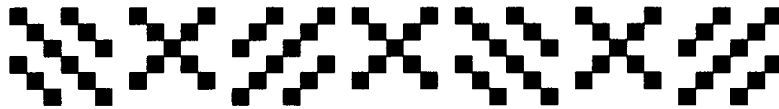


The Military Response of the Society of Friends in Indiana to the Civil War

*Jacquelyn S. Nelson**



As the dark clouds of the Civil War hovered over the United States in the spring and summer of 1861, members of a small denomination known as the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, were beset with an agonizing moral quandary. Their long-standing adherence to the peace testimony—that all wars were unlawful in the eyes of God—stood in marked contrast to the great moral issue of liberating the slaves. For years Quakers, who inaugurated the antislavery movement, had toiled relentlessly to ameliorate the black man's impoverished existence. Now, their fervent commitment to the bondsmen's emancipation and their love of country competed with their traditional pacifist beliefs.

Although this conflict of conscience confronted Quakers all over the nation, this essay concentrates on those Friends who lived in Indiana during the war years, 1861-1865. Indiana provides fertile ground for an examination of Quaker responses to war. In the aftermath of Fort Sumter this midwestern state, under the adroit leadership of Governor Oliver P. Morton, enthusiastically supported President Abraham Lincoln's efforts to restore the Union. Men flocked by the thousands to enroll for military duty, and citizens in scores of Indiana communities aided the military venture through voluntary donations of money and matériel. Caught up in the wartime excitement, the Quakers of Indiana could hardly ignore the martial spirit which had engulfed their neighbors and friends. As a group, the Quakers composed less than 2 percent of the total population of the state on the eve

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of southern secession. Between 16,000 and 20,000 Friends, organized into monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, resided in approximately thirty Indiana counties. (See appendix.) In addition to personal correspondence, cemetery records, public documents, and secondary references, church records of fifty-five monthly meetings in twenty-seven counties were consulted in the preparation of this essay. (See appendix.) Analysis of these rich primary sources focuses upon those Friends who challenged two centuries of Quaker thought on war and took up arms in defense of the United States.

From the onset of war, two of the yearly meetings to which Hoosier Quakers belonged—Indiana Yearly Meeting and Western Yearly Meeting—steadfastly urged Friends to adhere to Biblical teachings and abstain from all war-related activities. Quakers were encouraged to follow the Gospel and do all things that made for peace: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”¹ As the conflict progressed, however, some Friends joined the armed forces. In response, the admonitions of Indiana Yearly Meeting concerning military service increased in intensity and earnestness of condemnation. In 1862 Indiana Yearly Meeting expressed regret at Quaker military involvement in the war. Although Friends felt much sympathy for these men, the yearly meeting warned them not “to give way to do what your conscience condemns.”² Two years later the same body recorded its “emphatic disavowal of all such services, as contrary to the Gospel of Christ, and . . . our religious society.”³ Similar statements also came from the yearly meetings in London and Dublin and from the editors of Quaker publications.⁴ Unquestionably, the wording of these sharp and unequivocal reprimands shows that the Quaker hierarchy demanded a noncompromising allegiance to the peace testimony.

Assertions of the traditional belief that war is un-Christian have led historians erroneously to assume that few Friends actively participated in the Civil War. Margaret H. Bacon, historian and author of *The Quiet Rebels*, stated that only two or three hundred

¹ Epistle from the Meeting for Sufferings of Western Yearly Meeting, quoted in Minutes of Fairfield Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Fairfield, Hendricks County, Indiana, May 9, 1861 (Indiana Historical Society Library, Indiana State Library and Historical Building, Indianapolis).

² *Minutes of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Richmond, Ind., 1862), 14-15.

³ *Ibid.* (Richmond, Ind., 1864), 9-10.

⁴ Minutes of Fairfield Monthly Meeting of Men Friends, July 11, 1861; Chester Forrester Dunham, *The Attitude of the Northern Clergy toward the South, 1860-1865* (Toledo, Ohio, 1942), 117-18.



FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, RICHMOND, INDIANA, 1859, SKETCHED BY LEFEVRE CRANSTONE

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Quakers enlisted in the entire Union army, but that the largest number of them enrolled from Indiana.⁵ Historian Margaret E. Hirst noted that Indiana Yearly Meeting of 1862 received reports that one hundred of their members from five monthly meetings had volunteered for the army; a "considerable number" from ten additional meetings also served. Had there been even two hundred serving from the latter ten congregations, the author declared, the total would have remained at only three hundred soldiers.⁶

In a study of the attitude of the northern clergy toward the South during the war years, historian Chester Dunham wrote that when actual fighting commenced, Quakers maintained their pacifistic principles just as they had since colonial days. Quite simply, Friends believed that war was irreconcilable with the teachings of Christ and refused to participate in the hostilities.⁷ Historian Emma Lou Thornbrough recorded that "some" Quakers volunteered for military duty, and Stephen Weeks wrote only that some young Friends in the North joined the Federal army.⁸ Eminent Quaker historian Rufus Jones commented that while deviations from the peace testimony occurred more frequently than expected, the total number of Quaker soldiers "appears small." Possibly three hundred members of Indiana Yearly Meeting, asserted Jones, took up arms in the Civil War. Moreover, of those Quakers who joined the armed forces more came from urban areas than from rural meetings.⁹ Elbert Russell and Peter Brock, both of whom relied heavily on Jones's work, reached the same conclusion: only a small number of Friends enrolled for military duty.¹⁰

But the preceding historians, as with most historical scholars, did not undertake systematic studies to determine how many Quakers took up arms in the conflict. Heretofore, generalizations on the numbers of Quakers in uniform during the Civil War have been based on "probabilities and surmise rather than statistical fact."¹¹ As a matter of fact, Jones wrote that it was impossible "to

⁵ Margaret H. Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (New York, 1969), 116.

⁶ Margaret E. Hirst, *The Quakers in Peace and War* (London, Eng., 1923), 424.

⁷ Dunham, *Attitude of the Northern Clergy*, 117.

⁸ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis, 1965), 627; Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History* (Baltimore, Md., 1896), 303.

⁹ Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (2 vols., London, Eng., 1921), II, 729, 737, 738.

¹⁰ Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (New York, 1942), 410; Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States from the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, N.J., 1968), 727.

¹¹ Brock, *Pacifism in the United States*, 727.

discover the total number of these Quaker volunteers."¹² Furthermore, the emphasis in the historical writing of American wars, especially the Civil War, has centered upon the Friends as pacifists and conscientious objectors, not as combatants.¹³

The Society of Friends, however, has long known that many of its members served in the Civil War. But even Friends' estimates of Quaker participation in the armed forces have been underappraised. The authors of a history of Jericho Friends Meeting in Randolph County wrote that when the war began, many Quakers found it difficult to distinguish between what was good in abolishing slavery and bad about using war to accomplish that goal. Inevitably, the slavery issue prompted a large number of young men from Jericho Meeting to volunteer for military duty.¹⁴ The Quaker community of Carthage echoed similar sentiments. In spite of Quaker opposition to all wars, "quite a few" Friends enlisted in military service from this small Rush County town.¹⁵ In "History of New Salem Church" (Howard County), the author noted that with the commencement of the Civil War, "a few members" of the meeting joined the armed forces.¹⁶ Except for the writer of the account of the Randolph County meeting, who listed the names of sixteen Quaker volunteers, the authors of these and other histories of monthly meetings generally made no attempts to determine an accurate number of Friends who bore arms.¹⁷

George W. Julian, a prominent Indiana politician whose mother was a Quaker from Wayne County, wrote in 1895 that

¹² Jones, *Later Periods*, II, 729.

¹³ The author found one historian who noted that many Quakers enrolled for military duty. See Bernhard Knollenberg, *Pioneer Sketches of the Upper White-water Valley: Quaker Stronghold of the West* (Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. XV, No. 1; Indianapolis, 1945), 118-19. See also Kenneth Alan Radbill, "Socioeconomic Backgrounds of Nonpacifist Quakers during the American Revolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1971). For works concerning Quakers and pacifism see the following: Edward Needles Wright, *Conscientious Objectors in the Civil War* (New York, 1931); Lillian Schlissel, ed., *Conscience in America: A Documentary History of Conscientious Objection in America, 1757-1967* (New York, 1968); Brock, *Pacifism in the United States*; and Peter Brock, "Colonel Washington and the Quaker Conscientious Objector," *Quaker History*, LIII (Spring, 1964), 12-26.

¹⁴ R.C. Brumfield and Willard C. Heiss, *Jericho Friends' Meeting and Its Community, Randolph County, Indiana, 1818 to 1958* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1958), 53-54.

