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## Moral Choices: Two Indiana Quaker Communities and the Abolitionist Movement

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In the last public utterance of his life, John C. Calhoun told the nation that it was held together by cords of union, cords that were being severed one by one by the rise of the abolitionist movement in the North. One of these cords was religious, straining as the great national denominations—Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist—developed sectional fissures or split, North versus South. These divisions would have a profound impact on the future of American Protestantism, with consequences even to this day.<sup>1</sup>

Such divisiveness was not limited to the “mainline” denominations, nor did it occur solely along sectional lines. The movement for immediate, unconditional abolition of slavery also splintered churches in the North. Many denominations looked on the immediate abolition movement that rose in the early 1830s as dangerous and heterodox, tied to deism and infidelity and challenging both Scriptural Christianity and the peace of the churches. Abolitionists responded with “come-outer” movements in which they sought to free themselves of ties with spurious Christians implicated in the sin of slavery. Thus new denominations were born.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (New York, 1976), 100–101; John R. McKivigan, *The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830–1865* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984), 13–17.

<sup>2</sup> McKivigan, *War against Proslavery Religion*, 18–55, 74–110.

Surprisingly, among the groups that found themselves embroiled in controversy in the 1830s and 1840s was the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Friends were no strangers to theological dispute; they had split into Hicksite and Orthodox factions in a bitter confrontation in the 1820s, and in the 1840s new divisions were brewing. But unlike many other denominations, Quakerism had a long antislavery heritage that had put it in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement. By 1784, the various yearly meetings of Friends in the United States had ruled that no member could own slaves and that those who were slaveowners were to give slaves their freedom. Some Quakers chose to leave the society rather than embrace emancipation, but most submitted to the demand for manumission. Not a few Indiana Quakers in the 1840s were children or grandchildren of former slaveholders. Thus, Indiana Friends should have been spared contention on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

That, however, was not to be the case. The antislavery movement in the United States and Great Britain took a new turn in the late 1820s and early 1830s, culminating in the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. The keynotes of the new movement were the insistence that slaveholding was a sin and the call for its end through immediate emancipation. This position set abolitionists apart from earlier antislavery efforts, including Quaker ones, which had called for gradual emancipation, often linked to the forced colonization of freed slaves overseas. Abolitionism was also distinguished by its missionary zeal for organizing auxiliaries and flooding the country with antislavery literature. By striking at the "cords of union," it encountered ferocious opposition, both in the North and South. The Quaker attitude toward the new abolitionist movement was complex. Some Friends, to be sure, embraced it; about a third of the founding members of the Ameri-

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, Conn., 1950), 68-84. For a more critical interpretation of the growth of antislavery sentiment among Friends, see Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, N.J., 1985).

Some explanation is necessary about the organizational structure and components of the Society of Friends in the nineteenth century: (1) The lowest rung on the Quaker organizational ladder was the indulged or preparative meeting, often referred to simply as a meeting. It can best be thought of as an individual congregation. One or more meetings made up a (2) monthly meeting, which was the basic unit of Quaker organization. It had the power to receive and disown members, to hold property, and to solemnize marriages. Two or more monthly meetings made up a (3) quarterly meeting. The quarterly meeting dealt with problems—usually of doctrine and organization—deemed too important to be left to monthly meetings. Finally, several quarterly meetings made up a (4) yearly meeting. Until 1902, the yearly meeting was the ultimate authority for all Orthodox Friends living within its bounds. It made decisions on both doctrine and discipline and served as a court of final appeal. Each yearly meeting was independent of all others, but the Orthodox yearly meetings were tied closely together by an intricate system of correspondence. See Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington, 1988), xvi.

can Anti-Slavery Society were Quakers, and Friends such as John Greenleaf Whittier, Abby Kelley, and Sarah and Angelina Grimke were among the new movement's best-known proponents. But such men and women were exceptional, even among Quakers. As Thomas E. Drake noted a generation ago, the few vocal and radical abolitionists among Friends in the East soon found themselves isolated and, in some cases, purged.<sup>4</sup>

Indiana, however, seemed to offer hope to abolitionists. By the late 1830s, Indiana Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends was one of the largest in the world, growing steadily through migration, especially from North Carolina. Indiana Quakers had formed a solid phalanx to keep slavery out of the state, and they had vigorously protested against enactment of the notoriously racist Indiana Black Laws in 1831. In 1836 the yearly meeting had warned its members against joining any association that advocated colonization, which the yearly meeting condemned as "the unrighteous work of expatriation." In the same year and in 1837, it issued statements that hailed the growth of "a lively sense of the iniquity and horrors of Slavery." At the same time, however, it cautioned against joining "with others not of our society," lest the standing of Friends as a "peculiar people," separate from "the world," be compromised.<sup>5</sup>

In 1839 the situation in Indiana changed dramatically. The catalyst was the arrival of Arnold Buffum, who came from New England as the duly accredited agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A state antislavery society had been formed in Indiana a year earlier but had made slow progress, and Buffum was charged with organizing new affiliates in the state. Buffum targeted the Quaker communities of east-central Indiana, especially those in Wayne, Union, Randolph, Henry, and Grant counties. He established his headquarters in Newport (now Fountain City) in Wayne County, where he edited an abolitionist journal, the *Protectionist*, and from which he periodically mounted lecture and organizing tours. Buffum won many converts, and soon antislavery societies

<sup>4</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 133-66; James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York, 1976), 33-73.

<sup>5</sup> Hamm, *Transformation*, 13, 175; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXVII; Indianapolis, 1957), 33-37; Gayle Thornbrough, Dorothy L. Riker, and Paula Corpuz, eds., *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher: Vol. VII, 1861-1862, Including Letters to and from Calvin Fletcher* (Indianapolis, 1980), 315; Walter Edgerton, *A History of the Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends; Which Took Place in the Winter of 1842 and 1843, on the Anti-Slavery Question* (Cincinnati, 1856), 34-38. For a highly favorable reaction to the actions of Indiana Yearly Meeting before 1840 from a radical abolitionist Friend in New England, see William Bassett to Elizabeth Pease, 4th Mo. 25, 1840, Ms. A., 1.2, vol. 9, p. 31, Anti-Slavery Collection (Rare Books Department, Boston Public Library, Boston). This date is in the traditional Quaker dating system, which used numbers instead of the "pagan" names for the days of the week and the months of the year.

appeared in all of the counties in which he labored. Other Friends, however, looked on him with fear and mistrust. Buffum, after all, had been a Friend but had been disowned (the Quaker term for excommunicated) in the East and had come west pursued by letters and traveling Quaker ministers warning against him as an infidel and deceiver.<sup>6</sup>

Buffum's success created fears at the highest level of Indiana Yearly Meeting. In 1840 the Meeting for Sufferings, the yearly meeting's equivalent of an executive committee, issued a statement condemning membership in antislavery societies, and a year later it advised that local meetinghouses be closed to antislavery gatherings. In the fall of 1842, it took the final step of removing from the Meeting for Sufferings eight members with abolitionist sympathies and ordered that no one who identified himself or herself as an abolitionist could hold any position of responsibility in the society. Thus repudiated and in their own minds driven beyond endurance, the abolitionist Friends separated to form the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends. Ultimately perhaps two thousand people, or about a tenth of the yearly meeting's membership, separated.<sup>7</sup>

While the events of the separation are not in dispute, its causes are. At the time, there was no lack of explanations. Anti-Slavery Friends saw themselves upholding traditional Quaker testimony against slavery, while their opponents had abandoned it. Their opponents, meanwhile, fond of non-Friends' applause, prosperous because of economic ties with the South, and committed to the Whig party (Henry Clay himself had been in Richmond, Indiana, where the yearly meeting was held, on the very day that the abolitionists were purged from the Meeting for Sufferings and had been warmly received by leading Friends), looked on abolition "as calculated to deprive them of the means of amassing wealth." "Body" Friends, as conservative opponents of abolition became known, responded that Anti-Slavery Friends were abandoning Quaker tradition to ally themselves with non-Friends, many of whom were infidels leading notoriously immoral lives, thus endangering traditions of peculiarity and separation from the world that characterized true Quakers. Abolition, with its mob scenes, more-

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<sup>6</sup> Bassett to Pease, 4th Mo. 25, 1840, Anti-Slavery Collection; Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad* (Cincinnati, 1880), 225-28; New Garden, Ind., *Protectionist*, 1st Mo. 1, 1840, 8th Mo. 20, 1841; Lillie Buffum Chace and Arthur Crawford Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace, 1806-1899: Her Life and Its Environment* (2 vols., Boston, 1914), I, 88-91; *Proceedings of the Indiana Convention Assembled to Organize a State Anti-Slavery Society Held in Milton, Wayne County, September 12, 1838* (Cincinnati, 1838); Dwight L. Dumond, ed., *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857* (2 vols., Gloucester, Mass., 1966), I, 522.

<sup>7</sup> Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 38-42, 47-50, 57-63, 73-92.

over, placed Friends in situations in which they might violate the peace testimony. Finally, by ignoring the advice of the yearly meeting and then complaining and protesting when it removed them from important posts because of their actions, the abolitionists showed a regard for self and a contempt for the yearly meeting that was incompatible with the humility characteristic of solid Friends.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent scholarly analysis has not advanced much farther. No historian has accepted the argument of Anti-Slavery Friends that the "Body" was indifferent to slavery. Separatists were able to point to the statements of a few individual Friends who supported colonization or questioned aiding fugitive slaves, but these were positions that the "Body" continued to condemn. The old yearly meeting, moreover, opposed the annexation of Texas, continued to protest the legalized racism of Indiana law, and expanded its efforts to aid free blacks. Instead, two lines of historical analysis have emerged. One, set forth most fully by Ruth Anna Ketring in her 1937 biography of Charles Osborn, elder statesman and minister of Anti-Slavery Friends, argued that the separation was a split between conservative Quakers who "considered it little short of criminal for Friends to associate with 'worldly' people," and progressives, "who saw no objection to mingling with other people." The implication clearly was that Anti-Slavery Friends were more open to outside influences. The other theory was advanced by Drake in his 1950 monograph, *Quakers and Slavery in America*. Drake emphasized social and economic factors; because Indiana Yearly Meeting was the "melting pot" of American Quakerism, the split was the result of the wide gulf between democratic, radical abolitionist Friends in the countryside and the more conservative Quakers of the towns and cities, with their economic ties to the South. Subsequent accounts have generally accepted these analyses.<sup>9</sup>

