quaker town of West Branch, Iowa, both of Herbert Hoover’s parents died early, leaving him an orphan at age 10. “Bert” Hoover then went to Newberg, Oregon to live with his uncle John Minthorn, (then the administrator of Friends Pacific Academy, now George Fox University) whom Hoover

recalled as "a severe man on the surface, but like all Quakers kindly at the bottom." Graduating with the first class at Stanford University, he achieved early success as a mining engineer and was made a partner in his British firm by age 26.

Bored with making money, the Quaker side of Hoover yearned to be of service to others. When World War I started in August 1914, he led 500 volunteers to organize the return home of 120,000 American tourists and businessmen from Europe. Hoover then undertook an unprecedented food relief effort as head of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium. Long before the Armistice of 1918, he was an international hero and the Belgian town of Leuven named a prominent square after him.

After the United States entered the war in 1917, Hoover was appointed as head of the American Food Administration in Europe. In organizing food relief for millions of starving people in central Europe, Hoover turned to the newly formed Quaker organization, the American Friends Service Committee to carry out much of the logistical work.

In 1928, Herbert Hoover was urged to become the Republican Party candidate and his excellent reputation gave him the nomination. He campaigned against Al Smith on the basis of efficiency and prosperity. Although Smith was the target of anti-Catholicism from the Baptist and Lutheran communities, Hoover avoided the using the religious issue (Quakers were themselves under attack as pacifists) and won a landslide victory.

The credit-fueled boom of the 1920s burst in 1929 precipitating the Great Depression which bottomed out in 1933. In the 1932 elections Hoover was attacked by the Democrats as the "do nothing" president, while free market opponents accused him of being overly interventionist. He did make some political gaffes and his policies were not as effective as he had hoped. In any case, he became very unpopular and was widely ridiculed and lost the election. Rehabilitation from his 15 year of disgrace began in 1947 with his appointment to a commission to reorganize the executive branch. The Hoover Commission, as it was known, was successful and he was appointed as chairman of a similarly successful commission by President Eisenhower in 1953 yielding wide acclaim for instituting government efficiencies. In the end, he died as a beloved statesman with the ridicule of the Depression put behind him. Of particular note for Quakers is that he stayed in touch with his Quaker heritage; attending meeting for worship as he could in Washington when he was president, and working with Quaker organizations as he was able throughout his career.

Durham Meeting's Historical and Theological Roots

By John Hunter

When Elbert Russell arrived in 1926 there was no Quaker meeting in Durham. A curious fact, given that there were well over 100 meetings in North Carolina at the time and Duke University itself had early Quaker roots. (But explaining that is a story for another time!) Elbert Russell was a birthright Friend who was raised in the pastoral Quaker tradition in the Midwest. Although holding on to many of his roots (including his preaching career), he was a modernist, siding with Rufus Jones with regard to opposing the spread of the holiness movement among Friends, biblical interpretation, creedalism, and other points of theology. His modernism eventually got him into difficulty with some powerful Indiana Quakers and he left Earlham College where he had been a beloved professor for 20 years. After a ten-year sojourn in Baltimore and Philadelphia (plus some international travel) where he worked closely with a range of Quakers, he came to Durham as a professor in the newly forming Duke Divinity School and two years later was appointed Dean, a position which he held until he retired in 1941.

In 1937 Elbert Russell was asked by Duke President Few (who himself had some Quaker ancestors from Hillsborough) to look after what Quakers there may be on campus. A small meeting for worship was started in the Russell home and then began meeting on a monthly basis rotating among attendees' homes. Swelled by conscientious objectors working at Duke Hospital during World War II the meeting became formalized and became officially a part of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting, Conservative in 1954. (For a more complete history of Durham Meeting see: <http://durhammonthlymtg.home.mindspring.com/Handbook/DMMhistory.htm>)

It is important to note that there is no evidence that Elbert Russell in any way pushed the fledgling Durham Meeting towards his own preferred brand of Orthodox (pastoral) Quakerism. He was apparently careful not to assume that Orthodox Quaker theology should hold within the meeting. Rather, he seems to have essentially supported two fundamental pillars: silent worship and traditional Quaker decision making process. Based on records of the meetinghouse dedication in 1956, it is clear that he also provided strong and steady leadership for those first ten years. It is also worthy to note that in his time with the meeting, its affiliation was purposefully with an organization in Philadelphia (American Friends Fellowship Council) which specifically allowed such meetings to set their own courses in terms of membership, structure, practice, and theology.