¹⁵ "Brief History of Carthage Friends Meeting," 1939 (typed copy, Rushville Public Library, Rushville, Indiana), 12.

¹⁶ J.B. Freeman, "History of New Salem Church," taken from a Kokomo newspaper, circa 1932, and microfilmed with the Minutes of New Salem Monthly Meeting (Indiana Historical Society Library).

¹⁷ See also Ludovic Fields and Clayton Fields, "History of Westfield Monthly Meeting of Friends," n.d. (typed manuscript, Noblesville Public Library, Noblesville, Indiana); and Ethyl Clark Horney and George W. Moore, "The Hinkle Creek Friends," 1966 (typed manuscript, Noblesville Public Library).

the Quakers of Indiana Yearly Meeting not only had a good antislavery record but a record of patriotism: "I think it is conceded that in proportion to their number they had more soldiers in the war for the Union than any other religious denomination."¹⁸ Willard Heiss, Quaker and historian, wrote that "many" Quakers served in the Civil War.¹⁹ Finally, letters written by Friends during the war also disclosed that many Quakers marched off to the battlefield. One Quaker, for example, wrote: "23 of our Springboro Boys going to start away . . . for the Army."²⁰ Another letter recorded that the southern rebellion had become so serious that "thousands" of Quaker boys all over America were going into the army.²¹

Just how many Indiana Quakers joined the northern armies between 1861 and 1865? And how did the monthly meetings deal with these veterans during the war years and after they returned home from the battlefield? Because the question of the number of Friends who enrolled for military duty is inextricably intertwined with the treatment of Friends by the monthly meetings, the latter question must be addressed first. In the midst of the war virtually all monthly meetings, recognizing that some of their members had violated the peace testimony, attempted to extend care to those individuals. Once each year, in response to the annual questions, or "queries," on the religious and moral health of the meetings, most congregations reported that some Friends had strayed from the principles of peace and were guilty of engaging in military services. Never was the name of an individual listed in such statements, but a few of the meetings did include the specific number of Quakers who they believed had violated church discipline. In September, 1861, for example, Back Creek Monthly Meeting of Men in Grant County recorded with some alarm that eighteen members had borne arms.²² Hopewell Monthly Meeting

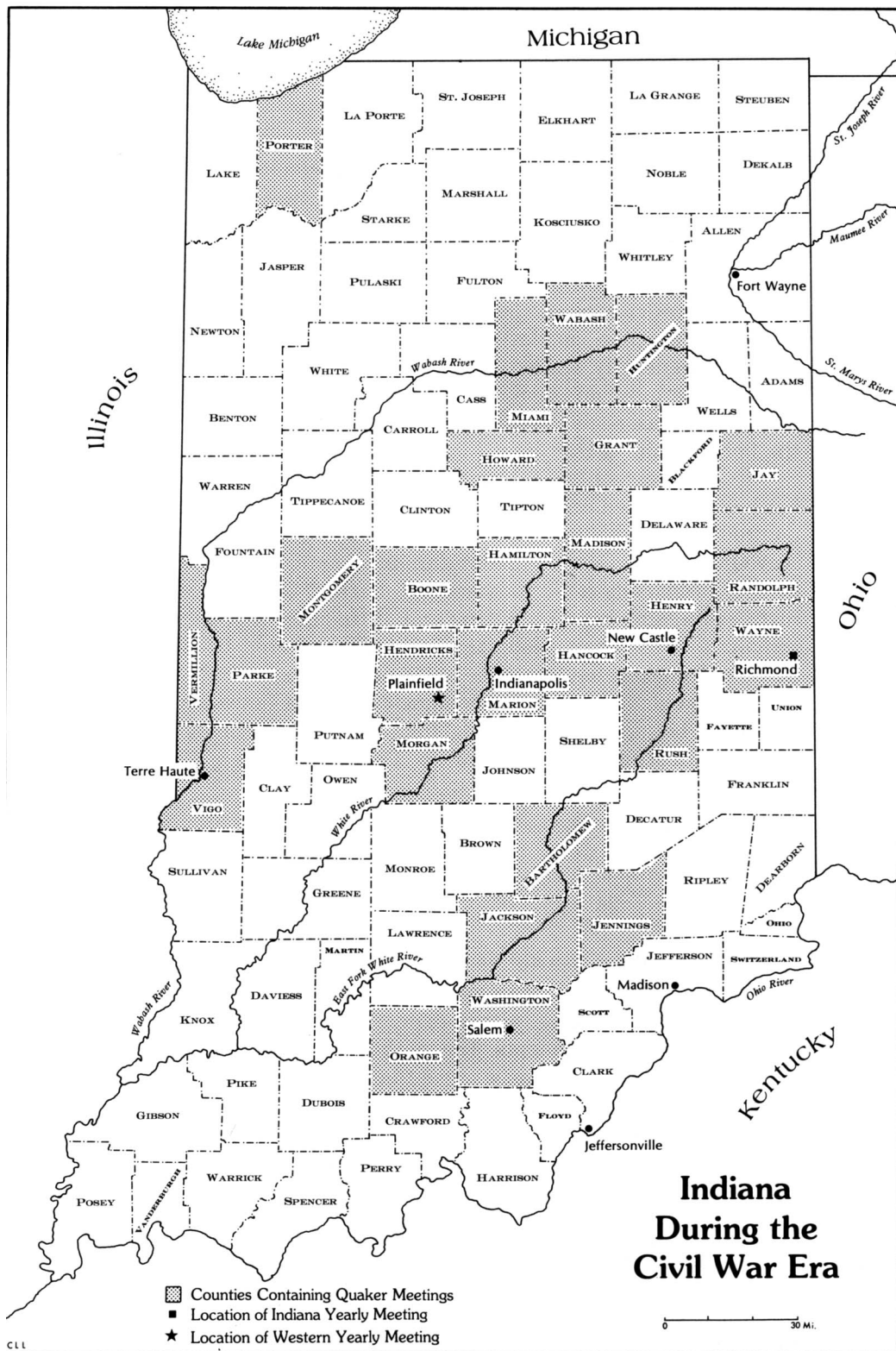
¹⁸ George W. Julian to Stephen Weeks, September 18, 1895, quoted in Weeks, *Southern Quakers*, 306n.

¹⁹ Willard Heiss, ed., *Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana: Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (6 parts and index, Indianapolis, 1962-1981), I,xix.

²⁰ Lydia Stanton to Miriam W. Green, January 22, 1865, Miriam Green Papers (Indiana Historical Society Library). The "Springboro" referred to in this letter is probably Springborough in Warren County, Ohio. While technically outside the border of Indiana, many Ohio Quakers had close ties with their counterparts in Indiana as evidenced by the letter which was written to a Hoosier Friend.

²¹ Letter written by William Stubbs Elliott, quoted in James O. Bond, "He Carried Three Packs: A Biography of Elisha Mills," n.d. (typed manuscript in the Noblesville Public Library, Noblesville, Indiana). This is obviously an exaggeration but does reflect that there was much war sentiment among Quaker young men.

²² Minutes of Back Creek Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Back Creek, Grant County, Indiana, September 19, 1861 (Indiana Historical Society Library).



Map Prepared by Cathryn L. Lombardi.

in Henry County also penned its concern when it noted that fifteen members had volunteered for the army.²³ These statements frequently concluded with the phrase “some care taken.” Presumably, the meetings attempted to counsel their errant soldiers.

The Discipline of the Society of Friends clearly explained the potential penalty for serving in the military. Violators of the peace testimony faced possible disownment (loss of membership) if counselling and advice proved ineffectual in convincing them to seek absolution for their combative conduct.²⁴ The monthly meetings, however, generally waited until the war was over before confronting the individuals who had joined the army. Some cases of military service remained unreported until 1870, five years after the fighting had ceased.

Once the monthly meetings received information that a member had committed military transgressions, two Friends were appointed to visit the individual and report at an ensuing meeting. Any Quaker who desired to maintain his membership within the Society of Friends could produce an “offering” or “acknowledgement” admitting his wrongdoing and, if the meeting accepted it, remain a member in good standing. Also referred to as “condemning” one’s behavior, these apologies were usually brief and simply stated in written notes signed by those beseeching forgiveness. The following offering from the minutes of Raysville Monthly Meeting in Henry County is a representative example of expiation:

I herein acknowledge that I have deviated from the principles of the society of friends by enlisting in the service of the U. S. and am convinced that war and the principles actuating it are wrong and inconsistent [*sic*] with the Christian religion[.] I wish friends to pass my deviation by and continue me as a member as my future conduct may deserve.²⁵

Some Quakers, fearful of being disciplined by the monthly meetings, penned offerings in advance of receiving treatment from Friends. Such apologies, although few in number, were called “free will” acknowledgments. The mother of a young Quaker veteran, for example, who was worried that a complaint against her son, Jose, would be brought before the meeting, wanted someone to counsel her son for his infraction. She wanted Jose to acknowledge that his military course of action was “inconsistent with the

²³ Minutes of Hopewell Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Hopewell, Henry County, Indiana, August 17, 1861, *ibid.*

²⁴ *The Discipline of the Society of Friends, of Indiana Yearly Meeting* (Richmond, Ind., 1864), 45.