Both historical interpretations, however, have their problems. Ketring's "pro-outsider"—"anti-outsider" dichotomy runs aground on facts pointed out by Anti-Slavery Friends at the time: the "Body" might condemn "mixed" antislavery societies, but many of

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<sup>8</sup> This summary is based on the pamphlets and documents from both sides collected in *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 239-41; John William Buys, "Quakers in Indiana in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Florida, 1973), 105-10; Indiana Yearly Meeting (Orthodox), Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, 7th Mo. 29, 1837, 10th Mo. 8, 1839, 10th Mo. 5, 1841, 4th Mo. 13, 1846, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives (Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana); Ruth Anna Ketring, *Charles Osborn in the Anti-Slavery Movement* (Columbus, Ohio, 1937), 50-53; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 162-65. For similar analyses, see Harold Lee Gray, "An Investigation of the Causes of Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1843" (M.A. thesis, Indiana Central College, Indianapolis, 1970); and Buys, "Quakers in Indiana," 111-42.

its stalwarts were involved in comparable temperance, education, and moral reform groups, not to mention political parties and business enterprises. Theologically, it is easier to find clear signs of outside influences, mostly evangelical, in the religious thought of anti-abolitionists such as Elijah Coffin, the clerk of the yearly meeting, and Jeremiah Hubbard, its leading minister, than among Anti-Slavery Friends such as Osborn, who was adamantly opposed to all doctrinal innovation. As for the second interpretation, economic differences may have played a role, but a town versus countryside explanation of the split faces the reality that nearly all Indiana Quakers in this period were rural. Indeed, although Indiana Yearly Meeting's bounds in 1842 stretched from the vicinity of Mansfield, Ohio, west to Iowa, there were only three meetings in any town with a population over one thousand.<sup>10</sup>

There is, however, another model for analyzing the split using the techniques of quantitative history: identifying the individuals on either side, looking at their characteristics, and learning what they had in common. This model has been used extensively with considerable success for one previous split, the Hicksite separation of 1827-1828, and to a lesser extent to identify characteristics of Friends in other periods. Utilizing this technique will not only offer more understanding of Quaker history, it will also help shed much-needed light on a neglected subject—the failure of the organized antislavery movement in Indiana. In the words of one contemporary, Indiana was a “hard place” for antislavery. Racism was firmly embedded in state laws and in the attitudes of most Hoosiers. Organized abolition had come later to Indiana than to almost any other northern state, and the historical consensus is that it was weaker here than in any other free state. Both Whigs and Democrats condemned it, and it was popular sport to break up antislavery meetings with rocks and rotten eggs. Before 1848, one editor claimed, the abolitionist movement in Indiana was dominated largely by Wayne and Henry county Quakers. When these Friends split over the movement, it was even further weakened.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For the involvement of “Body” Friends in various political, temperance, and educational activities, see *Journal of That Faithful Servant of Christ, Charles Osborn, Containing an Account of Many of His Travels and Labors in the Work of the Ministry, and His Trials and Exercises in the Work of the Lord, and in Defence of the Truth, as It Is in Jesus* (Cincinnati, 1854), 421-22; Richmond, Ind., *Palladium*, October 22, 1836, January 6, 1838, November 16, 1839; Centerville, Ind., *Wayne County Record*, August 18, 1841. For Elijah Coffin, see [Mary C. Johnson, ed.], *Life of Elijah Coffin* (Cincinnati, 1863). For Jeremiah Hubbard, see *Memorials of Deceased Friends Who Were Members of Indiana Yearly Meeting* (Cincinnati, 1857), 150-51. For the composition of Indiana Yearly Meeting, see *Location and Days of Holding Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Cincinnati, 1835).

<sup>11</sup> See Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth-Century America* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1967); and Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783*

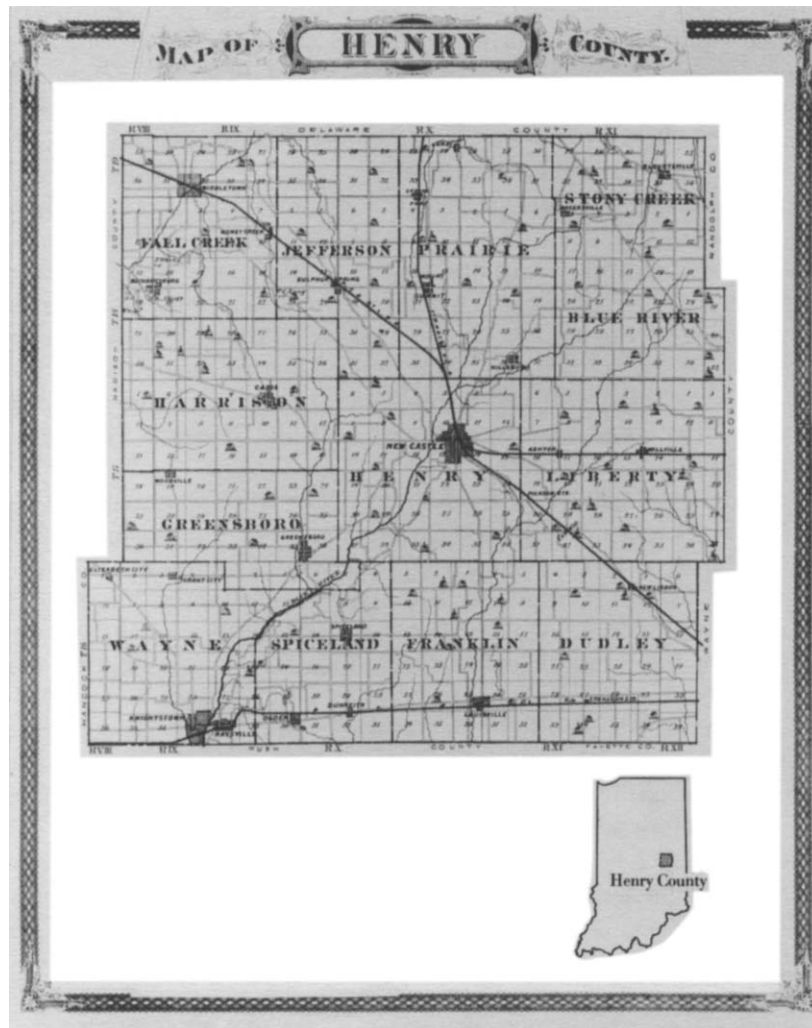
Ultimately, the decisions that Hoosier Quakers made are best explained not in terms of social and economic factors—wealth, occupation, former residence—but in less tangible terms of religious commitment and moral choice. Such conclusions are based on analysis of the separation in two Quaker communities in Henry County, Duck Creek and Spiceland monthly meetings. Both were typical of Indiana Quakerism in the 1840s. Duck Creek's boundaries were extensive, taking in Quakers in Greensboro, Harrison, Henry, Fall Creek, and part of Wayne townships, along with a few Quaker families in the eastern portions of Hancock and Madison counties. Spiceland was more compact, embracing most of Wayne and the western half of Franklin townships, with the northern edge of Rush County. The first Friends at Duck Creek had settled there in 1818, while Spiceland had been pioneered in 1824. Duck Creek Monthly Meeting was made up of two meetings, Duck Creek at the edge of the village of Greensboro and Clear Spring at the southeast corner of Harrison Township. Three meetings comprised Spiceland Monthly Meeting—the largest in the village of Spiceland, with smaller ones to the west on Blue River at Elm Grove and Raysville.<sup>12</sup>

Statistically, Duck Creek Monthly Meeting had a membership of 645 in October, 1842: 128 adult men, 144 adult women, and 373 children or youths unmarried and under twenty-one. It represented at least 115 families. Spiceland was slightly larger—760 members—consisting of 137 adult men, 161 adult women, and 462 children, comprising at least 127 families. The overwhelming majority of adults in both communities, as will be seen, had roots in the South, especially in North Carolina, although a minority was born in Pennsylvania or New Jersey. These families were mobile—the average adult had lived in at least three other Quaker communities before arriving in Spiceland or Duck Creek; close to half had resided for a time in Ohio. Nearly all were landowners. Although occupational data are difficult to obtain, it appears that

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(Philadelphia, 1984). For contemporary assessments of the weakness of antislavery in Indiana, see Gamaliel Bailey to Gerrit Smith, July 23, 1838, box 2, Gerrit Smith Papers (Syracuse University Library, Syracuse, New York); Centerville, Ind., *Free Territory Sentinel*, October 17, 1849; E. Smith to Luther Lee, September 29, 1851, in *True Wesleyan*, October 18, 1851; and Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 227. For scholarly endorsements of this verdict, see Marion C. Miller, "The Antislavery Movement in Indiana" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1938), 2; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850–1880* (Indianapolis, 1965), 14–16, 19; and Joseph G. Rayback, *Free Soil: The Election of 1848* (Lexington, Ky., 1970), 285.

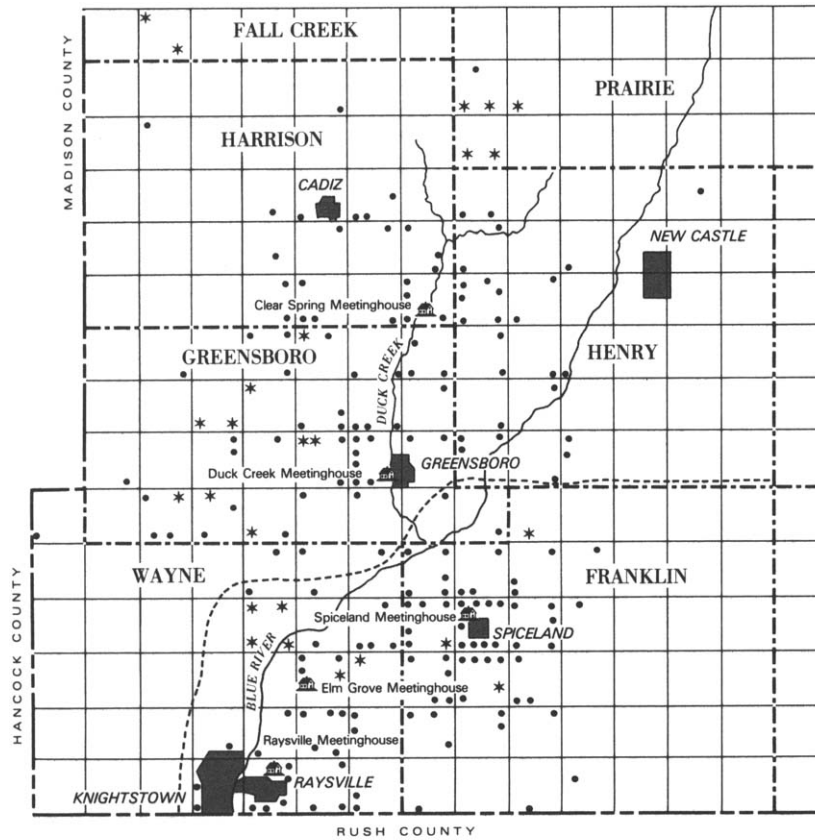
<sup>12</sup> For a history of Spiceland, see Richard P. Ratcliff, *The Quakers of Spiceland, Henry County, Indiana: A History of Spiceland Friends Meeting, 1828–1968* (New Castle, Ind., 1968). For Duck Creek, see Henry W. Painter, comp., "History of Spiceland Quarterly Meeting," 1921, typescript, pp. 1–10 (Henry County Historical Society, New Castle, Indiana).