After Elbert Russell moved away in 1946 (and with him the steady influence of an experienced Friend) the members of the Meeting began to look for appropriate local affiliations. There were essentially three choices. There was a small group of evangelical meetings in North Carolina headquartered in Canton, Ohio; the (Orthodox and pastoral) North Carolina Yearly Meeting (FUM) in Greensboro; and the small (4 monthly meetings) Conservative Yearly Meeting based in Woodland in eastern North Carolina. Clearly, from a worship point of view, the Conservatives were by far the best fit, even if some of the old Quietist traditions (Orthodox theology, plain dress, plain speech, aversion to music and dancing, etc. still practiced by some in the Yearly Meeting) were less of a fit. Intervisitations were underway by the early 1950s and good relationships were established with the warm and supportive Quakers from rural Eastern North Carolina.

In a number of ways the Conservative Yearly Meeting was wise in the way it dealt with its new member meeting. While it certainly made Durham Friends aware of its practices and expectations as spelled out in its newly revised (1950) "Rules of Discipline", it did not seek to enforce some of the requirements which would have caused discord with the more liberal and Hicksite-leaning Durham Friends. The "Rules of Discipline" still upheld traditional Gurneyite Orthodox positions and required (p58) "...a belief in the Divinity, Mediation, and Atonement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (with disownment as the result of not being able to be in unity on this point.) The primacy of scripture was also clearly spelled out (p25): "We have always asserted... that all our doctrines and practices shall be tried by them, and admit it as a positive maxim 'That whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the Devil.'" (Barclay) As to the appointment of Ministers, when Durham meeting declined to appoint any, the Yearly Meeting did not press the point, but only encouraged the Meeting to do so when it was ready. It seemed as though the Yearly Meeting knew full-well that the dominant theological sentiment of its new meeting in Durham was tending toward the Hicksite, but wanting to be supportive and keep Durham in the fold, it was quite

tolerant of Durham Friends. In doing so, it opened itself up to change.

Change came in several ways. Several Durham Friends sat on the committee for revision the Discipline in 1969 and working together with Friends from all quarters of the Yearly Meeting, a complete reorganization of the venerable document resulted. The doctrines and testimonies were spelled out in modern prose while the historical material was greatly reduced and clearly placed in sections labeled “historical notes.” The doctrine of Atonement was never directly mentioned in the 1969 revision and even a Hicksite would have been pleased with the statement that a clear leading of the Spirit “... must be followed as the supreme organ of ascertained religious and moral truth.” (p7). Further, the official position of the Yearly Meeting was now that the only requirement for membership was that the applicant be “...willing to listen for and give expression in their lives to the promptings of the Inner Spirit...” (p29). While the 18th century flavor of the Advices was left unchanged, and Fox’s purposefully conservative theological 1671 letter to the governor of the Barbados was left in, new material was inserted mentioning race relations, social injustice, civil disobedience, upbringing of children, and space was openly given to a complete bibliography reflecting a wide range of Quaker thought.

Change also came in the form of pushing the Yearly Meeting towards peace action. Durham Meeting was instrumental in helping to found Quaker House in Fayetteville in 1969. Placing a peace witness in a military town during the contentious Vietnam War was a bold stroke and that first house was soon fire bombed. Starting with a presentation to Yearly Meeting by Wood and Sue Bouldin (Durham Meeting members who served as the first staff at Quaker House) in 1969 and thereafter with additional requests, in 1973 members of the Durham Meeting again pushed Yearly Meeting to directly financially support Quaker House. But some weighty Friends still saw Quaker House as somehow too controversial and the request for direct support from the Yearly Meeting budget was once again denied. Younger Durham Meeting members present were appalled, believing that if ever there was an appropriate traditional Quaker witness, it should certainly be peacefully opposing war and preparations for war. Mary Littrell, a middle aged Quaker from Woodland, counseled the frustrated young Friends to be patient and she was exactly correct. The Yearly Meeting did change, and soon the Yearly Meeting was including Quaker House in its annual budget.