²⁵ Minutes of Raysville Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Raysville, Henry County, Indiana, September 23, 1865 (Indiana Historical Society Library).

principals [*sic*] of peace,” to avoid any impending disciplinary action which might sour him on the Society.²⁶

Despite the fact that they were often solicited and were frequently a prerequisite for remaining a member of the Society of Friends, condemnations reveal that some Quakers admitted fault for having enrolled in military service. Moreover, there was no feeling of triumph for these men; many were truly sorry for their military actions. Early in the war a professor at Earlham College wrote that some of the Quakers who had returned home from the battlefield “look with sorrow on their past course and are striving to justify themselves.”²⁷ In all, approximately 220 Indiana Quaker veterans conceded guilt for this breach of faith.²⁸

A large number of veterans from virtually all monthly meetings whose records were examined, however, refused to admit wrongdoing for their military involvement. If Quakers denied any wrongdoing in their martial actions, the committee that dealt with them reported the soldiers as “treated without satisfaction.” After a period of deliberation the meeting either extended additional care to those Quakers, in hopes of eliciting acknowledgments, or disowned them. If the monthly meeting chose the latter course of action, “testifications” of disownment were written and read at a subsequent meeting. The committees later informed the ex-soldiers of the decisions against them. The following disownment was excerpted from the Raysville Monthly Meeting minutes of July, 1866:

Robert Parker who has had a right of membership in the religious society of Friends, has so far deviated from the peaceable principles held by our society as to enlist in the Armies of the United States and do military service therein for which he has been treated with, without being brought to see the error of his course. We therefore disown him from being a member with us.²⁹

One hundred forty-eight Quaker soldiers lost membership within their respective local assemblages for involvement in military operations.³⁰

Thus, close scrutiny of the Quaker minutes recorded between 1861 and 1870 reveals that 368 Indiana Friends bore arms in the

²⁶ Rachel [no last name] to Ann [Pleas?], January 1, 1866, Susan Unthank Collection, *ibid*.

²⁷ Joseph Moore to John Hodgkin, June 3, 1862, Joseph Moore Papers (Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana). Moore taught geology and botany at Earlham.

²⁸ This number was reached after a close examination of all monthly meeting minutes available.

²⁹ Minutes of Raysville Monthly Meeting of Men Friends, July 28, 1866.

³⁰ This number was reached after a close examination of all monthly meeting minutes available.

Civil War and either apologized or were disowned for their martial conduct. But there were others. Besides the aforementioned Friends, 236 Indiana Quakers died in the war. Research also shows that an additional 596 Quakers took up arms in the conflict but avoided all disciplinary action by the monthly meetings. Hence, the number of documented cases of Quaker participation in military service is 1,198, well above any of the estimates of previous writings, Quaker or non-Quaker. (See appendix.)

Numbers alone, however, are misleading in a state in which more than 200,000 men and boys took up arms for their country's cause.³¹ Based on this sole statistic, the number of Quaker military men appears insignificant. Sixty-two percent of all Indiana males between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine bore arms in the Civil War.³² In contrast, the percentage of Friends in service in the same age range lies between 21 and 27 percent.³³ Although there is a wide gap between the number of Friends in uniform and the total for the state of Indiana, the proportion of Quaker males, aged fifteen through forty-nine who joined a military company is much higher than previous estimates, which ranged from 6 to 7.5 percent.³⁴

Another way to determine the significance of Quaker involvement in the war is to compare the number of military Friends with the number of those who claimed exemption from military service because of religious scruples. Under President Lincoln's call of August, 1862, for 300,000 men to serve nine months, all able-bodied white male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to enroll in the state militia.³⁵ Those

³¹ W. H. H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1865-1869), Statistics and Documents, I, 5. The exact number is 208,367.

³² The percentage was computed by dividing 208,367, the total number of soldiers, by 334,310, the total number of males aged 15-49 in Indiana as reported by the Federal Census of 1860.

³³ According to the Federal Census of 1860, the percentage of males of the total Indiana population in the 15-49 age bracket was 24.8, computed by dividing 334,310, the total male population 15-49, by 1,350,428. Multiplying 16,000 and 20,000 by 24.8 percent yields, approximately, 4,000 (3,968) to 5,000 (4,960) Quaker males between the ages of 15 and 49. The above percentages were computed by dividing 1,079, the number of Quaker males belonging to Indiana Yearly Meeting or Western Yearly Meeting who enrolled for military duty, by 4,000 and 5,000. The remaining 119 soldiers were Hicksite Quakers for whom the author has no population figures. An analysis of seventeen Indiana monthly meetings that included membership statistics in their minutes in 1865 reveals that approximately 24 percent of their men aged 15-49 participated in military service during the Civil War. This statistic supports and adds credence to the percentages found for Quakers in the entire state of Indiana.

³⁴ The above percentages were calculated by dividing 300, the top estimate, by 4,000 and 5,000.

³⁵ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, I, 40-43.

Friends who remained staunchly committed to the peace testimony and refused to volunteer for military service could append to their signatures the phrase "conscientiously opposed to bearing arms."³⁶ Registration records show that 2,170 Friends, nearly 1,000 more than the total who bore arms, so identified themselves. But in at least eight Indiana counties the number of Quakers in uniform exceeded the number of "conscientious" Friends.³⁷ Grant County, for example, sent 124 Friends off to war while 119 Friends expressed opposition to fighting. Jay County enrollment records list six as "conscientious," but twenty Quakers took the field. And Madison County Quaker records show that 32 men joined the armed forces, yet only 16 Friends remained faithful to their antiwar tenet. The largest disparity in convictions occurred in Orange County where 19 Friends voiced religious scruples against war while 63 took up arms.³⁸

Conversely, militia enrollment records also show that in a few counties the proportion of Quaker soldiers to those Friends who were "conscientious" was extremely small. At Sugar Plain Monthly Meeting in Boone County, for example, 60 Friends requested "conscientious" status while only 6 bore arms. Pipe Creek Monthly Meeting in Miami County sent 13 soldiers into the army while 113 were designated as "conscientious."³⁹ Apparently some Quaker communities contained more antiwar sentiment than others.

In addition to the underappraisal of Quaker participation in the Civil War by most historians, one writer, Thomas C. Drake, asserted that on the whole there was no mass enlistment of Friends into the armed forces. According to him, those who did volunteer for active duty broke away from the Quaker majority as individuals, not as a group.⁴⁰ Drake's analysis of Quaker involvement in the war is supported only to a limited extent by the current

³⁶ General Order Number 64, *General Orders*, State of Indiana Adjutant General's Office, Indianapolis, August 1, 1862 (Unidentified photocopy, Lilly Library, Earlham College).

³⁷ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, I, 187-88. The author examined registration records housed in the Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, and determined the number of conscientious objectors in the Quaker counties designated for this survey to be 2,486, excluding Jennings County which the above number does include.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Other counties: Union: 12 "conscientious," 14 soldiers; Vermillion: no "conscientious," 3 soldiers; Vigo: no "conscientious," 2 soldiers; Washington: 35 "conscientious," 39 soldiers.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Huntington County enrollment records list 47 conscientious objectors, and only 5 Quakers became soldiers.