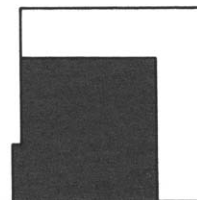
Reproduced from *Maps of Indiana Counties in 1876 . . .* (1876; Indianapolis, 1968), n.p.



# **Residences of Members of Duck Creek and Spiceland Monthly Meetings, Southwestern Henry County, 1842**



- \* Anti-Slavery Friends
- "Body" Friends
- Monthly Meeting Boundaries



**Southwestern  
Henry County**

Map prepared by Janice Sorby and Suzanne Hull, Indiana University Graphics Department, Bloomington.

nearly all adult men were farmers, along with a few craftsmen—carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and millers—who also farmed. There was also a handful of shopkeepers. Only two professional men have been identified—Robert Harrison, an English-born schoolmaster at Spiceland, and Dr. Vierling Kersey, a physician at Raysville.<sup>13</sup>

Two considerations dictated the choice of these communities for study. First and foremost, material from both is abundant. The records of both monthly meetings—consisting of books of births, deaths, and marriages; and the minutes of the men's and women's monthly meeting, with their records of business matters, removals and transfers of membership, reception and disownment of members, and appointment of officers and committee members—are virtually complete. Thus it was possible not only to identify virtually every Friend living in both communities in 1842, but also such characteristics as age, place of birth, previous residence, time of arrival in the community, family connections, appointment to offices, and relationships with the meeting. Of equal significance is the 1842 tax duplicate for Henry County, which includes the value of all real and personal property for each resident as well as the location of landholdings, making it possible to measure wealth (or lack of it) and to plot places of residence. Also of interest are the records of the Henry County Female Anti-Slavery Society—the only known records of any female antislavery organization in the state—which permit comparisons of rates of participation in abolitionist organizations before and after the separation. Finally, there are some scattered manuscript correspondence, a few comments in the diaries of visiting Friends, some hints in reminiscences, and one contemporary chronicle, *A History of the Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends*, by Walter Edgerton of Spiceland.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Indiana Quakers did not compile precise statistics on membership until the 1860s. Membership of the monthly meetings was calculated using the abstracts of records (births, deaths, and marriages) and minutes of business meetings in Willard C. Heiss, ed., *Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana* (7 vols., Indianapolis, 1962–1977), IV, 153–326. These records were used to trace movements, along with William Wade Hinshaw, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (6 vols., Ann Arbor, Mich., 1936–1950). Twenty-one was considered the age of adulthood, save for married people. For landholdings, see Henry County Tax Duplicate, 1842 (Henry County Historical Society). For Harrison, see Sadie Bacon Hatcher, *A History of Spiceland Academy, 1826 to 1921* (Indianapolis, 1934), 111, 155. For Kersey, see William Perry Johnson, *Hiatt-Hiett Genealogy and History* (n.p., 1951), 183.

<sup>14</sup> Most of the information was drawn from the abstracts in Heiss, *Abstracts*. Additional information was taken from the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Birth, Death, and Marriage Book 1826–1870, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, vols. I and II, *ibid.*; Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Women's Minutes, vol. I, *ibid.*; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Birth and Death Record, vol. I, *ibid.*; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, vol. I, *ibid.*; and Spiceland Monthly Meeting Women's Minutes, vol. I, *ibid.* The Spiceland marriage records were lost before 1900, but the minutes provide a substitute. The original records of the Henry County Female Anti-Slavery Society are also lost, but there is a typescript deposited by Sarah Edgerton, the daughter of Walter and Rebecca Edgerton, in the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

Both communities, moreover, were deeply involved in the split. Spiceland was the home both of George Evans, assistant clerk of the yearly meeting and one of the most thoughtful and articulate critics of abolitionists, and of Walter and Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton, the clerks, or presiding officers, of the Anti-Slavery yearly meeting. Greensboro, the center of Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, had a national reputation in the 1840s as a center of radical reform activities, only "a little less notorious than Newport" in Wayne County, the home of Levi Coffin of Underground Railroad fame. The leader of Duck Creek abolitionists, Seth Hinshaw, was in fact much more advanced in his reform views than anyone in Newport. The two communities also offered, however, an opportunity for comparison and contrast. Although both were split, Duck Creek had the reputation of being far more radical in its abolitionist views than Spiceland.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, details about the process of the separation at Duck Creek and Spiceland are sketchy. It is known that when county male and female antislavery societies were formed in 1841, Spiceland and Duck Creek Friends dominated them. The yearly meeting's pronouncements, however, apparently had deleterious effects on the groups. For example, while traveling with Charles Osborn in New England and New York in 1840, George Evans of Spiceland had condemned antiabolitionist sentiment among Friends there; he is also one of the few Henry County Quakers for whom historians have indisputable evidence of aiding fugitive slaves. Yet when the yearly meeting in Indiana acted, he became an outspoken antiabolitionist. It is also known that at least nineteen Spiceland women who remained with the "Body" who previously were active in the Henry County Female Anti-Slavery Society withdrew from it after 1842. It seems likely that some of the future Duck Creek and Spiceland Anti-Slavery Friends were present at the critical yearly meeting in October, 1842, since yearly meeting always drew thousands of Friends to Richmond from surrounding counties, and Henry Clay's visit had further swelled the number of visitors. Doubtless they witnessed firsthand the events that abolitionist Friends found so offensive. After the yearly meeting, conferences of Anti-Slavery Friends were held in various places, including the convention in Newport in February, 1843, that officially formed Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends. The Edgertons, Micajah C. White, Enoch Macy, William Macy, Diana (Hinshaw) Macy, and Phebe (Hiatt) Macy of

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<sup>15</sup> For an account of the antislavery history of both communities, and biographical information on George Evans, Seth Hinshaw, and the Edgertons, see Thomas D. Hamm, *The Antislavery Movement in Henry County, Indiana* (New Castle, Ind., 1987), 23-27, 37-42, 46-48. The quotation is from *Life and Travels of Addison Coffin* (Cleveland, 1897), 63.

## ANTI-SLAVERY FRIENDS



**SETH HINSHAW**  
1787–1865

Reproduced from *Hazzard's History of Henry County* (2 vols., New Castle, Ind., 1906), II, facing 857.



**ABIGAIL (RICH) HINSHAW**  
1791–1873

Reproduced from painting, Henry County Historical Society Museum, New Castle, Indiana.



**WALTER EDGERTON**  
1806–1879

Reproduced from *History of Henry County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1884), facing 805.



**ANN (CLEARWATER) WRIGHT**  
1777–1861

Courtesy Earlham College Archives, Richmond, Indiana

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## “BODY” FRIEND

**GEORGE EVANS**  
1802–1863

Courtesy Richard P. Ratcliff, Spiceland, Indiana.



Spiceland, along with Seth Hinshaw of Duck Creek, took part. Just when these Friends formed new meetings is also unknown, since their records before 1849 are lost, but it was probably in February or March of 1843, because old monthly meetings did not begin disowning the separatists until September, 1843. Some Friends wavered between the two groups—Nathan and Jane (Wilson) Macy and Nathan's sister Anna Macy, for example, alternated meetings before finally deciding to remain with the "Body." The last disownment of separatists by the "Body" did not take place until spring, 1845. Ultimately, forty-one adults with sixty children separated at Duck Creek (15.6 percent of the total membership of the old monthly meeting, or 17.7 percent of its adult membership), while at Spiceland twenty-two adults with sixty-three children left (11.1 percent of the total membership, or 8.3 percent of the adults). The two groups of Anti-Slavery Friends combined to form Duck Creek Monthly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends. Those around Greensboro built a new meetinghouse in the village, while those who had been members of Spiceland Monthly Meeting reached an uneasy agreement with the "Body" and continued to use the Elm Grove Meetinghouse.<sup>16</sup>

With this knowledge and these records, the question arose: what made abolitionist Friends, those who felt so strongly about the antislavery cause that they were willing to organize a new yearly meeting and break venerable ties, different from those Quakers who were more conservative and stood aloof from abolition? Seven variables were tested:

(1) **Economics.** Two theories, mutually exclusive, offered possible explanations. The first was that conservative antiabolitionists were well-to-do. These Friends, presumably involved in marketing their crops through downriver trade with New Orleans, would have been wary of any force that made for sectional tension.

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<sup>16</sup> Anti-Slavery Friends were identified from disownments by the two original monthly meetings as recorded in their minutes. For the formation of the new yearly meeting, see *Conference of Anti-Slavery Friends* (Newport, Ind., 1843). For the Macy family, see Miriam Baldwin to Jesse Baldwin, 9th Mo. 29, 1844, Baldwin family file (Henry County Historical Society); and Spiceland Monthly Meeting Women's Minutes, 3rd Mo. 20, 5th Mo. 22, 6th Mo. 19, 7th Mo. 24, 9th Mo. 25, 10th Mo. 23, 11th Mo. 20, 1844. For the meetings under Duck Creek Monthly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, see *Minutes of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, 1843*, p. 4. The surviving records of Duck Creek Monthly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends include the marriage book, 1843–1855, and the women's monthly meeting minutes, 1850–1857, both in the Anti-Slavery Friends Collection (Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis). For George Evans's early proabolition attitudes, see "Letters from George Evans to His Family and Particular Friends at Spiceland, Indiana," 1839–1840, typescript, pp. 84–85 (Indiana Division). For his later attitudes, see George Evans, *An Expostulation to Those Who Have Lately Seceded from the Religious Society of Friends* (Spiceland, Ind., 1844). For the "Body" women in organized abolition, see Henry County Female Anti-Slavery Society Records, 1841–1845 (Indiana Division).