It is important to note that association with the Conservative Yearly meeting has helped Durham Meeting in several regards. The discipline of good order has flowed from Yearly Meeting participation including conduct of business, the answering of queries, and record keeping. But the largest benefit has been the character of our weekly worship. The best elements of Quietist worship as descended through the Orthodox tradition, flavored by Wilburite sentiment, and then represented to Durham Meeting by the kindly Friends of the Conservative Yearly Meeting in the second half of the 20th century, has been a blessing. The example of quiet waiting and speaking in the Presence has given our worship a deep and rewarding tenor that is sometimes not found in active urban meetings.

The other half of Durham Meeting’s roots (in recent decades the dominant one) is straight-up Hicksite. By the late 1960s the meeting remained small and, other than the Klopfer family, was still primarily composed of the same founding (now elderly) group from the late 1930s and the 1940s. There were few children and therefore no viable First Day school. But then came a wave of young friends. The late 1960s saw the entry of a host of active Friends such as the Gambles, Hartleys, and the Hunters, soon followed by the Junks, Strattons, and Keightons. The next decade saw more influx with Norma Martell, the Sniders, Geigers and Graedons, and in the early 1980s came the Passmores, Langhams, Stevensons, Reddy/Slawson, and the Stewarts and later in that decade the Hysjulien-Vangsnes family. There were, of course, many more (often with families) who also came in those years who have moved on, but who were very active in the Meeting. With only a few exceptions, the new wave of Friends were politically liberal and activist by inclination. Many younger Friends tried attending Yearly Meeting, but while warmly welcomed, they found no viable children’s program, three days of laborious business meetings, and apparently little interest in directly engaging the present world in a way that spoke to younger Friends’ concerns. (Even Peter Klopfer’s restaurant witness and resulting Supreme Court decision in 1967 attracted little Yearly Meeting notice, and Yearly Meeting minutes failed to even mention the Vietnam War until a brief line in the 1973 report of the Peace Committee noted that US troops were being withdrawn.) The rejection of Lyle Snider’s plea for support of Quaker House in 1973 seemed to illuminate the sharp difference between, on the one hand, the rural, mostly elderly, conservative, quiet Quakers with an isolationist history; and on the other hand a new generation of young Friends with families, highly educated, steeped in politics (especially concerning the Vietnam War with many acquaintances serving and some killed), conscientious objectors, and politically active. In their minds, could the Yearly Meeting change fast enough?

In sharp contrast to the AFSC and the Hicksite yearly meetings in the north east, in the late 1960s neither yearly meeting in North Carolina was actively addressing the painful issue of the Vietnam War. A conference for interested Triangle area Friends regarding Quaker response to the Vietnam War was organized by John Hunter and was held at the Carolina Friends School in the fall of 1968. The conference was well attended and attracted Friends from Greensboro as well. Beyond the discussion of the war, there was a strong desire expressed to meet again as a support for those Friends from meetings who did not feel that their respective yearly meetings were engaging them in areas they they felt were important. A week-end family-oriented conference was organized for the next spring at Quaker Lake and once again was very well attended, this time attracting Friends from all of the Piedmont Crescent. The excitement was palpable regarding being able to meet and worship with like minded Friends in a family-friendly setting and to discuss issues of immediate importance. From this 1969 gathering, based on a concern brought by a young soldier from Fort Bragg and presented by Bob Gwyn of the Chapel Hill Meeting, Quaker House was founded.

