



WILLARD HEISS, RANDOLPH COUNTY FRIEND,  
DURING WORLD WAR II

Courtesy of Virginia Heiss

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# The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a Case Study

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Richard M. Nixon was, even in the estimation of admirers, a complex and often contradictory man. One of the contradictions that critics have for half a century found hard to comprehend was that this Cold Warrior came from a Quaker background. In their minds, the Nixon who prolonged the Vietnam War with carpet bombing and the Cambodian "incursion" simply could not be reconciled with the well-known commitment of the Quakers to nonviolence.<sup>1</sup>

The critics have long-standing popular perceptions on their side. If any single characteristic dominates the public image of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, it is the group's historic commitment to pacifism, what Friends call the Peace Testimony. "We certainly do know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdoms of this world," English Friends proclaimed in 1661. For two centuries official Quaker statements in Europe and in North America adhered to this precedent. In the twentieth century, Quakers have been in the forefront of American peace movements.<sup>2</sup>

The popular image and the official statements do not reflect Quaker reality. In the twentieth century, there is reason to believe that pacifism has become a minority position among American Friends. In contrast to other historic peace churches, like the Amish and Mennonites, among whom rates of conscientious objection have been high, the available statistics suggest that in conflicts from World War I to Vietnam a majority of male American Friends of service age made the

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<sup>1</sup>For biographers' treatment of Richard M. Nixon's Quaker background see Charles E. Fager, "Review Essay of *Nixon: A Life*," *Quaker History*, LXXXIV (Spring 1995), 65-76.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660-1914* (York, U.K., 1990), 25.

decision to serve in the armed forces. Indeed, there is evidence that many American Quakers have become suspicious of peace activism and regard the Peace Testimony as an unrealistic relic of a bygone era.<sup>3</sup>

This article is an attempt to explain how the Peace Testimony lost its force for many American Quakers over the course of the twentieth century. It uses Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends (Orthodox or Five Years Meeting) as a case study. Indiana Yearly Meeting is appropriate for several reasons. Originally embracing all Friends west of the Scioto River in central Ohio and stretching beyond the Mississippi into Iowa and Kansas, since 1892 it has included Quakers in western Ohio, east-central Indiana, and parts of Michigan and Canada. From the 1840s until the 1960s, it was the largest yearly meeting of Friends in North America. Earlham College, which since its founding in 1847 has educated numerous Quaker leaders, is located within the yearly meeting's boundaries. Indiana Yearly Meeting has been in the forefront of dramatic changes among American Friends, especially the revival movement among Gurneyite Quakers in the late nineteenth century. Since 1902 it has also been home to the headquarters in Richmond, Indiana, of the Five Years Meeting (since 1965 Friends United Meeting), the largest international Quaker organization in the world. And Indiana was Nixon's ancestral home. Although he was a product of the Quaker community of Whittier, California, his Quaker roots lay in southern Indiana. As this article will show, the attitude of most Indiana Friends toward war in the twentieth century has been very much like that of the last Quaker president.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The standard work on Quaker pacifism is *ibid.* For later periods see E. W. Orr, *The Quakers in Peace and War, 1920 to 1967* (Eastbourne, U.K. 1974), and Peter Brock and Nigel Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1999), 334-45. For a study of another yearly meeting that reaches conclusions similar to our own see Cecil B. Currey, "The Devolution of Quaker Pacifism: A Kansas Case Study, 1860-1955," *Kansas History*, VI (Summer 1983), 120-33.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert Hoover is the other Quaker president. In the 1820s American Friends divided into two groups, Orthodox and Hicksite. Orthodox Friends emphasized views of the authority of the Bible and the divinity of Jesus that were similar to those of evangelical Protestants. Hicksite Friends emphasized the primacy of the traditional Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light. In the 1840s and 1850s Orthodox Friends divided into Gurneyite and Wilburite factions. Gurneyites, the larger group, were open to ties with other evangelical Protestants in reform and humanitarian efforts; the more conservative Wilburites shunned such ties as threatening Quaker distinctiveness. Organized in 1821, Indiana Yearly Meeting was solidly Orthodox during the Hicksite Separation; only about 3,000 of its 18,000 members were Hicksites. In the 1840s and 1850s, almost all of its members sided with the Gurneyite group. See Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Westport, Conn., 1988), 169-203.

The basic organizational unit for Friends since the seventeenth century has been the monthly meeting. It has the power to receive and expel members, hold property, and solemnize marriages. Two or more monthly meetings make up a quarterly meeting, which traditionally held its sessions four times a year. It handled business considered beyond the competence of the monthly meetings. Several quarterly meetings make up a yearly meeting. The yearly meeting has traditionally been the highest level of authority for Friends, with the power to set doctrinal standards and policy

Quakers have always been good record keepers, so this study has been able to draw on a rich variety of sources. Every year since 1821, Indiana Yearly Meeting has published a volume of minutes, which in the twentieth century has always included reports from the yearly meeting Peace Committee. We also made extensive use of the records of thirteen local congregations or monthly meetings. Seven of these were urban meetings with relatively large memberships: Greenfield, Marion, Muncie, New Castle, Portland, Wabash, and West Richmond. Six were from rural meetings varying in size: Dublin, Hopewell, New Garden, Oak Ridge, Spiceland, and Walnut Ridge. These meetings represent a cross section of the yearly meeting in every respect: a mix of rural and urban, large and small, liberal and evangelical. We also conducted oral history interviews with Indiana Yearly Meeting Friends who have been active in supporting peace policies.