And, in the nature of the upper classes throughout history, they would have been fearful of any kind of radicalism. In contrast, poorer Friends, subsistence farmers who did not perceive any threat to their livelihood in abolition, were more open to a force that extended the traditional testimony against slavery.<sup>17</sup>

Conversely, there is a growing body of historical literature suggesting just the opposite. Some historians have argued that the key to reform activism was leisure. Wealth, they maintain, provided the surplus to subscribe to antislavery journals and to have hired girls and hands to mind children and work fields while husbands and wives went off to reform meetings. Poorer Friends, in contrast, were so occupied with trying to scratch out a living that they could not spare the time (nor the money) to become involved in antislavery. Thus, any significant differences in wealth and property between the two sides were carefully analyzed.<sup>18</sup>

(2) **Residence Patterns.** The tax duplicate made it possible to map the residences of most of the Friends in both communities. Could it be that the separation was one that pitted neighborhood against neighborhood, suggesting deeper cleavages about whose nature one can only speculate?

(3) **Place of Origin.** The overwhelming majority of both Spiceland and Duck Creek Quakers came from the South, especially from North Carolina—among adults 226 of 272 at Duck Creek, 208 of 298 at Spiceland. There is a growing body of research on southern Quakerism suggesting that southern Friends were divided in their views on slavery—that abolition was far more popular in Quaker communities of the piedmont and back-country, where slaveholding was relatively rare, than among Quakers of eastern North Carolina, where it had been far more common among Friends. Could it be that the divisions among the North Carolina Friends of Spiceland and Duck Creek reflected cleavages that went back generations? Or could it be that the Friends from eastern North Carolina in the two monthly meetings were more radical in

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<sup>17</sup> For a contemporary exposition of this argument, see Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 39. For such a conclusion by a modern historian concentrating on the Northeast, see Edward V. Magdol, *The Antislavery Rank and File: A Social Profile of the Abolitionists' Constituency* (Westport, Conn., 1986), 64. Magdol found that the members of antislavery societies and signers of antislavery petitions "tended to be the most mobile, least propertied, and most economically expectant." *Ibid.*, 63-64, 75, 139-40.

<sup>18</sup> For one such analysis, see Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry Reconsidered: Social Bases of the Grassroots Party," *Journal of American History*, LXXXI (September, 1984), 280. The importance of leisure time has been especially emphasized as an important factor in the involvement of women in antebellum reform movements. See, for example, Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York, 1978), 102-104.

their antislavery views than their neighbors in their old homes and had come north for that reason?<sup>19</sup>

(4) **Timing of Migration.** The monthly meeting minutes pinpointed when almost every individual arrived in the North (as distinct from Spiceland or Duck Creek, since many had sojourned in Ohio or other parts of Indiana before coming to Henry County); perhaps the timing of migration might help explain the split. Could it be, for example, that Quakers who had only recently left the South were less open to a movement that made for sectional discord, splitting them from old friends and family there, while those who had lived longer in the North were more open to it? Or could it be that Friends who had arrived in the North after 1830 had seen the hardening of proslavery sentiment in the South after Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, and thus were convinced that only radical action would bring about abolition, while older settlers remembered a less intransigent South and still put their faith in gradualism and moderation?<sup>20</sup>

(5) **Age.** Sociologists have long noted that the young are the most likely to be open to new ideas, while conservatism tends to increase with age. Historians of antebellum reform have noted as well that in the 1830s and 1840s reform was an activity of the young. Could it be that the separation was one that pitted young against old?<sup>21</sup>

(6) **Family Ties.** Any Quaker community involved intricate tangles of kinship, given the large size of families and the tendency of Friends, reinforced by the requirements of the Discipline, to marry only within the society.<sup>22</sup> Could it be that family ties and connections, or perhaps even family feuds, were behind the separation?

(7) **Power and Status within the Society.** The final question concerned the relationship of individual Friends to the meeting and to the society. Other historians examining periods of stress among Quakers have discovered struggles for power, with the "outs" separating from the "ins" from frustration over not being

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1656-1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Houston, 1984), 425, 502; and Kenneth L. Carroll, "East-West Relations in North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 1750-1784," *Southern Friend*, IV (Autumn, 1982), 17-25.

<sup>20</sup> For the hardening of southern attitudes, see Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, 59-61.

<sup>21</sup> Francis D. Glamsier, "The Importance of Age to Conservative Opinions," *Journal of Gerontology*, XXIX (September, 1974), 549-54; Lois Banner, "Religion and Reform in the Early Republic: The Role of Youth," *American Quarterly*, XXIII (December, 1971), 677-95.

<sup>22</sup> The Discipline was, in its narrowest sense, the collection of the rules, regulations, and traditions under which Friends lived. For that in force at the time of the separation, see *Discipline of the Society of Friends of Indiana Yearly Meeting* (Cincinnati, 1839).

allowed to hold positions of influence within the group. These positions included officers such as minister (not pastoral, but rather a recognition of a gift of speaking in meetings), elder (one charged with regulating the ministry), overseer (one who reported violations of the Discipline to the meeting and worked with offenders to bring them to repentance), and clerk (the presiding officer of a meeting for business). Could a power struggle have been the case in Henry County, or could it be that families who separated had long had problems with the strict code of behavior required of Friends under the Discipline, and, influenced by those of other faiths, wanted to liberalize the society? Thus, did the separation pit unruly Friends against the pillars of the meetings, those with troubled pasts against the more observant and faithful, unlikely to question established ways? To gauge this possibility, the minutes of both meetings were examined, noting for each adult the number of committee appointments and offices held (a reliable indicator of the influence, or *weight*, to use the favorite Quaker term) as well as any violations of the Discipline.<sup>23</sup>

What, then, divided these Friends? The examination of these seven questions suggests that, with one exception, quantifiable social characteristics are not critical in explaining the separation.

Statistics in tables 1 and 2 show that when patterns of wealth and property holding are compared, no clear pattern is discernible. In Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, the average wealth of Anti-Slavery families was considerably higher than that of "Body" Friends—\$1,509.79 to \$1,121.66. This average is misleading, however, because it is skewed by the wealth of two men among the abolitionists—Seth Hinshaw at about \$5,000 and John Swain at over \$7,600—who together accounted for two-thirds of all of the property owned by the Duck Creek separatists. When a distribution of the wealth of the two groups is plotted, however, it shows that more "Body" Friends had wealth of over \$1,000 than was the case with Anti-Slavery Friends. Thus a clear pattern is difficult to discern. In Spiceland, the average wealth of Anti-Slavery families was also higher than that of the "Body"—\$1,577.72 to \$1,471.52. Plotting the distribution of wealth shows that again Anti-Slavery Friends tended to be more prosperous—over half possessed property worth at least \$2,000, while only about one-fifth of the "Body" Friends could claim the same. But there were also Anti-Slavery Friends whose property holdings were minimal. Thus, an economic explanation of the separation does not appear to hold true in these two communities because both sides were diverse in total wealth. Prosperity may have made it possible for the families of William Macy, Walter Edgerton, Seth Hinshaw, and John Swain to become

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<sup>23</sup> For a similar analysis, see Doherty, *Hicksite Separation*.



**Table 1**  
Wealth-Holders by Value of Total Wealth at Duck Creek

<i>Value in Dollars</i>	<i>Body</i>		<i>Anti-Slavery</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
0- 499	28	26.2	6	37.5
500- 999	29	27.1	5	31.3
1000-1499	19	17.8	2	12.5
1500-1999	12	11.2	1	6.3
2000-2999	12	11.2	0	0.0
3000-3999	3	2.8	0	0.0
4000 or more	4	3.7	2	12.5
	107	100.0	16	100.1

SOURCE: Henry County, Indiana, Tax Duplicate, 1842 (Henry County Historical Society, New Castle, Indiana). Ten families were not located, along with nearly all of the elderly widows. Some undoubtedly lived in Hancock or Madison counties. It is also unclear when the assessment was made, so some families may have arrived after it. This was the case with at least three Anti-Slavery families.

**Table 2**  
Wealth-Holders by Value of Total Wealth at Spiceland

<i>Value in Dollars</i>	<i>Body</i>		<i>Anti-Slavery</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
0- 499	24	22.2	2	18.2
500- 999	24	22.2	3	27.3
1000-1499	19	17.6	0	0.0
1500-1999	19	17.6	0	0.0
2000-2999	10	9.3	5	45.4
3000-3999	7	6.5	0	0.0
4000 or more	5	4.6	1	9.1
	108	100.0	11	100.0

SOURCE: Henry County, Indiana, Tax Duplicate, 1842. Eighteen families were not located along with some elderly widows and single adults. See Table 1.

involved in reform, but lack of it did not prevent Friends like Vierling Kersey and Isaac and Charity (Willits) Pitts of Greensboro from becoming abolitionists.

As the map shows, plotting the residences of members of the two monthly meetings revealed some interesting patterns. Assuming that Spiceland and Greensboro were the centers of their monthly meetings, most Anti-Slavery Friends lived on the fringes. The Swains, for example, were the only Quakers in Fall Creek Township, while the Wrights and the family of Solomon Cox, all separatists, accounted for all but one of the Quaker families in

Prairie Township. Among the members of Spiceland Monthly Meeting, a majority of Anti-Slavery Friends lived on the western edge of the monthly meeting's bounds in the vicinity of Elm Grove Meetinghouse. This might lead one to think that Anti-Slavery Friends were isolated and deprived of opportunities for full participation in the affairs of the society, but as will be seen later the monthly meeting minutes show this not to be the case.

One of the striking results of mapping residences is to show the tendency of Anti-Slavery Friends to cluster, a tendency especially noticeable in the case of the Spiceland group, where a majority lived on contiguous farms along Blue River. For the most part, however, this grouping probably reflects the tendency of families to settle near each other. In fact Anti-Slavery Friends on Blue River consisted of three sibling pairs, all first cousins, while the clusters to the north were members of the Wright and Hinshaw families.

A consideration of the third possible explanation, place of origin, also showed some possibly significant patterns. (See table 3.) One explanation suggests that older conflicts, previously discussed, between coastal and piedmont Friends in North Carolina may have carried over into these communities. The monthly meetings of Friends in eastern North Carolina had sent sixty-eight adults to Duck Creek and Spiceland; only two joined Anti-Slavery Friends. Quakers from Virginia, and those from eastern Ohio, whose family ties often were with Virginia or eastern North Carolina, showed an equal antipathy for abolition. No Friend from Virginia joined Anti-Slavery Friends, and of the forty-six adults in the two monthly meetings who had lived in eastern Ohio, only Walter and Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton and Mary (Pennington) White went with the separatists. Also notable is the fact that none of the Friends born in New Jersey or Pennsylvania, with the exception of James Gause of Spiceland, "came out," which ties in with another striking fact: while about a quarter (129) of the adults in the two monthly meetings who remained with the "Body" were born in the North, only six of the sixty-three adults who separated were northern born.