⁴⁰ Thomas C. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, Conn., 1950), 197.

findings. Examination of Quaker military service revealed that, out of a total of 181 regiments raised within the state of Indiana, Friends enrolled and served in at least 135 units.⁴¹ Further investigation yields that several companies were composed of large groups of Friends. Company F of the Sixth Regiment, three months' service, for example, was dubbed the "Quaker Company."⁴² Raised in Knightstown and surrounding areas in southwestern Henry County with heavy concentrations of Quakers, this company, one of the first to be organized, totaled seventy-four men. Mustered into service at Indianapolis on April 25, 1861, with William C. Moreau as captain, the entire regiment, under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Crittenden of Madison, Indiana, fought in the first battle of the war at Philippi, Virginia, on June 3. Returning to Indianapolis in August, all men of Company F were mustered out at the expiration of their terms of service.⁴³

Several companies in three-year regiments were also represented by large numbers of Friends. Companies A and D of the Thirty-sixth Regiment, raised in southern Henry County from the Quaker communities of Lewisville and Greensboro, respectively, are two such units. The former, under the command of a Quaker captain, William Davis Wiles, was reported to have had fifty Quakers in its service, while Captain Isaac Kinley of Company D, recruited forty fellow Quakers for active duty.⁴⁴ Considerable action was seen by the Thirty-sixth Regiment including the battle of Shiloh, siege of Corinth, and the battles of Stones River, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Atlanta.⁴⁵ Finally, the *Howard Tribune* (Kokomo) boasted that a regimental company was raised among the Quakers in southwestern Howard County.⁴⁶ Mustered in as Company G of the Eighty-ninth Regiment, this unit, largely utilized for guard and picket duty, reportedly traveled in excess of ten thousand miles. These men also participated in a few skirmishes and were periodically stationed at Fort Pick-

⁴¹ Civil War regiments numbered from the Sixth through the One Hundred Fifty-sixth, plus twenty-six batteries of Light Artillery.

⁴² *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, April 23, 1861.

⁴³ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, I,6, II,4,6, IV,8-9.

⁴⁴ *Rushville Weekly Republican*, November 13, 1861; Heiss, *Abstracts*, IV, 25,416. Company A had a total of 116 men; Company D, 107. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, I,14.

⁴⁵ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, II,361-62.

⁴⁶ *Howard Tribune* (Kokomo), August 14, 1862.

ering, Memphis, Nashville, Vicksburg, and New Orleans throughout the war.⁴⁷

Research also uncovered sizeable aggregates of Friends in other Indiana regiments. Company E of the Twelfth Regiment, three years' service, included twenty-five Quakers primarily from Morgan County. Hamilton County sent twenty-two Quakers to war in Company G, One Hundred and Forty-seventh Regiment, one year service, and twenty-one Friends in Company A, One Hundred and First Regiment, three years' service. Orange County Quakers were well represented in Company D, Sixty-sixth Regiment, as eighteen Friends mustered in for three years. Eighteen Quakers also enrolled in Company C of the Eighty-ninth Regiment from Grant County.

Further analysis of Quaker military service shows that anywhere from five to sixteen Friends were represented in each of 54 companies in 38 regiments and 3 batteries of light artillery. The composition of 335 companies in 122 regiments and 9 batteries of light artillery, however, included four or fewer Quakers.⁴⁸ Thus, while the majority of military companies contained only a few Friends, evidence exists that in many companies Quakers enrolled for military duty in large clusters.

Why did these Quaker men violate their antiwar teachings and testimony and willingly bear arms? How could one reconcile the Quaker belief in the unlawfulness of war with killing another human being? Among the sources utilized to unravel this question of motivation are letters written by Friends in uniform. Although Quaker writings on the subject of military service are sparse, these letters offer at least a partial explanation for what appears to have been contradictory, inconsistent, and anomalous behavior. Several themes emerge from these introspective personal accounts in regard to what factors prompted many Friends to defend the Union.

⁴⁷ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, III, 98-101. In the above examples of mass enlistment, only those Quakers who could be documented by the Quaker genealogy were included in the total number of 1,198 Quaker soldiers, numbering 48 out of the total of 393 reported by the newspapers. Since the genealogy is far from complete, it is very likely that the remaining 345 men were Quakers, but the author chose not to include nonrecorded Friends. The author also found 276 soldiers buried in Quaker cemeteries but could not document them with the Quaker genealogy. Had the above soldiers plus the 276 buried in Quaker cemeteries been enumerated, the total number of Quaker soldiers would soar to 1,819; the percentages would then increase from the limits of 21-27 percent to 36-45 percent.

⁴⁸ The above information was based upon the war records, determined from Terrell's *Report of the Adjutant General* and the official record kept in the Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, of 1,099 out of 1,198 Quakers.

Some Friends joined the army for patriotic reasons. Quakers repeatedly asserted that they loved their country and were willing to obey the laws of the United States government under which they had been guaranteed religious freedom. Many Quakers ardently believed that, by enlisting in military service, they were not only loyally following their country but serving God as well. These Christian soldiers, convinced that the federal government was justified in taking offensive measures against the Confederacy, expressed confidence that God would exonerate Lincoln's administration for its endeavor to restore the Union. Thus, while the elders of the Society of Friends argued that all wars were unlawful in the eyes of the Lord, some of the Quaker soldiers contended that there was a "right" war and just cause for fighting that ultimately would receive divine sanction.

Solomon Meredith, a general with a Quaker background, who came from Centerville, Indiana, was an exemplary patriotic warrior. He, as with some Friends who joined the military, invoked the deity not only to justify or perhaps rationalize his own and the government's militaristic actions, but to give guidance to those in command of the United States. He prayed to God to direct the leaders of the Union to act from "pure motives," unite the country, and extinguish the "unholy rebellion." To him there was no course of action except to stand by President Lincoln—anything less would most certainly lead to failure. He insisted that he had acted from pure and patriotic motives since the inception of the war and had not had "one selfish thought."⁴⁹

Another Friend, Daniel Wooton, echoed a similar patriotic view for joining the military in several letters in which he carefully explained how a Quaker could take up arms in the rebellion. He insisted that the cheapest way for the nation to obtain "justice" in the war was to hang every seceder and stated that "God will also justify us in doing so."⁵⁰ Private Wooton conceded that the Bible says "thou shalt not kill," but at the same time he believed that God gave to the United States the power to quell the rebellion in the quickest way possible.⁵¹ He was convinced, too, that by choosing the martial life "I would be serving my God."⁵²

Some Quaker soldiers expressed a more nationalistic view of patriotism devoid of any spiritual direction. They saw the seceders as traitors and aggressors and said that the rebellion had to be

⁴⁹ Solomon Meredith to Anna Meredith, May 23, 1863, Solomon Meredith Papers (Indiana Historical Society Library).

⁵⁰ Daniel Wooton to Miriam W. Green, May 1, 1861, Miriam Green Papers.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1861.

⁵² *Ibid.*, August 31, 1863.

crushed. A young private wrote that, although it was hard to leave his sister and mother, "they [the Confederates] are the aggressors and must bear the consequences."⁵³ A Quaker from Economy repeated similar feelings of loyalty when he wrote that he was willing to serve out his time "rather than acknowledge the independence of the South."⁵⁴ In August of the same year, after participating in the conquest of Vicksburg, he repeated his stance: "am willing to go anywhere that will help to end the war."⁵⁵ This man's brother, a soldier in another regiment, likewise wrote upon the reception of orders to march to Vicksburg: "You need not be uneasy about me, for I am going willingly."⁵⁶

Eight Quaker soldiers from Morgan County also expressed the patriotic motive in their apologies to the monthly meeting. Although they asserted that, as a general principle, war was contrary to Christ's teachings, "in this particular instance . . . by the sternest necessity, we feel that we were following the path of duty to our government."⁵⁷ Another Quaker soldier tersely stated that he and his brother volunteered to "goo [*sic*] Fight for our Country."⁵⁸

In sum, love of country impelled some Friends to take an active role in the Civil War. Furthermore, this devotion to the United States apparently was of two types. One was a kind of Christian patriotism, a strong belief that God was on the side of the Union and would confirm the actions of the federal government in quelling the insurrection. The other rationale could be called national patriotism, also a strong feeling of loyalty to the Union but devoid of holy approbation.

At least one Quaker admitted in writing, however, that it was not true patriotism that motivated him to enroll in the army. This young man, Franklin Elliott of Wayne County, wrote a lengthy and revealing letter of condemnation for his actions in volunteering for military duty. In part he wrote: "I confess that it was not true Patriotic motives that led me to take up arms in the War . . . I did it manly [*sic*] to gratify a stubborn and rebellious spirit within me."⁵⁹

⁵³ John E. Morgan to his sister, May 25, 1863, Susan Unthank Collection.

⁵⁴ Swain Marshall to his parents, January 8, 1863, Marshall Correspondence (Indiana Historical Society Library).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, August 19, 1863.

⁵⁶ Alonzo Marshall to Elvira Marshall, December 19, 1862, Marshall Correspondence.

⁵⁷ Minutes of White Lick Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at White Lick, Morgan County, Indiana, January 27, 1866 (Indiana Historical Society Library).

⁵⁸ Manoah Ratliff to Sarah Ratliff, August 15, 1862, Civil War Collections (Indiana Historical Society Library).

⁵⁹ Minutes of Milford Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Milford, Wayne County, Indiana, June 21, 1865 (Indiana Historical Society Library).