This (yet unnamed) conference continued to be organized, and attracted Friends from Rockingham, Wilmington Fayetteville, Winston-Salem, Greenville, (and occasionally from Asheville) in addition to the core group from Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, and Greensboro. In 1974 it was decided to formally constitute this burgeoning group as Piedmont Friends Fellowship. Discussion at that time was clear that PFF was not intended to compete or detract from the yearly meetings, but only to provide an outlet for needed fellowship and support and that it was hoped that Friends would also remain active in their yearly meetings. There was, however, an unmet need for a formal affiliation, especially from smaller worship groups who were not affiliated with a yearly meeting or those established meetings who were critically uncomfortable with their current yearly meeting affiliations. For this reason, PFF did go on to formally affiliate with Friends General Conference in 1975 thereby allowing meetings FGC membership.

For Durham Meeting, this affiliation with FGC (through PFF) proved to be very strengthening and has supported dramatic growth. A number of Durham Friends have served on national FGC committees and have brought a good cross-fertilization of ideas and support. (Most recently the FGC Religious Education Committee, on which two Durham Friends sit, met at Durham in January, 2008) In addition, Durham Friends have enjoyed the annual national summer FGC Gathering in great numbers. Durham Friends (averaging perhaps 20) have happily and profitably attended the Gathering for 30 years as it met all around the country. Almost 50 Durham Friends attended the Gathering when it was held at Virginia Tech in 2005 where our Karen Stewart was co-clerk of the Planning Committee, and Durham Friend Karen McKinnon will be a co-clerk of this national gathering in 2009. This gathering has proven to be a wonderful boon for our youth, exposing them to other Quaker children and teens from all over the United States and Canada and engaging them in Quaker concerns and service activities. (Emily Stewart is on the FGC staff in Philadelphia, Claire Reddy has taken a very active role in the national FGC youth program, and Austin Stanion was been chosen to serve as clerk of the FGC high school meeting for 2008.)*

Affiliation with FGC has also strengthened Durham Meeting from the perspective of the Hicksite tradition of taking action as directed by the Inner Light. The natural activist nature of our meeting is thereby legitimized and guided by Hicksite Quaker values. Our meeting is constantly engaged in the creative tension of Quaker activism and worship as promoted by this tradition.

Durham Meeting is the beneficiary of two strains of Quaker theology and practice. We are perched on not one, but two of the branches of the Quaker schism tree, and as we hold on to both we are helping to bring them closer together. Our yearly meeting is changing rapidly and FGC is moving too. Durham Meeting is in a great position to grow within solid Quaker traditions.

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*Note. Since 2008, Durham teens Jon-William Sweitzer-Lamme and Emma Trisolini have been active as FGC high school clerks, Emily Stewart has moved on from the FGC staff, and Karen Stewart remains actively involved with the FGC Long Rang Conference Planning committee. (1/11)

Orig: 5/08
Rev 2/10
Rev 1/11

Discussion in the Second Durham Meeting Q-101 Class

In our second meeting for this series of “Quakerism-101” classes we may be discussing some of the following questions. Can you locate relevant material pertaining to these questions in the selections above?

1. What were the principal attributes of Quietism? Are they still revered today among Quakers?
2. How did the tradition of traveling (preaching) in the ministry develop and where has it gone?
3. Why were Quakers in the vanguard of abolitionism?
4. Were the basic issues surrounding the schisms in the Orthodox branch about belief, practice, or control?
5. Why were Quaker women the leaders of the early feminist and women’s rights movements?
6. Work on common commitments continued in spite of the ugly splits and animosities. How?
7. Who were the healers among Friends and how were they so?
8. Can Durham Meeting profitably be engaged with two branches of Quakerism?

Some Other Resources for Further Study (available on the Web)

- John Woolman: A plea for the Poor, Part X. <http://www.qis.net/~daruma/woolman3.html>
- Lucretia Mott: Letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton; <http://www.mott.pomona.edu/transcription.htm#p1>
- Rufus Jones and Mysticism by Matthew Hedstrom. <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Hedstrom0204.htm>