In contrast, certain patterns were also significant among the separatists. Most Anti-Slavery Friends at Spiceland had at some time been members of New Garden Monthly Meeting in Guilford County, North Carolina—sixteen of the twenty-two adults, in fact, had lived in Guilford County, the heart of piedmont North Carolina Quakerism. In Duck Creek, half of the Anti-Slavery Friends had roots in two monthly meetings: Marlborough in Randolph County, North Carolina (bordering Guilford), and New Hope in Greene County, Tennessee. Indeed, half of the Quakers in the two monthly meetings who had lived in Tennessee joined the separatists. Here it was tempting to make a connection with earlier cases

**Table 3**  
 "Body" and Anti-Slavery Friends Categorized by Former Residences

	Duck Creek		Spiceland	
	Body Number	Anti-Slavery Percent	Body Number	Anti-Slavery Percent
Eastern North Carolina	19	95.0	49	98.0
Piedmont North Carolina	146	85.4	119	88.1
Tennessee	15	53.6	5	100.0
Virginia	9	100.0	9	100.0
Pennsylvania and New Jersey	10	100.0	26	96.1
Maryland	0	0.0	3	100.0
South Carolina	2	100.0	3	100.0
Eastern Ohio	28	100.0	18	85.7
			3	14.3

SOURCES: William Wade Hinshaw, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (6 vols., Ann Arbor, Mich., 1936-1950); Willard C. Heiss, ed., *Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana* (7 vols., Indianapolis, 1962-1977). Totals would serve no purpose here, since some Friends are included in more than one category, such as those who had lived both in Virginia and eastern Ohio. "Eastern North Carolina" is defined as consisting of the monthly meetings of Perquimans, Pasquotank, Suttons Creek, Rich Square, Jack Swamp, Core Sound, and Contentnea. "Piedmont North Carolina" is the monthly meetings of Cane Creek, Spring, Holly Spring, New Garden, Dover, Hopewell, Center, Back Creek, Marlborough, Deep River, Springfield, Union, Westfield, Deep Creek, and Mt. Pleasant. The last is actually located in Carroll County, Virginia, but it was part of North Carolina Yearly Meeting. "Eastern Ohio" includes those monthly meetings in Ohio that were part of Ohio Yearly Meeting in 1842.

of antislavery activism: Guilford County had long been the center of antislavery sentiment among North Carolina Friends. It had been settled in the 1750s largely by relatives of the famous Quaker abolitionist John Woolman, and they were leaders in moving North Carolina Friends toward a clear antislavery stance. Later, in the 1810s and 1820s, Guilford County had been the heart of organized antislavery activity in the state. Greene County, Tennessee, was notable for similar activities at the same time. And at least some Anti-Slavery Friends, such as Enoch Macy of Spiceland and John Swain of Duck Creek, had been active in these groups.<sup>24</sup>

Such a conclusion, however, faced two difficulties. First, the Friends from east Tennessee in the two monthly meetings consisted almost entirely of two extended families, and such a sample is probably too small to be a basis for generalization. As for Friends with origins in Guilford County, they were numerous in both monthly meetings, and in fact most of those from Guilford County did *not* become abolitionists: they were 135 of 231 adults in the "Body" at Duck Creek, and 101 of 298 at Spiceland. Ties to antislavery activities in North Carolina and Tennessee are also not especially meaningful. The North Carolina Manumission Society (the state's antislavery organization, formed in 1816) and its related organization in Tennessee were gradualist groups that embraced colonization—in short, their attitudes were closer to the ideas of the most conservative of the Indiana "Body" in the 1840s. It is not surprising that the North Carolina Manumission Society included among its members men like Elijah Coffin, the clerk of Indiana Yearly Meeting, and the prominent minister Jeremiah Hubbard, who were both inveterate opponents of abolition with colonization sympathies.<sup>25</sup>

Thus it is difficult to find any clear relationship between previous residence and antislavery principles. It may have been a *sine qua non* for Anti-Slavery Friends to have had some firsthand knowledge of slavery; virtually all of the abolitionists had roots in piedmont North Carolina or east Tennessee. But then so did most of those who remained with the "Body." And certain groups—Friends from eastern North Carolina, Virginia, and eastern Ohio and those born in the North—found little that was attractive in the abolitionist movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History* (Baltimore, 1896), 234-43; H. M. Wagstaff, ed., *The Minutes of the North Carolina Manumission Society, 1816-1834*, in *James B. Sprunt Historical Studies*, XXII (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1932), 62, 80, 93; B. H. Murphy, ed., *The Emancipator, Published by Elihu Embree at Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1820* (Nashville, Tenn., 1932), 10.

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Sowle, "The North Carolina Manumission Society," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XLII (Winter, 1965), 47-69; Wagstaff, *Minutes*, 35, 56, 66; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 128, 141-42.

**Table 4**  
 Year of Arrival in North for Adult "Body" and Anti-Slavery Friends

	<i>Duck Creek</i>			<i>Spiceland</i>		
	<i>Body</i>		<i>Anti-Slavery</i>	<i>Body</i>		<i>Anti-Slavery</i>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Born in North	45	19.5	1	84	30.5	27.3
1800-1809	32	13.9	1	28	10.2	4.5
1810-1819	46	19.9	4	43	15.7	0.0
1820-1829	48	20.8	3	56	20.3	45.4
1830-1839	39	16.9	26	43	15.7	22.7
1840-1842	3	1.3	0	3	1.1	0.0
Unknown	18	7.8	6	18	6.5	0.0
	231	100.1	41	275	100.0	99.9

SOURCES: Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*; Heiss, *Abstracts*. One Spiceland Friend, Robert Harrison, who was born in England, is not included in this table.

The timing of migration, the fourth social factor tested, also revealed little, as statistics in table 4 show. At Duck Creek, there was some indication that timing was important: of forty-one adult Anti-Slavery Friends, thirty, or about 75 percent, had come north after 1831. In contrast, almost 90 percent of the "Body" Friends had arrived before 1831. It is possible that the Hinshaw and Wright families who, as will be seen, made up most of the membership of the Anti-Slavery group, had witnessed the reaction to Nat Turner's Rebellion, which may have played a part in their radicalization. But in Spiceland, the timing of migration was remarkably similar for both groups—about three quarters of each had come north before 1830.

Closely related was age at the time of the move north; could it be that direct contact with slavery, or the memory of it, was crucial in motivating Anti-Slavery Friends, and that "Body" Friends lacked such memories? Again, Anti-Slavery Friends had had such contact—findings in table 5 show that the overwhelming majority had lived in the South long enough to be conscious of the institution. Yet this is also true of a majority of "Body" Friends. It is equally valid to say that the overwhelming majority of Friends in the two monthly meetings with memories of the South did not become abolitionists.

The fifth variable, age, proved more helpful in explaining the separation. Certain patterns did emerge, showing that abolition appealed most to young and least to older Friends. At Spiceland, the oldest of Anti-Slavery Friends, Elias Jessup, was forty-eight in 1842. The rest of the Spiceland separatists were rather evenly distributed from age twenty to forty-five. (See table 6.) The situation at Duck Creek was slightly different. Some older Friends did separate; the eldest, Jesse Wright, Sr., was seventy-three at the time of separation. But there, as at Spiceland, the overwhelming majority of Anti-Slavery Friends was under age forty-five—at least thirty-one of forty-two. Overall, however, the age distribution of Anti-Slavery Friends reflects the age distribution of the two meetings, and in every age group, the overwhelming majority chose to remain with the "Body."

Family ties, the sixth variable, did produce some notable patterns in both communities and at first glance seemed to explain some of the patterns of separation. As statistics in tables 7 and 8 show, family ties and a high degree of kinship solidarity were striking among both "Body" and Anti-Slavery Friends. In the Spiceland "Body," about 7 percent (twenty adults) consisted of the families of the brothers Eli and Nathan Gause with their spouses and children. Another 7 percent (nineteen adults) was made up of the families of Stephen Macy, Sr., and his brother Thaddeus, who had died in North Carolina but whose widow and children had come to Indiana. One of the largest kinship networks in the

**Table 5**  
Age at Arrival in North for Adult Members at Duck Creek and Spiceland

	Duck Creek			Spiceland		
	Body Number	Percent	Anti-Slavery Number	Body Number	Percent	Anti-Slavery Number
Born in North	45	19.5	1	84	30.5	6
5 or less	15	6.5	2	22	8.0	0
6-10	10	4.3	2	16	5.8	1
11-15	12	5.2	1	15	5.5	4
16-20	20	8.7	6	17	6.2	3
21-30	47	20.3	11	42	15.3	4
31-40	22	9.5	4	33	12.0	4
41-50	15	6.5	6	15	5.5	0
50 or over	12	5.2	3	11	4.0	0
Unknown	33	14.3	5	20	7.3	0
	231	100.0	41	275	100.0	22
						99.9

SOURCES: See Table 4.

**Table 6**  
Age Groupings of Friends at Spiceland and Duck Creek after the Separation

	Duck Creek			Spiceland		
	Body	Anti-Slavery	Body	Anti-Slavery	Body	Anti-Slavery
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 21	4	1.7	0	0.0	7	2.5
21-30	55	23.8	11	26.8	76	27.5
31-40	58	25.1	13	31.7	77	27.8
41-50	33	14.3	7	17.1	44	15.9
51-60	28	12.1	6	14.6	19	6.9
61-70	20	8.6	1	2.4	23	8.3
Over 70	12	5.2	1	2.4	8	2.9
Unknown	21	9.1	2	4.9	22	8.0
	231	99.9	41	99.9	276	99.8
					22	100.0

SOURCES: Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*; Heiss, *Abstracts*. A few dates of birth were taken from tombstones and from the 1850 census. "Adults" are those over twenty-one or married people.