Another Quaker was disappointed and even ashamed that he was unable to join the army and fight for the Union. Anna Starr of Richmond wrote to her husband William that she and brother Clinton had discussed the issue of his joining the service. Only his sick and totally helpless wife prevented him from enlisting. Clinton “extremely” regretted his absence from military service and said that he would “always feel *ashamed to have to own* that he was not in this war.”⁶⁰

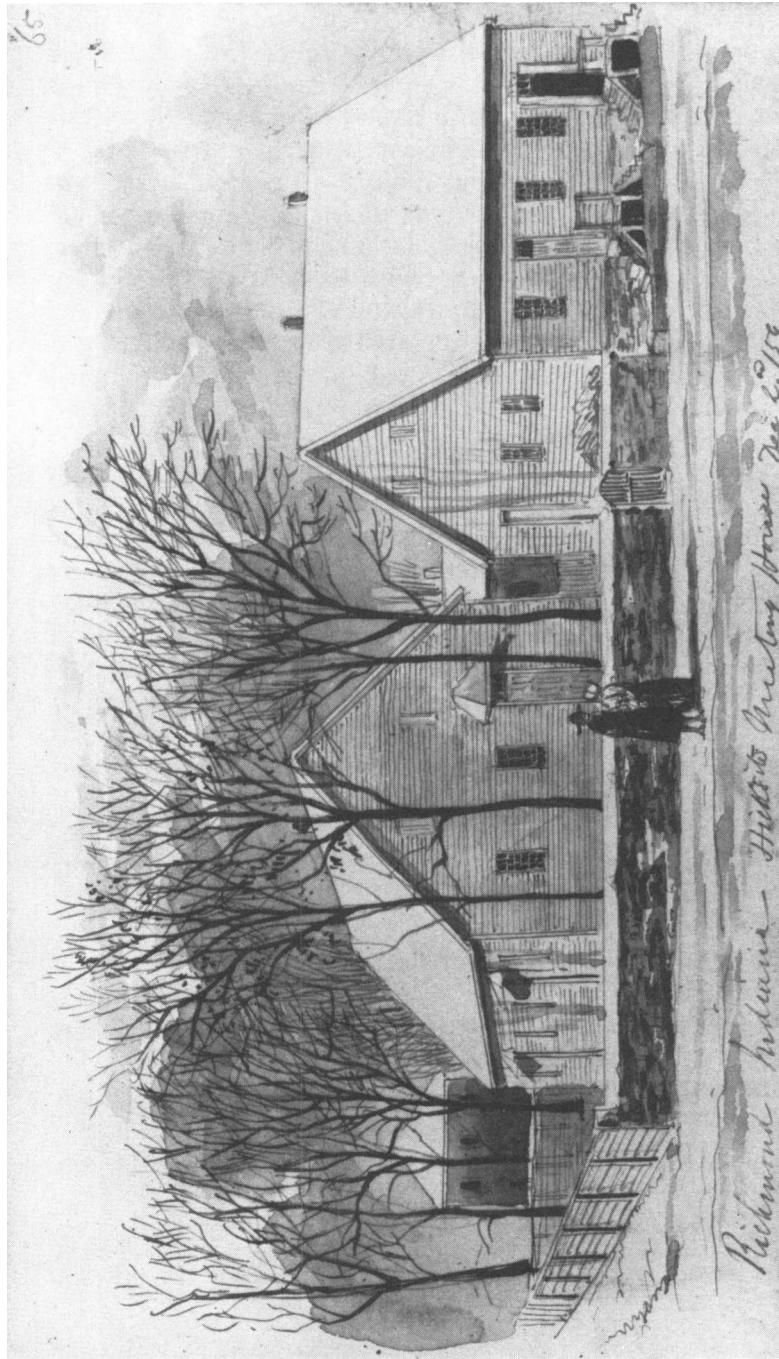
Some Friends also volunteered, no doubt, because they were very young and could not comprehend the gravity and consequences of their decisions. While statistics indicate that the ages of Friends in uniform ranged from twelve to fifty-nine, the largest age group of Friends (and non-Friends) who served in the Civil War from Indiana were the eighteen-year-olds. But at least one hundred Quaker boys, seventeen years of age or younger, enrolled for military duty.⁶¹ As reports filtered back from army camps about the fun of military life, the youthful and impressionable boys at home, although legally bound by the constraints of age as well as morally restricted by the Quaker discipline, found it difficult to refrain from enlisting. As a further stimulus to recruitment, public rallies, parades, and picnics—replete with brass bands and speeches filled with patriotic jargon—were held in cities and towns across Indiana in and near Quaker communities. The festival-like atmosphere typical of these grand occasions may have swayed even the most devout Friend to join the struggle to save the Union. Newspaper advertisements of such gatherings were often printed in bold-faced type to catch the eyes of virtually every reader. Some of these youthful Friends may also have been influenced to bear arms by a brother or brothers already in the service. Examination of Quaker birth and death records shows that seventy families saw two sons go to war, twenty families were represented by three sons, and four brothers joined the army in each of eight families. Six father-son combinations also enlisted in Hoosier regiments.⁶²

One Quaker woman wrote that “Brother gone—As he enrolled amongst the thousands who have gone—Is he but a lad of 17—so

⁶⁰ Anna Starr to William Starr, May 31, 1863, William Starr Collection (Indiana Historical Society Library). Clinton later found a way to serve his country as a tax collector for the federal government.

⁶¹ The above statistics were based upon the known ages of 870 out of 1,198 Quakers in uniform on the date of muster. Eighteen-year-olds also composed the largest group for the state of Indiana as a whole. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, I, 110.

⁶² This information was derived from Heiss’s birth and death records. Names of the parents of soldiers were checked to determine the familial relationship.



HICKSITE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, RICHMOND, INDIANA, DECEMBER, 1859,
SKETCHED BY LEFEVRE CRANSTONE

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

young and thoughtless—oh how truly lamentable!”⁶³ The father of a young Quaker enrolled at Earlham College penned a letter to the school’s superintendent, Walter Carpenter, pleading with him to influence his son, Lavinus, not to enlist in the army. Anxious that Lavinus would be induced to take part in the “Bloody strife,” he wrote: “I wish thou would use thy Influence . . . to induce him either to stay with you in school . . . or come home and stay with us.”⁶⁴ No evidence was found to determine whether Carpenter failed to communicate with Lavinus or if the young man simply did not heed the advice; he enlisted anyway. Lavinus King died only four days after mustering into the army.⁶⁵

Economic conditions in the United States certainly prompted some Quakers to volunteer for active duty. Unemployment coupled with the use of bounties in recruitment were powerful incentives to financially distraught Friends in Indiana. Although the pay was low (thirteen dollars per month for infantry privates throughout most of the war), the first few months of the hostilities were beset by depression. Intermittent joblessness faced many men until 1863; furthermore, farm and factory wages remained low. Army life offered the assurance of an income, although small and dependent upon the continuation of the war.⁶⁶ Reflecting this concern for a steady income, one Quaker wrote before his enlistment: “I don’t think I shall go yet a while at least . . . as long as I have work to do I shall not go but if I run out of work and they want more men I think Dan shall go.”⁶⁷

A few Quakers entered the armed forces to fill sorely needed noncombat positions. Eli Patterson, for example, a Quaker from Spiceland, volunteered for service on the expressed condition that he not be required to bear arms but instead be assigned to hospital duty. When confronted by the monthly meeting after the war, Patterson asserted that his request was strictly adhered to by military authorities.⁶⁸ Examination of the war records of Quakers reveals that, although most Indiana Friends in uniform entered the service as combat soldiers, approximately twenty of them dutifully worked in the following essential nonfighting roles: surgeon, assistant surgeon, hospital steward, nurse, orderly, am-

⁶³ Sarah Spray Diary, August 23, 1862 (Indiana Historical Society Library).

⁶⁴ Dean King to Walter Carpenter, July 8, 1862, Letters Written by and about Earlham College Students, 1861-1865 (Archives, Lilly Library, Earlham College).

⁶⁵ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, V, 445.

⁶⁶ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis, 1951), 37-38.

⁶⁷ Daniel Wooton to Miriam W. Green, July 11, 1861, Miriam Green Papers.