**Table 7**  
Kinship Solidarity among Families with Ten or More  
Adults at Duck Creek

<i>Family</i>	<i>Number Joining "Body"</i>	<i>Number Joining Anti-Slavery</i>
Bowman	13	7
Hiatt	12	4
Hinshaw	4	15
Lamb-Pearson	26	1
Modlin	13	0
Pickering	22	0
Presnall	26	1
Ratliff	22	0
Stanley	16	0
Wright	2	12

SOURCE: Heiss, *Abstracts*, IV, 153-213

**Table 8**  
Kinship Solidarity among Families with Ten or More  
Adults at Spiceland

<i>Family</i>	<i>Number Joining "Body"</i>	<i>Number Joining Anti-Slavery</i>
Gause	20	2
Gordon	14	0
Hiatt	24	1
Hodson	10	0
Macy	19	10
Sheridan	17	0
Small	17	1
Francis White	13	0
Stanton White	7	9

SOURCE: Heiss, *Abstracts*, IV, 221-326. Francis White (1764-1813) died in Perquimans County, North Carolina, but his widow Miriam (Toms) White (1773-1855) and several children had settled at Spiceland. He was not related to Stanton White (1767-1837), who had come to Spiceland from Guilford County, North Carolina, and whose widow Sarah (Stanley) White (1771-1847) and several children and grandchildren were members at Spiceland at the time of the separation. See "White Genealogy" in "The Works of Webster Parry, Edited by Edna Harvey Joseph," 1988 typescript, pp. 104-21 (Archives, Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana).

monthly meeting consisted of descendants of the matriarch Charity (Williams) Hiatt, who had sat at the head of the Spiceland meeting until her death in 1840 at the age of nearly ninety. Her son Joel Hiatt, daughters Rachel Kersey and Rebecca Unthank, and grandchildren John Hiatt, Anna (Hiatt) Unthank, Anna (Kersey) Boone, and Mary (Kersey) Sheridan, along with their families, made up 24 of the 276 "Body" adults. The family of old Charity's younger sister Ruth (Williams) Gordon accounted for another fourteen. Of all the Gordon and Hiatt descendants in the meeting, only one joined Anti-Slavery Friends. Combining these four kinship groups with Smalls, Sheridans, Whites, and Hodsons accounts for almost half of the "Body" membership.<sup>26</sup>

Many Spiceland "Body" Friends, moreover, had family ties to high officials of the yearly meeting outside Spiceland. George Evans, probably the leading antiabolitionist in either community, was not only the assistant clerk of the yearly meeting but the brother of Thomas Evans, the clerk of the Meeting for Sufferings. John Hiatt and Anna (Hiatt) Unthank were siblings of Naomi (Hiatt) Coffin, the wife of Elijah Coffin, while Joel Hiatt and Rebecca (Hiatt) Unthank were Naomi's aunt and uncle. Richard J. Hubbard, who appears to have been the single most active member of Spiceland Monthly Meeting, was the son of eminent minister Jeremiah Hubbard, whose name was a byword among Indiana abolitionists because of his support of colonization. William B. Unthank, the husband of Rebecca and another "weighty" Spiceland Friend, was the stepson of William Hobbs, a fervent proponent of disciplinary action against the abolitionists and an influential member of the Meeting for Sufferings.<sup>27</sup>

Similar ties bound Duck Creek "Body" Friends. Of the 231 adult conservatives, 29 were the families of three Presnall brothers, Stephen (1772–1822), John (1778–1856), and Daniel (1786–1870). If Dempsey Reese, the illegitimate son of Stephen Presnall's wife Hannah is included in this kinship group, it accounts for about 13 percent of the monthly meeting's membership after the separation. The wife of Daniel Presnall was Pleasant Modlin, whose aged mother Ann (Newby) Modlin was the oldest person in either community at the time of separation and whose descendants included another thirteen Duck Creek Friends. Twenty-two of the Duck Creek "Body" consisted of a triangle of Ratliff first cousins. The mother of most Ratliffs, Elizabeth (Pearson) Ratliff, was a half-sister of Nathan Pearson, whose wife was Huldah (Lamb) Pearson. Huldah's sister was the weighty Friend Rebecca Ratliff,

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<sup>26</sup> These relationships were determined from Spiceland Monthly Meeting records in Heiss, *Abstracts*, and the abstracts of North Carolina Quaker Records in Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> See note 26.

widow of one member of the Ratliff triangle. These four family networks—Presnalls, Ratliffs, Pearsons, and Lambs—accounted for about 40 percent of “Body” adults after the separation. When three more families are added—Hiatts, Stanleys, and Pickerings—the total comes to almost two-thirds of the monthly meeting’s membership after the split. These kinship networks produced only three Anti-Slavery Friends.<sup>28</sup>

There were similar patterns among Anti-Slavery Friends. At Spiceland, a majority of abolitionists consisted of three pairs of brothers and families—Elias Jessup (1794–1868) and Tydemon Jessup (1800–1866), Enoch Macy (1797–1870) and William Macy (1799–1872), and Jesse White (born 1805) and the family of his brother Isaac White (1798–1840). The six men were first cousins, grandsons of Isaac and Catherine (Stanton) White. Family connections may explain how they were originally drawn into abolition, since the Whites’ sister Catherine was the wife of Levi Coffin of Newport. Of the Spiceland separatists, only Vierling Kersey, James and Rachel (Johnson) Gause, Walter and Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton, and Peter Pearson left all of their relatives behind to embrace Anti-Slavery Friends. At Duck Creek, thirteen of the twenty-four families or parts of families among Anti-Slavery Friends were those of the brothers Benjamin Hinshaw (1782–1866) and Seth Hinshaw (1787–1865) and their children and Jesse and Ann (Clearwater) Wright and their children. Three more were Willits sisters and their husbands; the sisters’ mother was a first cousin of the Hinshaw brothers. Duck Creek Anti-Slavery Friends may also have been influenced by kinship ties beyond the monthly meeting. One Wright sister was married to a son of Charles Osborn, the best-known minister among Anti-Slavery Friends. Seth Hinshaw’s first wife, Hannah Beeson, had died before he left North Carolina, but he had maintained close ties with her brothers, who were pillars of Anti-Slavery Friends in adjacent Wayne County. John Swain, another Duck Creek abolitionist, was the brother of Elihu Swain, a Wayne County Anti-Slavery Friend who was married to a sister of Daniel Worth, the president of the Indiana State Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>29</sup>

Thus the separation in both communities was characterized by a rather high degree of kinship solidarity. The Hinshaws and Wrights went out almost as a unit, leaving behind in the case of

<sup>28</sup> See note 26.

<sup>29</sup> These relationships were determined through the abstracts of Duck Creek Monthly Meeting records in Heiss, *Abstracts*, and Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*. For Seth Hinshaw’s relations with the Beeson family, see Seth Hinshaw to Isaac W. Beeson, 6th Mo. 21, 1849, and n.d., box 1, Isaac W. and Benjamin B. Beeson Papers (Indiana Division). For the Swains, see Heiss, *Abstracts*, II, 175; and Thomas D. Hamm, “Daniel Worth: Persistent Abolitionist” (Senior Honors Thesis, Department of History, Butler University, 1979), 5.

the former, two sons who had married into weighty "Body" families and in the case of the latter two daughters whose husbands were not Friends. Only the Bowmans were fractured by the separation of their sister Annis Hinshaw, the wife of Benjamin, along with two Wilson brothers who took opposing sides and three Willits sisters who left behind their father and stepmother. (One wonders if this might somehow be related to the fact that their stepmother had been a Stanley.) At Spiceland, only the Macy and Stanton White families were badly fractured; the other seven largest family groups, accounting for 119 adults, produced only 4 Anti-Slavery Friends.

The nature of this kinship solidarity, however, was complex, not lending itself either to patriarchal or matriarchal characterizations. At Duck Creek, of the twenty-four families or parts, all but three were related to other Anti-Slavery Friends there. In ten cases this connection was through the husband, in ten through the wife, and in one through both. Spiceland Anti-Slavery families were a bit more lopsided in their ties. Of the fifteen families or parts there, four had no ties to other Anti-Slavery Friends, while in the case of seven it was through the husband and but four through the wife. But it would be wrong to see this community as a patriarchal world in which women were left with no choices except those made for them by male relatives. The wives of Elias Jessup, Vierling Kersey, and Peter Pearson at Spiceland all remained with the "Body" when their husbands joined Anti-Slavery Friends. It is reasonable to think that the decisions of Benedict and William R. Macy, the two adult sons of Enoch and Nancy Macy, to remain with the "Body" were affected by the prominence of their wives' families, the Gordons and Dickses, among the "Body." The same sorts of influences may explain why John and Cyrus Hinshaw, the sons of Benjamin and Annis at Duck Creek, remained with the "Body": their wives were daughters of Rebecca (Lamb) Ratliff and Cadwallader Pitts, respectively, both elders among "Body" Friends. A striking case of a woman who made up her own mind was Miriam (Macy) Baldwin, the widowed, childless aunt of William, Enoch, and Nathan Macy. She made her home with Nathan and Jane (Wilson) Macy while they leaned toward joining Anti-Slavery Friends and attended their meetings. In poor health, she had no way of going to meeting unless her nephew took her in a wagon, which forced her to meet with separatists. Yet sure that the leaders of the "Body" were the ultimate repository of religious wisdom, she refused to join Anti-Slavery Friends. In addition, there were apparent cases of men being drawn to Anti-Slavery Friends by their wives. The only child of Benjamin and Annis Hinshaw to separate with them was their daughter Ann with her husband Thomas Cox. At least three daughters of Jesse Wright, Sr., with their husbands followed their parents. James L. Presnall at Duck

Creek was apparently led to break with the rest of his family by his courtship of Martha P. Bales of Westfield in Hamilton County, whose parents and siblings were pillars of Anti-Slavery Friends there. And at least two daughters of William and Phebe Macy brought their husbands out of the "Body" after 1842, marrying them in the Anti-Slavery meeting and thus forcing them to face disownment by the "Body."<sup>30</sup>

While these sorts of family connections must mean something, they do not explain everything. Take for example William and Enoch Macy—their brothers Nathan and Solomon remained behind with the "Body," as did their sister Anna after considerable soul searching; the two were step-brothers of Elijah Coffin himself. None of Enoch Macy's adult children separated with him and, as has been shown, even the wives of three Spiceland separatists did not join their husbands. Walter and Rebecca Edgerton's family ties all should have inclined them toward the "Body." Walter's brother Joseph was not only one of the most influential ministers in Ohio Yearly Meeting but also one of its foremost opponents of the abolitionist movement, characterizing it as an "overactive, restless spirit" that "like the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar" was "ready to eat up every green thing." One of the weapons that the Meeting for Sufferings had used in its attack on abolition in 1841 was the printing and distribution of an essay by the Ohio minister. Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton was the daughter of Joseph Cox, one of the yearly meeting's weightiest elders and one of the most influential members of the Meeting for Sufferings.<sup>31</sup>

Family, then, played a role in the decisions of at least some of these Quakers in how to respond to the Anti-Slavery split. But it does not explain the decisions of all. The ultimate answer to the question of motive lies in an examination of the relationship of the two sides with their meetings and their attitudes toward the Discipline that defined what Quakerism was.

Anti-Slavery Friends rhetoric provides an important clue. Antebellum Indiana Quakers lived in a world circumscribed by the elaborate body of custom and tradition embodied in the Discipline. Aside from their insistence on joining antislavery societies, no one

<sup>30</sup> Heiss and Hinshaw abstracts were used to determine these relationships. For Miriam Baldwin, see Miriam Baldwin to Jesse Baldwin, 9th Mo. 29, 1844, Baldwin family file. For the marriage of James L. Presnall, see Westfield Monthly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends Women's Minutes, 11th Mo. 1, 1843, photocopy, Friends Collection (Earlham College).

<sup>31</sup> These relationships were determined through the use of the Heiss and Hinshaw abstracts. For Joseph Edgerton, see Eunice Thomasson, comp., *Some Account of the Life and Religious Services of Joseph Edgerton, a Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends, with Extracts from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia, 1885), 133; and Joseph Edgerton, *Address to the Members of the Society of Friends* (Richmond, Ind., 1841). For Joseph Cox, see *Indiana Yearly Meeting Minutes, 1874*, pp. 77-81.

ever accused Anti-Slavery Friends of seeking to weaken that Discipline. Indeed, few defenders were more rigorous in its application or in devotion to it. After the separation, Anti-Slavery Friends continued to use the old Indiana Yearly Meeting Discipline with but two changes—no one under complaint was to take part in business meetings, and no Friend was to vote for a slaveholder. Anti-Slavery Friends had no desire to live outside its guidance. As Huldah Wickersham, a young Friend in another Henry County meeting wrote, “Our anti-slavery principles had not destroyed our love for religious society, nor our desire to watch over one another for good; but seeing we were altogether denied religious privileges, there was no other alternative left us.” In other words, one could not be a true Friend without participating in the affairs of the society, and the actions of the yearly meeting made that impossible. Charles Osborn exhorted the separatists in 1842: “Let all our Friends who are virtually cut off from the communion and fellowship of Society . . . still bear in mind that they are acting in strict accordance with the spirit of the Discipline and with the Gospel of Christ, and that they ought not to be terrified and driven back because of church censure.”<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Anti-Slavery Friends saw the very purity of the Society of Friends threatened. As the conference that founded the new society proclaimed, there was “a universal liability in all associations, both civil and religious, to deterioration and corruption.” Declension was the only possible explanation for the actions of Indiana Yearly Meeting against the abolitionists. Now a “reformation” was necessary, but, with the loss of their positions and right to participate effectively in business meetings, there was no hope for success. So their sole choice was to separate and to hope that as a separate body they could lead Friends back to the Light. Paradoxically, in order to uphold the whole of the Discipline, these Quakers violated part of its letter.<sup>33</sup>

In this urge toward reformation, these Friends had precedents from the Quaker past. In the 1750s and 1760s the favorite prophet of Anti-Slavery Friends, John Woolman, had helped to lead a reformation movement that had tightened the Discipline and given it the form that molded the lives of Indiana Quakers. Again, in the 1820s, other Friends, this time led by Elias Hicks, had seen corruption and outside influences creeping anew into the society and so had sought to purge the society of them. In the first case, the reformers were successful and permanently changed the course of Quaker history. The second had led its proponents, the Hicksites,

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<sup>32</sup> Discipline of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, 1843, box 1, Beeson Papers; Huldah Wickersham to Elizabeth Pease, 10th Mo. 18, 1843, Ms. A. 1.2, v. 13, p. 65, Anti-Slavery Collection; Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 65-66, 75.

toward separation. Although Anti-Slavery separatists in Indiana would have spurned any comparison or affiliation with the Hicksites, their courses were similar.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, one would expect to find that Anti-Slavery Friends at Duck Creek and Spiceland were Friends concerned about upholding the rigor of the Discipline, active in the affairs of the society, and skeptical about the encroachment of outside forces, all of which were confirmed. An examination of the minutes of the two monthly meetings showed that the backdrop to the separation at Duck Creek was a bitter controversy from 1834 to 1837 over the proper understanding of Quaker doctrine. It also demonstrated that Anti-Slavery Friends were not powerless and disfranchised before the separation—they held offices and were active in the society out of proportion to their numbers. Indeed, close study of the records suggested that Anti-Slavery Friends were, as a group, more devoted to strict observance of the Discipline than were members of the “Body.”

The separation at Duck Creek took place in a monthly meeting with an almost uniquely troubled history. It had been badly split by the Hicksite separation in 1828; one member left declaring that “Elias Hicks [the leader of the Hicksites] is as good a man as Jesus Christ and that a certain approved minister ought to be killed off.” In the mid-1830s, new difficulties festered. Their source is obscure, but hints suggest that the controversy pitted primitivists opposed to innovation against Friends in sympathy with the yearly meeting’s leadership, which was moving in an increasingly evangelical direction that emphasized points of agreement with other denominations and deemphasized Quaker peculiarities. In the fall of 1835, a proposal to set up a Sunday School, or “First Day School for Scriptural Instruction,” as Friends referred to it, died because of lack of unity in the monthly meeting. A year later, the monthly meeting’s committee on education reported that it was so badly divided that it was impossible to keep up the monthly meeting’s school in Greensboro. At the same time, the routine matter of appointing a new overseer dragged on for four months, stalled by disagreement over the right person. Doctrine was also an issue. A quarterly meeting committee of weighty Friends reported late in the summer of 1837 that the ministers and elders of the monthly meeting were “in unity” with the yearly meeting, but that “a number of the members . . . stood opposed to the order of our society.” At issue was a controversy over the nature of the resurrection (traditionalist Friends said that it was purely spiritual, while evangelical Quakers were coming to argue that physical bodies would be

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<sup>34</sup> Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*, 113-66; H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1986).

raised up at the Last Day) that a visit by Joseph John Gurney, a prominent English Quaker minister, aggravated. In August, 1837, Whitewater Quarterly Meeting ordered that Duck Creek Monthly Meeting be "laid down" or dissolved and that its members be joined to Spiceland Monthly Meeting.<sup>35</sup>

The significance of this struggle is that the losers appear to have been those who five years later became Anti-Slavery Friends. The most notable was Seth Hinshaw, the monthly meeting treasurer. He had not only been vocal in the doctrinal controversy, but when the monthly meeting was laid down, he responded by circulating a manuscript that Spiceland Monthly Meeting considered "defamatory . . . and instrumental in exciting disunity and discord among Friends." Hinshaw backed down, but another Duck Creek Friend of similar views, Mathew Symons, was disowned. Cast out at the same time was Henry Lamb, who, over the "repeated objections" of the elders and overseers, had been preaching in Clear Spring Meeting. Lamb had close ties with Seth Hinshaw—they came from the same Quaker community in North Carolina, Lamb's daughter Mary had married Hinshaw's only son Jabez, and the two had had business dealings both in North Carolina and Indiana.<sup>36</sup> When Duck Creek Monthly Meeting was reestablished in 1840, its members quickly went back to their old ways. Attempts to establish First Day and monthly meeting schools failed. Then in the fall of 1842 the monthly meeting found itself split again over a complaint that Eli Stafford, an overseer and active Friend, was guilty of "defamation and detraction." Once more, the quarterly meeting intervened. The case was still under deliberation when the separation began.<sup>37</sup>

Closer examination of the lives of Duck Creek Friends reveals, however, that this sort of disciplinary disorder was more characteristic of "Body" Friends than of separatists. One striking difference between the two groups was their experience of the Discipline. Over a third of "Body" families (thirty-nine of ninety-one) at Duck

<sup>35</sup> Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 4th Mo. 28, 9th Mo. 24, 1835, 3rd Mo. 24, 4th Mo. 21, 8th Mo. 25, 10th Mo. 20, 11th Mo. 24, 12th Mo. 22, 1836, 1st Mo. 26, 2nd Mo. 23, 1837; Whitewater Quarterly Meeting Men's Minutes, 9th Mo. 2, 1837 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives); Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, ed., *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney: With Selections from His Journal and Correspondence* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1854), II, 104-105.

<sup>36</sup> Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 3rd Mo. 24, 9th Mo. 22, 1836; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 12th Mo. 20, 1837, 1st Mo. 24, 2nd Mo. 21, 4th Mo. 25, 1838; Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*, I, 679, 683; "Seth Hinshaw Claims for Collections, 8th Mo. 15, 1833," *Genealogical Journal by the Randolph County Genealogical Society*, II (Winter, 1977), 13; Deed Book M, p. 279, Henry County Recorder's Office, Henry County Courthouse, New Castle, Indiana.

<sup>37</sup> Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 11th Mo. 26, 1840, 8th Mo. 26, 1841, 5th Mo. 26, 9th Mo. 22, 12th Mo. 22, 1842; Spiceland Quarterly Meeting Men's Minutes, 9th Mo. 14, 1840, 12th Mo. 12, 1842, 3rd Mo. 11, 1843 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives).



Creek contained a husband or wife who was not a member. Of these thirty-nine, thirteen had a husband or wife who had never been a Friend, while sixteen contained ex-Quakers who had been disowned after the marriage, suggesting that these were families in which abiding by the judgment of the meeting was not a special concern. Typical was Thomas Newby, whose wife Sarah was active in the monthly meeting's affairs. He had been read out of Back Creek Monthly Meeting in Randolph County, North Carolina, in 1825 for shooting a neighbor's cow and stubbornly refusing to pay any compensation. When, after coming to Indiana, he had requested that his membership be restored, Back Creek had refused its permission after finding that he had left behind not only bad debts but a generally un-Friendly reputation. The rest of the thirty-nine consisted of families in which a husband or wife had "married contrary to discipline," meaning that they were Friends married in a non-Quaker ceremony and, unlike their spouses, had been unwilling to "condemn their misconduct" or make an apology to the monthly meeting.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, about 30 percent (72 of 231) of the adults in Duck Creek's "Body" had faced disciplinary action at some point in their lives. In most cases (60 of 72) it was for common marriage offenses. But others who were still members in 1842 had records that might be described as "colorful." Richard Ratliff, Jr., formerly an elder and one of the meeting's most active members, had actually been disowned in 1837 for fathering an illegitimate child, although he had regained his membership three years later. Daniel Presnall had feuded with the monthly meeting for two years over the poor committee's treatment of his stepmother. Charges of slander, profanity, and drunkenness were proffered against him in response. His brother John was pulled in as well, accused of "vague testimony," "slandorous accusation," contradictory statements, and making threats. John Presnall's son-in-law Henry Lewelling (a nephew of Thomas Newby the cowkiller) was at the same time forced to acknowledge his "malicious and unchristian disposition toward one of his neighbors" and "use of an expression shocking to Christian feelings." And, of course, when the separation took place still another influential "Body" Friend, Eli Stafford, was "under dealing."<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, the record of Anti-Slavery Friends suggests significantly less in the way of such confrontation. Of the twenty-two

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<sup>38</sup> To determine experience of the Discipline, Heiss and Hinshaw abstracts as well as the Duck Creek and Spiceland minutes were used. For Newby, see Back Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 3rd Mo. 30, 7th Mo. 27, 1825, 3rd Mo. 25, 1829, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Archives, Friends Historical Collection (Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina).