⁶⁸ Minutes of Spiceland Monthly Meeting of Men Friends held at Spiceland, Henry County, Indiana, May 5, 1866 (Indiana Historical Society Library).

bulance driver, baggage-master on a hospital train, medical cadet, sanitary agent, cook, chaplain, and medical examiner. A few Friends also served their companies and regiments in the capacities of bugler, wagoner, scout, guard, carpenter, blacksmith, teamster, musician, artificer, quartermaster, and paymaster.⁶⁹

Several Quakers also enrolled for military duty for defensive purposes when Confederate General John Hunt Morgan invaded the state of Indiana in the summer of 1863. Morgan's raid into southern Indiana, late in the evening of July 8, created much excitement, fear, and conflicting and exaggerated rumors—prompting Governor Morton to issue a call for citizens to organize for defense. In less than forty-eight hours 65,000 men volunteered to repulse Morgan's daring raid. These "Minute Men" were organized into thirteen regiments and numerically designated from the One Hundred and Second to the One Hundred and Fourteenth inclusive.⁷⁰ Companies in which Quakers volunteered, frequently titled by colorful names such as Buck Tails and Liberty Tigers, were found in nine of these regiments. Although only the southern counties were imminently threatened, Quakers from central Indiana also responded to Morton's call. Quakers from the counties of Hamilton, Wayne, Hendricks, Randolph, Henry, Hancock, Madison, and Marion joined Friends from Orange and Washington counties in southern Indiana in repelling the rebel encroachment. When Morgan finally crossed the Indiana border into Ohio five days later, the crisis subsided and the Minute Men were mustered out of service.⁷¹

Only a few Quakers entered military service as draftees and substitutes—and for good reason. Like most of the Union soldiers who answered the call to arms and enrolled in the armed forces through voluntary enlistment, Quakers also sought to avoid the stigma of forced service and to receive the bounty money given only to volunteers.⁷² Clearly, Quakers viewed the likelihood of

⁶⁹ The above information was found primarily in Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, *passim*.

⁷⁰ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, I, 166-78, III, 189. Morgan's raid, if successful, was to relieve the pressure on the flank and rear of the Confederate army in the West under generals Bragg and Buckner, which was in a perilous position in 1863. Morgan ignored direct orders to operate only in Kentucky and crossed the Ohio River into Indiana. See also Lorine Letcher Butler, *John Morgan and His Men* (Philadelphia, 1960); Cecil Fletcher Holland, *Morgan and His Raiders: A Biography of the Confederate General* (New York, 1942); and Basil Duke Wilson, *History of Morgan's Cavalry* (Cincinnati, 1867).

⁷¹ Morgan was finally hemmed in near Salinville, Ohio, and surrendered July 26, 1863. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, I, 192-97. See appendix for an explanation of how it was determined which regiments were composed of Quakers.

⁷² Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 38.

being drafted as an incentive to enlist. One Friend, for example, wrote that he and his brother "will goe [*sic*] before we ar [*sic*] drafted."⁷³ Of the 1,198 Friends in uniform from Indiana only twenty-one, or 1.8 percent of them, waited to be conscripted into service, well below the 8.6 percent calculated for the entire state of Indiana.⁷⁴ Furthermore, any person drafted could be excused from military service either by furnishing a substitute or, until the draft law of 1864, paying a \$300 commutation fee. Research shows that six Quakers from Indiana entered the service as substitutes.⁷⁵

Quakers who remained on the homefront cited antislavery sentiments as a motivator for military service. As noted earlier, a few letters and some of the histories of monthly meetings indicated that some Friends saw nothing wrong with utilizing war to help free the slaves; by taking up arms they compromised one Quaker principle to fight for another. William Stubbs Elliott, a Friend from Hamilton County, wrote early in the war that Quakers were entering the army inspired with abolitionist enthusiasm. Convinced that the war would terminate the institution of slavery, Elliott, who later volunteered for military service, declared that "it is my duty to abolish this curse from the nation."⁷⁶ Similarly, James O. Bond, author of an unpublished biography of a Quaker Civil War veteran, implied that fear of the spread of slavery to the whole nation prompted Quakers to bear arms.⁷⁷ John W. Griffin, a Friend from Spiceland, also believed that there was a "righteous" war to end slavery. To him the Quaker theory of nonresistance was radical and, if implemented, would lead to the destruction of the federal government. Thus, Griffin asserted that neither the New Testament nor the early writings of the church fathers required rigid adherence to the doctrine of pacifism.⁷⁸ Finally, historian Thomas Drake declared that Friends saw the Civil War as God's way of punishing a nation of slaveholders. He also noted that the abolitionist Levi Coffin believed that the war would continue until slavery was abolished.⁷⁹

⁷³ Thomas R. Ratliff to Sarah Ratliff, August 5, 1862, Civil War Collections.

⁷⁴ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, I, 53. The latter percentage was calculated by dividing 17,903 draftees by 208,367.

⁷⁵ This information was discovered by researching the military records of Quaker volunteers.

⁷⁶ Letter written by William Stubbs Elliott, quoted in James O. Bond, "He Carried Three Packs," 8.

⁷⁷ Bond, "He Carried Three Packs," 6. Bond is a grandson of Elisha Mills.

⁷⁸ Richard P. Ratcliff, *The Quakers of Spiceland, Henry County, Indiana: A History of Spiceland Friends Meeting, 1828-1968* (New Castle, Ind., 1968), 62.

⁷⁹ Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 197.

Interestingly enough, the idea that freeing the slaves prompted Quakers to enroll in the armed forces was conspicuously absent from the letters written by the soldiers themselves. Some Quaker correspondence, nevertheless, indicated that these combatants were curious about blacks and at least one soldier was convinced that slavery had brought on the war. Early in the conflict one Quaker, in response to his parents' inquisitiveness about the "darkies," wrote home that he had not yet seen any blacks; they had all been "run farther south."⁸⁰ Several weeks later he wrote that the slave quarters on a plantation he passed "looked like a good sized town."⁸¹ This same soldier also saw the urgency of the bondsmen's liberation "so as to never get into another such fix as we are in now."⁸²

Some Quaker soldiers, while endorsing the need for the black man's emancipation, opposed the movement of blacks to the North. One Quaker, Swain Marshall, wrote that most of the men in his company favored abolition with the condition that the blacks "stay where they are."⁸³ Another Friend in uniform not only echoed approval for the slaves' freedom but wanted to "get the country clear of them; for my part I think we are getting a little more than our share of them here [Camp Wickliffe, Kentucky]."⁸⁴ Swain Marshall's brother, Alonzo, only mentioned slaves on one occasion, however, laconically writing that "there are a number of slaves around here."⁸⁵

Although few Quaker combatants reenlisted, most who neither died nor were discharged early because of physical disability, completed their terms of service.⁸⁶ Close examination of the Quaker segment disclosed only thirteen deserters and two soldiers absent without leave, a mere 1.3 percent of the whole number of documented cases of Quaker military service. This figure compares very favorably with the 4.3 percent of the total Hoosier fighting force who abandoned their units.⁸⁷ In addition, while most of the

⁸⁰ Swain Marshall to his parents, March 6, 1862, Marshall Correspondence.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1862.

⁸² *Ibid.*, March 6, 1862.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ R. Gordon to [no name], January 15, 1862, Susan Unthank Collection.

⁸⁵ Alonzo Marshall to his parents, August 22, 1862, Marshall Correspondence.

⁸⁶ Research shows that 58 Friends, approximately 5 percent of the total Quaker enrollment, registered twice for military duty. In addition 5 Quakers enlisted three times for service in Indiana regiments. The percentage of Indiana troops that reenlisted computes to be 5.6, determined by dividing 208,367, the total number of troops furnished by Indiana, by 11,718, the total number of Hoosier men who reenlisted.

⁸⁷ Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, Statistics and Documents, I, 114. The latter percentage was computed by dividing 8,927 deserters by 208,367.



QUAKER SOLDIER, SWAIN MARSHALL,
OF THE EIGHTH INDIANA REGIMENT

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

Quaker fighting men remained either recruits or privates, some of them earned and accepted appointments to higher rank. The categorical breakdown of Friends' military status is as follows: 118 corporals, 80 sergeants, 42 lieutenants, 15 captains, 4 majors, 2 colonels, 2 adjutants, 2 generals, and 2 provost marshals.⁸⁸

The collective military record of the Society of Friends in the Civil War undoubtedly is linked to the question of motivation. Evidence suggests that the reasons for the initial enrollment are indeed similar to the incentives for reenlistment, acceptance of promotion to higher rank, and completion of terms of service. As one Quaker soldier wrote when faced with the dilemma of reenlistment: "I could not think of leaving the old 8th [Regiment]. . . . Should I have to serve three years more, I will do it faithfully and willingly, trying to do my duty to my country."⁸⁹ Another Quaker soldier struggled with the same predicament. Ultimately, he decided that, since he had withstood the hardships thus far and borne the responsibility for the safety of his friends back home, he could harbor no thought of leaving his regiment. This man chauvinistically wrote that he was "too proud of the victories by the army of the Cumberland to even give one thought to leaving hir [*sic*] at this late day [.]"⁹⁰

In all probability, however, a thorough analysis of the question of motivation can neither be fully determined nor clearly understood. Indeed, many of the soldiers themselves may not have comprehended the complex issues behind the commencement of hostilities well enough to know why they were fighting. The abolition of slavery, preservation of the Union, and, of course, patriotism were exceedingly emotional, if not simplistic, concepts that overshadowed the points of dispute between the North and the South. Too, the Quaker concept of the Inner Light, the inward spirit that granted each individual the freedom to follow his own conscience and that seemingly could have vindicated Friends' military actions, fails to provide the historian with a satisfactory answer to the perplexing inquiry.

A cursory comparison of the motives for enlistment of a large number of non-Quaker soldiers and the Indiana Friends in uniform shows striking similarity. In his widely read book, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*, Bell Irvin Wiley studied thousands of letters and diaries written by Union soldiers.

⁸⁸ This information was discerned by researching the military records of Quaker volunteers.

⁸⁹ Swain Marshall to his father, February 18, 1864, Marshall Correspondence.

⁹⁰ Daniel Wooton to Miriam W. Green, August 31, 1863, Miriam Green Papers.

He found several reasons why many young men of the North joined the armed forces.

First of all, significant numbers of men, caught up in the “prevailing excitement,” saw the “lure of far places” as a way to seek change in their lives. The war and military service, then, could broaden the horizons of those who had never had the opportunity to travel. Once the fighting began, Friends and associates already in the service coaxed those at home to join the hostilities. In 1863 the federal government adopted the first conscription plan, providing an additional impetus to enlistment. In order to avoid the “stigma of forced service” and to obtain the bounties awarded to volunteers, thousands of men rushed to enroll for military duty. In particular, the expectation of economic rewards served as an incentive for financially distressed men. Furthermore, some veterans indicated that love of country and “hatred of those who seemed bent on destroying its institutions” impelled them to join the fight for the United States. Wiley also noted that a desire to emancipate the slaves spurred some men to enlist in the army, although very few soldiers actually expressed this motive. Finally, preservation both of the Union and the country’s system of government prompted many men to participate in the war.⁹¹

Clearly, the writings of the Quaker soldiers evince much of the feeling and flavor discovered by Wiley in other manuscripts. It appears that the motives of Quakers differed insignificantly from those of the soldiers of Wiley’s massive study. Once the war was set in motion at Fort Sumter, the incentives for enlistment transcended the religious scruples of those Friends who were determined to fight. Quaker combatants could indeed be included among Wiley’s “common soldiers.”

One final consideration needs to be addressed. In the broader context of Quaker history in the Civil War era, the fact that 1,198 Friends bore arms and that 596 remained undisciplined may be indicative of a loosening of the strict code of behavior to which Quakers had been bound. Research shows that church discipline had begun to weaken during the years of the Civil War and that deviations from the code were not uncommon. Throughout the decade of the 1860s many Friends faced charges for a wide number of violations such as: marrying a non-Friend, not attending meeting, using profane language, departing from plain speech and dress, and drinking. Some of these Quakers lost their member-

⁹¹ Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 37-44.

ships within the Society by disownment.⁹² It is conceivable that those Friends who joined the armed forces could no more live up to the strict Quaker standards than those who committed other types of infractions. As a matter of fact, a large number of Friends who were disowned for military service also had other offenses charged against them simultaneously.⁹³ In these instances adherence to Quaker principles was weak in general.

Historians of Quaker meetings have offered a variety of explanations for Friends' military service over the last half century. Indiana Quaker historian Willard C. Heiss wrote that after the conclusion of the war in 1865, "the application of the Discipline to the lives of Friends became increasingly relaxed." Not only was disownment for violations of the peace testimony gradually abandoned, but punishment for nonadherence to other Quaker beliefs also abated. By the end of the nineteenth century, except for "serious matters," few Friends lost membership within the Society by disownment.⁹⁴ Historian Thomas Drake wrote that Quaker soldiers were not disowned automatically for volunteering, for Friends could not bring themselves to be too strict with their young men who compromised one Quaker principle (antiwar testimony) to fight for another (abolition of slavery). Freedom and the Union seemed to be worth fighting for.⁹⁵ Carthage Friends in Rush County held "considerable discussion" concerning the course of action and the type of attitude they should take in regard to Quaker military service. Based upon the long-recognized ideal among Friends that one should obey one's conscience, they decided that if a man believed it was his duty to go to war, then the meeting should respect his decision and allow him to retain his membership. Consequently, those Friends who joined the armed forces were continued as members of the Society.⁹⁶ Jericho Friends also refrained from disapprobation of soldiers. They worried about their men and welcomed them back when they returned home safely.⁹⁷ In all, fourteen of the meetings that the author researched refused to disown ex-soldiers.⁹⁸

⁹² This information was based upon reading the monthly meeting minutes for the years 1861-1870.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Heiss, *Abstracts*, I,xix.

⁹⁵ Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 197.

⁹⁶ "Brief History of Carthage Friends Meeting," 12.

⁹⁷ Brumfield and Heiss, *Jericho Friends' Meeting*, 54.

⁹⁸ This information was based upon reading the monthly meeting minutes for the years 1861-1870. Written apologies obviated the need for disciplinary action in some of these meetings. Not all veterans who belonged to these meetings, however, produced acknowledgments. Those who did not were not disowned.

Historian Daniel Boorstin wrote that the greatest failure of the Society of Friends in America was its rigidity of beliefs and unwillingness to compromise. Writing specifically about the period before the American Revolution, Boorstin noted that "Quakerism had many qualities which would have suited it to become the dominant American religion."⁹⁹ But Friends' increasingly uncompromising dogmas throughout the first half of the eighteenth century laid the foundation for a wall that was built around the Society, by the mid-1750s. As Quakers gradually withdrew from society, their chances for growth waned, too. The Quaker story in America, then, according to Boorstin, was "one of the greatest lost opportunities in all American history."¹⁰⁰

The reactions of Quaker monthly meetings after the Civil War perhaps show that Friends tried to compromise to avoid further loss of membership. Since Friends had been reluctant to proselytize before and during the Civil War, membership lists were shrinking. Needing to stave off this decline, the Society increasingly reduced the penalties for violations of the Quaker discipline. Indeed, historian John William Buys's assessment that the "Civil War proved a watershed . . . [for] the Society of Friends" may be correct.¹⁰¹ Elbert Russell would have agreed with Buys. Russell asserted that the Civil War "made a definite break in the history of American Quakerism." The war forced the Society out of its "official isolation," which was brought on by adherence to the peace testimony, and compelled many Quakers to reexamine the pacifist tradition.¹⁰²

Rufus Jones viewed the enlistment of Quaker soldiers as part of the weakening of the peace testimony rather than as part of the overall loosening of the code of behavior. Jones noted that at the time of the Civil War the rank and file membership possessed little more than a "traditional adherence" to the antiwar stand. Quakers gave little serious thought to war, and for most Friends it was an "unexamined inheritance." Although the formal position of the Society was one of opposition to all wars, in the "lives of individual members, however, . . . [the incompatibility of war with Christian ideals] had not become a settled, dominant, first-hand conviction."¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans*, Vol. I: *The Colonial Experience* (New York, 1958), 41.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ John William Buys, "Quakers in Indiana in the Nineteenth Century (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1973), 300.

¹⁰² Russell, *History of Quakerism*, 408. Russell noted that the Society's relief work during the war also forced Quakers out of isolation.

¹⁰³ Jones, *Later Periods*, II, 728.

Indisputably, the Society of Friends was faced with a serious moral dilemma when the Civil War began in 1861. For a variety of reasons approximately twelve hundred Quaker men did not remain passive in the highly charged environment of the conflict between the North and the South. Even possible estrangement from both family and the religious community failed to convince these men that they had made the wrong choice. And while the percentage of Quakers in service was low in comparison to the percent of all Indiana men who enrolled for military duty, this author's findings show that virtually all historians who have written about Quakers in the Civil War have erred in their estimates.

As Henry Steele Commager wrote, the war did not "come to an end, psychologically or emotionally, with Appomattox."¹⁰⁴ Once the hostilities ceased in 1865, the Society of Friends was again confronted with an ethical quandary. The need to solve this dilemma compelled each monthly meeting to decide what should be done in regard to Quaker military service. Statistics show that opinion was anything but unanimous on the treatment of ex-soldiers. Unquestionably, then, the impact of the Civil War was felt not only by active Quaker participants but also by those Friends who remained at home during the war and who, upon cessation of hostilities, sat in judgment of their brethren. The larger ramification is that violations of the peace testimony appear to reflect a general breakdown of Quaker discipline and signal a gradual relaxation of the code's application over the next five decades.