<sup>39</sup> Heiss, *Abstracts*, IV, 191, 201, 203.

married couples, only five had not been married in meeting, and there were only three adults among them whose spouse was not a member. Only two Anti-Slavery Friends, Seth Hinshaw and Matthew Symons, had ever been in any other kind of disciplinary difficulty while at Duck Creek, and they, of course, were on the losing end of a tangled theological dispute. The only other Friend who had faced disciplinary proceedings was old Jesse Wright, Sr., who had been disowned in Tennessee in 1820 on the rather vague charge of "denying his own assertion." He regained his membership in 1835. In short, Duck Creek Anti-Slavery Friends appear to have been more consistent in adherence to traditional principles and practices of Friends than those who remained with the "Body."<sup>40</sup>

Spiceland, in contrast, had not known the conflict and division Duck Creek had faced. Its minutes and the accounts of various visiting Friends suggest a world of relative harmony and scrupulous adherence to the Discipline. A much lower percentage of its members, about 20 percent, had married out of meeting, and, in contrast to Duck Creek, only a seventh of the "Body" families included a husband or wife who had been disowned or were never members. Of the fifty-two adults in the Spiceland "Body" who had been disciplined, only four were involved in any sort of moral transgression— theft, premarital sex, making a "lewd proposition," fathering an illegitimate child. Spiceland, in short, offered few attractions for the unruly sorts of Friends who found a more congenial home a few miles north along the banks of Duck Creek.<sup>41</sup> If the Spiceland "Body" was a straitlaced group, however, Anti-Slavery Friends were even more so. Every married couple among them had been married in meeting, and, so far as can be determined from existing records, not one had been the subject of any disciplinary action before the separation.<sup>42</sup>

As for influence and power, or "weight," in the two monthly meetings before the separation Anti-Slavery Friends were hardly

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<sup>40</sup> New Hope Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 12th Mo. 23, 1820, 6th Mo. 23, 1821 (North Carolina Yearly Meeting Archives).

<sup>41</sup> Heiss, *Abstracts*, I, 97, IV, 291; Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*, I, 872; *Life and Travels of Addison Coffin*, 59-63; *Journal of the Life and Labors of William Evans, a Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends* (Philadelphia, 1870), 539-42. One might wonder if instead of being better behaved, Spiceland Friends were more lax in the administration of the Discipline. It seems unlikely that so many Spiceland Friends would have filled important positions in the yearly meeting if their monthly meeting had a reputation for laxity. And tracing the disciplinary histories of Spiceland Friends back through the records of monthly meetings of which they had previously been members shows that they avoided trouble no matter where they lived.

<sup>42</sup> This conclusion is based on examination of the Heiss and Hinshaw abstracts as well as the minutes of New Garden, Deep River, and Hopewell monthly meetings in the North Carolina Yearly Meeting Archives.

**Table 9**  
**"Weight" of Members of Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, 1826-1842**

<i>Average Number of Appointments Annually</i>	<i>Male "Body"</i>		<i>Male Anti-Slavery</i>		<i>Female "Body"</i>		<i>Female Anti-Slavery</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0	63	57.8	9	47.4	81	66.4	7	41.2
under 1	10	9.2	3	15.8	10	8.2	7	41.2
1-1.99	11	10.1	3	15.8	11	9.0	0	0.0
2-2.99	8	7.3	2	10.5	7	5.7	2	11.8
3-3.99	6	5.5	1	5.3	4	3.3	1	5.9
4-4.99	3	2.8	0	0.0	5	4.1	0	0.0
5-5.99	1	0.9	0	0.0	2	1.6	0	0.0
Over 6	7	6.4	1	5.3	2	1.6	0	0.0
	109	100.0	19	100.1	122	99.9	17	99.9

SOURCE: Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's and Women's Minutes, 1826-1842, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives (Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana). Five Anti-Slavery Friends who arrived in the monthly meeting in the fall of 1842 are not included in the count, since they transferred their membership after the yearly meeting had warned against appointing abolitionists to committees.

**Table 10**  
 "Weight" of Members of Spiceland Monthly Meeting, 1833-1842

Average Number of Appointments Annually	Male "Body"		Male Anti-Slavery		Female "Body"		Female Anti-Slavery	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0	57	46.3	4	30.8	93	61.2	2	22.2
under 1	21	17.1	3	23.1	15	9.9	1	11.1
1-1.99	15	12.2	0	0.0	17	11.1	2	22.2
2-2.99	9	7.3	1	7.7	11	7.2	0	0.0
3-3.99	4	3.3	1	7.7	8	5.3	0	0.0
4-4.99	4	3.3	2	15.4	5	3.3	3	33.3
5-5.99	4	3.3	0	0.0	2	1.3	0	0.0
Over 6	9	7.3	2	15.4	1	0.7	1	11.1
	123	100.1	13	100.1	152	100.0	9	99.9

SOURCE: Spiceland Monthly Meeting Men's and Women's Minutes, 1833-1842, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives. John M. Macy, who arrived in Spiceland just as the separation was beginning, is not included in this count. Although he received no appointments before 1843, he received so many afterwards from the "Body" that it would be misleading to label him as lacking weight.

shut out. In the case of Duck Creek, John and Ann (Lewis) Swain had been elders in Tennessee, and at Duck Creek they were overseers, as were Obediah and Armelia (Hinshaw) Elliott and Abigail (Rees) Wright. Seth and Benjamin Hinshaw had been overseers in North Carolina, and at Duck Creek Seth Hinshaw served as the monthly meeting treasurer. His son Jabez was the monthly meeting librarian. And if one measures weight by frequency of committee appointments, reference to statistics in tables 9 and 10 shows that the number received by Anti-Slavery Friends was comparable to those received by "Body" members. Only four men and three women in the monthly meeting, for example, received more than Seth Hinshaw, the leader of the radical abolitionists.<sup>43</sup>

The situation was even more striking at Spiceland. Anti-Slavery Friends there had filled offices out of all proportion to their numbers. Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton had been clerk not only of the women's monthly meeting but of the quarterly and yearly meetings as well before she was thirty-five. Both Phebe (Hiatt) Macy and her brother-in-law Enoch Macy had been elders in the monthly meeting, and both Louisa (Bundren) White, the widow of Isaac, and Nancy (Rayl) Macy, the wife of Enoch, had been overseers. Isaac White, who died in 1840, had been an elder, clerk of the quarterly meeting, and a member of the Meeting for Sufferings. His younger brother Jesse White had been Spiceland Monthly Meeting's first assistant clerk. In terms of committee appointments, Anti-Slavery Friends at Spiceland were more active than the average for the monthly meeting. While about 55 percent of "Body" adults had never received any kind of appointment, only 28 percent of Anti-Slavery Friends could so claim. Walter Edgerton was one of the three most active members of the monthly meeting, while no one received more appointments than Louisa (Bundren) White. Of the twelve Spiceland women who had an average of four or more appointments a year, four—Louisa (Bundren) White, Phebe (Hiatt) Macy, Diana (Hinshaw) Macy, and Rebecca (Cox) Edgerton—became Anti-Slavery Friends.<sup>44</sup>

At its most basic level, of course, discord was a contest over power. Anti-Slavery Friends justified separation because they had lost their positions of influence, which, they said, would hinder their effectiveness in fighting slavery. But they did not become abolitionists because they were excluded and isolated; they became

<sup>43</sup> Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia*, I, 1132; Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 11th Mo. 26, 1840; Duck Creek Monthly Meeting Women's Minutes, 3rd Mo. 23, 1843, 11th Mo. 26, 1840; Marlborough Monthly Meeting Men's Minutes, 10th Mo. 14, 1817, 4th Mo. 1, 1820 (North Carolina Yearly Meeting Archives).

<sup>44</sup> Heiss, *Abstracts*, IV, 305, 323; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Women's Minutes, 7th Mo. 24, 1839; Whitewater Quarterly Meeting Women's Minutes, 1839 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives); Indiana Yearly Meeting Women's Minutes, 1839, *ibid.*; Spiceland Quarterly Meeting Men's Minutes, 3rd Mo. 16, 1840.

excluded and isolated because they had made the decision to become abolitionists, and most of the yearly meeting found that threatening.

What, then, do the experiences of these communities reveal about the abolitionist movement, especially in Indiana, and about Quakerism? The experiences show us that among these Friends, at least, the decision to become an abolitionist was not a function of wealth or property—economically, Anti-Slavery Friends were a cross section of their communities. Nor was abolition a function of previous residence or length of time in Spiceland or Duck Creek. Age does seem to have been a factor; abolition apparently held little appeal for Friends born before 1795. Complex kinship ties connected abolitionist families, but there were numerous exceptions to this rule. What quantitative work does show is that, by and large, Anti-Slavery Friends were those who were committed to strict observance of the Discipline, regulating their lives by the peculiarities of Quakerism, defending the traditional doctrines of Friends against change.

Such observance was a matter of individual conscience, and thus one is drawn to something that historians can never hope to recapture completely—moral choice. Scholars can reconstruct many of the elements of the environment in which these Quakers lived and can look at the declarations in which they corporately explained their behavior; in a few cases, they can even examine personal statements. But chroniclers of the past cannot recapture the individual conscience of each Friend, and even if they could somehow question each individually, it is difficult to see whether the feat would reveal much more. True, the upbringing of all as Quakers no doubt predisposed them to antislavery, and moral values are undoubtedly shaped in large part by family; but environment cannot be seen as a major causative factor. Decisions about separation are explicable ultimately only by individual conscience.

Duck Creek and Spiceland were, of course, but two Quaker communities in Indiana that the separation affected. Therefore, any conclusions based on these areas need comparison with the results of studies of other Quakers that the separation also touched. But unless the experience of these Henry County Friends was completely atypical, it constitutes a warning against attempting to explain all religious behavior through quantifiable characteristics and forgetting the element of moral choice in human response to all moral issues.