Thus, far more Quakers from Indiana fought in the Civil War than has been generally known. In itself this finding is profoundly important. This powerful evidence dispels the myth that has been perpetuated by historians for over one hundred years that Quakers, at least in Indiana, refused to fight in the Civil War. It is hoped that this investigation, while limited in scope, may provide the needed incentive to probe more closely the activities of Friends in other states during the Civil War. Only then can historians adequately assess Quaker participation in the war and the war's impact on the entire Religious Society of Friends.

APPENDIX

It is virtually impossible to determine an accurate count of the number of Quakers who lived in Indiana on the eve of the Civil War. Emma Lou Thornbrough, author of *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880*, estimated that about

¹⁰⁴ Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Blue and the Gray* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950), I, xiv.

15,000 Quakers resided in Indiana in 1850. Historian Margaret E. Hirst, author of *The Quakers in Peace and War*, asserted that the number of Friends could be as high as 20,000 by the time of the Civil War. Rufus Jones, Quaker historian and author of *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, wrote that the membership of Indiana Yearly Meeting, which at the time of the Civil War also included Friends who resided in Ohio, was in excess of 20,000. According to the Indiana Yearly Meeting Minutes of 1857, 1,800 Friends (male and female) from the ages of 15 through 19 resided in Indiana. The percentage of this age group in the entire state of Indiana, according to the Federal Census of 1860, was 11.41, computed by dividing 1,350,428, the total population of Indiana, into 154,085, the total number of persons in the 15-19 age bracket in Indiana. Dividing 1,800 by .1141 yields 15,776, the approximate number of Quakers in Indiana belonging to Indiana Yearly Meeting circa 1860. For convenience sake this figure has been rounded to 16,000. Another Yearly Meeting was established in Indiana in 1858—Western Yearly Meeting. Therefore, the estimate of 1857 includes those Quakers who, one year later, became attached to Western Yearly Meeting. In addition to the previous numbers, a small group of Quakers called Hicksites lived in Indiana for whom the author has no population figures. This group of Friends separated from the main body (called Orthodox Friends) in the late 1820s and formed seven meetings in six Indiana counties. The author will not distinguish between Orthodox Friends and Hicksite Friends in this article. Although there were doctrinal differences between the two groups, the Hicksites retained the peace testimony as part of their discipline. Unless otherwise noted, the term “Quaker” or “Friend” refers to any one of the two groups. In terms of population, then, the author estimates the Indiana Quaker population, including Hicksites, to lie between 16,000 and 20,000.

The author relied on Willard Heiss, ed., *Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana*, to determine the names and locations of the surviving monthly meeting records. The author consulted forty-five monthly meeting minutes in this category. They are as follows: Sand Creek in Bartholomew County (also known as Driftwood in Jackson County); Mississinewa and Back Creek in Grant County; Poplar Ridge, Westfield, and Greenwood in Hamilton County; Fairfield, Plainfield, and Mill Creek in Hendricks County; Duck Creek, Spiceland, Hopewell, and Raysville in Henry County; Honey Creek, New Salem, and Pleasant Hill in Howard County; Fall Creek (Hicksite) in Madison County; Bridgeport and Beech Grove in Marion County; Pipe Creek in Miami County; West Union and White Lick in Morgan County; Lick Creek in Orange County; Rocky Run, Rush Creek, and Bloomfield in Parke County; Cherry Grove, White River, and Poplar Run in Randolph County; Walnut Ridge in Rush County; Greenfield in Tippecanoe County; Salem in Union County; Wabash in Wabash County; Blue River and Blue River (Hicksite) in Washington County; and West Grove, Milford, Milford (Hicksite), Whitewater, Whitewater (Hicksite), New Garden, Springfield, Dover, and Chester of Wayne County. Most of the preceding records have been microfilmed by the Indiana Historical Society and can be viewed at the Society library in Indianapolis. All Indiana Yearly Meeting records are now available at Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. Original records are also housed at Western Yearly Meeting House in Plainfield, Indiana. A few of the records are held by the meetings themselves, and some of the Hicksite minutes are housed in the Hicksite Meeting House in Waynesville, Ohio. Thus, the potential researcher should consult the six-part work by Heiss to determine exactly where specific records are located.

Because some of the Quaker minutes have been lost, damaged, or not made available to the Indiana Historical Society for microfilming, ten meeting records were researched via Heiss's *Abstracts* to cull information otherwise unobtainable. They are: Sugar Plain in Boone County; Oak Ridge in Grant County; Hinkles

Creek and Richland in Hamilton County; Maple Grove (Hicksite) in Huntington County; Camden (Hicksite) in Jay County; Indianapolis in Marion County; Sugar River in Montgomery County; Carthage in Rush County; and Honey Creek (Hicksite) in Vigo County. Many of these records for the Civil War years do not now exist. In many cases Heiss used the abstracts compiled by William Wade Hinshaw (1930s) for his material.

According to Willard Heiss, then, the fifty-five sets of monthly meeting minutes enumerated above are the ones known to exist for the years 1861-1870. Admittedly, some Quakers have not been counted in this survey. Due to the incompleteness of the birth and death records, some soldiers who escaped disciplinary action may not have been counted. In addition, the minutes of Grove Monthly Meeting in Jennings County have not been found. Thus, Quakers from this meeting who were disowned, who produced offerings, or were not disciplined, have not been included in this survey. The author did examine cemetery records of Jennings County but found only one Quaker soldier.

The names of the Quaker soldiers were determined by several research methods. Those Friends who either produced offerings or were disowned by their respective meetings for military service were identified by a close reading of the monthly meeting minutes for the years 1861-1870. In cases in which the monthly meeting minutes were not available, the author consulted Heiss's six-part *Abstracts*. The names of those Quakers who either died in the war or were not disciplined by the Society of Friends were determined by checking lists of soldiers from the counties in which Quakers resided against the birth and death records (also included in the Heiss work) of the monthly meetings. The soldiers' lists were either obtained from county histories or from the eight-volume compilation of the war in Indiana by W. H. H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*. Since the birth and death records of the monthly meetings are far from complete, the author also examined cemetery records of the counties in which Quakers lived. The Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, has a file called "Veterans Graves Registration," an alphabetical card catalogue, by county, of Civil War veterans buried within the state of Indiana. This index, compiled for approximately fifty of Indiana's ninety-two counties, was also checked against the birth and death records compiled by Heiss. The counties that were researched by this method include Grant, Morgan, Howard, Huntington, Miami, Jay, Montgomery, Marion, Orange, Washington, Vigo, Vermillion, and Parke. The remaining cemetery records, encompassing a wide range of completeness and also checked against soldiers' lists, were either found in county libraries or the Genealogy Division of the Indiana State Library. County records researched by this method include Bartholomew, Hancock, Rush, Jennings, Jackson, Porter, Randolph, Wayne, Henry, Hamilton, Boone, Hendricks, Wabash, and Madison. In addition, the county recorders' offices have cemetery records. The Recorders of Boone and Randolph counties also have burial record books which give the names and locations of graves of Civil War veterans within their respective counties. Finally, a few names were discovered in letters written by Quakers. This correspondence frequently included names of relatives and friends who had joined the army.

The membership status of each Quaker soldier was ascertained by using Heiss's *Abstracts*. Any Quaker who was disowned prior to the war and who had not been readmitted to the Society before the outbreak of hostilities was not included in the total of 1,198. In the course of the author's research between 100 and 200 names were deleted for this reason. The only exception to this was if the Quaker was reinstated after the war or was buried in a Quaker cemetery. Such cases, however, were few indeed. Similarly, names of soldiers appearing in the birth and death records who joined the Society of Friends after the war have not

been included in the total number. To insure additional accuracy the names and service records of all soldiers were compared with the official record of military service kept by the Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, at the Indiana State Library and Historical Building, Indianapolis. If the age listed on the official record was not the same as the age determined from the Quaker birth and death records, that soldier's name was deleted. This way soldiers with common names could be distinguished as Quakers or non-Quakers. One exception to this was when the Quaker soldier was under the legal military age of 18. Obviously some Quaker soldiers lied about their age in order to enroll for military duty. Thus, their official military record lists them as age 18 when in reality they were not yet of legal age. In any case when there was doubt as to whether a soldier was a Quaker or not, the name was dropped. Thus, the total number of 1,198 that the author has documented is the minimum number of Quaker soldiers in Indiana. Simple addition shows 1,200 Quakers in military service. Two soldiers from Wayne County, however, were counted twice in the preceding number. Both were disowned for military service and later died in the war. Hence, the number should be 1,198.