Our conclusion is that in the twentieth century pacifism has lost much of its force in the lives of the members of Indiana Yearly Meeting, and it has lost that force because Indiana Quakers have been almost totally absorbed into the larger culture of the United States. The Peace Testimony has not totally disappeared from Indiana Quakerism. The yearly meeting in its official statements has adhered to pacifism. And an active and articulate minority of Indiana Friends has been committed to pacifism, not merely refusing to participate in war, but working to remove the causes of war and criticizing United States policies that rely on military force. Paradoxically, such activities, at least since World War II, have probably weakened the appeal of the Peace Testimony for many other Indiana Friends, since it has often been tied to a political and religious liberalism that they rejected.

To test this argument, we have focused on four periods when Indiana Friends faced the implications of the Peace Testimony: World War I, World War II, the Korean "Police Action," and the Vietnam War. We have defined the period of each war expansively in order to gauge the reactions of Hoosier Quakers at the onset of conflict: for example, our consideration of World War II begins in 1936. In each period, we found a combination of official statements upholding the Peace Testimony, some pacifist Friends working for it and in other types of peace activities, some Quakers who actively supported involvement in each war, and considerable indifference to the Peace Testimony by most members.

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for members. Since 1900, the yearly meetings with Hicksite origins have been joined together in Friends General Conference. In 1902, most of the Gurneyite yearly meetings in North America joined together to form the Five Years Meeting. In 1965 the latter changed its name to Friends United Meeting. See Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 220, 239, 241; and Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988), xvi-xvii.

In fact, support for the Peace Testimony has never been unanimous among Quakers, nor, even among those who accepted it, has there been complete agreement about all of its implications. Before 1860 Friends disagreed over the acceptability of traveling in armed ships, paying war taxes, or even holding offices in governments that used military force. In the various colonial conflicts, the Revolution, and the War of 1812 some Friends took up arms. In these cases the response of the body of the society was uniform. Friends who fought were offenders against the Discipline who, if they would not repent and condemn their misconduct to the satisfaction of Friends, would be "disowned," the Quaker term for excommunicated.<sup>5</sup>

This stance broke down during the Civil War. Virtually all southern Quakers were staunch unionists, and those who were mustered into the Confederate army were nearly all unwilling conscripts, many of whom passively resisted efforts to arm and train them. In the North, young Quaker men faced an agonizing choice. Virtually unanimous in their support for the Union and for generations opposed to slavery, Friends confronted what by 1863 had become an antislavery war. This was reason for many to break with the Peace Testimony. For the first time, some monthly meetings looked the other way and did not deal with such men as offenders against the Discipline. This was especially true in Indiana Yearly Meeting. One analysis has concluded that about a quarter of all Quaker men of military age in the state, about twelve hundred in all, enlisted in the Union army. While some monthly meetings did proceed against enlistees, many others ignored them entirely.<sup>6</sup>

After the Civil War, Indiana Yearly Meeting experienced dramatic and lasting change. A wave of revivalism that transformed their lives and modes of worship swept up most Orthodox Friends in Indiana. At the heart of this "Great Revival" was a group of young Quaker ministers who had been caught up in the interdenominational second-experience holiness movement. Such holiness advocates argued that all Christians should have two distinct, instantaneous experiences: first conversion, or being "born again," and secondly sanctification, which purged believers of the desire or propensity to sin. Such ministers used these teachings as tools for a radical transformation of Gurneyite Quakerism, especially in the Midwest. Most of the traditional Quaker peculiarities, such as the "plain dress" and "plain language" of "thee" and "thy," disappeared. Unprogrammed worship, based on silent waiting, gave way to music and regular preaching by ministers whom by the 1890s Quaker congregations called pastors. By 1900, even the venerable labels of "Society of Friends" and "Friends Meeting" were giving way to "the Friends

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<sup>5</sup>Brock, *Quaker Peace Testimony*, 47-184.

<sup>6</sup>Jacquelyn S. Nelson, *Indiana Quakers Confront the Civil War* (Indianapolis, 1991); Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 66-69.

Church." One of the casualties of this transformation was the Peace Testimony. Now largely acculturated, most Indiana Friends embraced views on war, pacifism, and conscientious objection that were not that much different from their neighbors in the small towns, cities, and rural districts of the Middle West.<sup>7</sup>

Part of this transformation was theological, as demonstrated by a debate that took place in 1878 and 1879 in the *Christian Worker*, a Quaker periodical published in New Vienna, Ohio. On one side was David B. Updegraff, an Ohio Quaker minister who was probably the most prominent proponent of holiness revivalism among Friends. Updegraff was a biblical literalist who had strong ties with non-Quaker holiness advocates. These influences led Updegraff to argue that Quaker pacifism was based on misinterpretation of scripture; the Old Testament wars proved that sometimes God might command believers to fight. Moreover, many non-Quaker holiness believers, whose experience of sanctification was beyond question, had been soldiers in the Civil War and still embraced defensive war. Faced with a choice between Quaker tradition and holiness consistency, Updegraff chose the latter. His arguments drew a storm of criticism, much of it from Indiana Friends. But Updegraff's holiness cohorts' relative lack of interest in the Quaker Peace Testimony is striking.<sup>8</sup>

Changes in Quaker demographics in Indiana in this period also played a role. Between 1870 and 1900 the yearly meeting's membership grew steadily. Meetings were founded in areas of northern Indiana and western Ohio in which Quakers had previously been unknown. Thousands of new members were received whose only knowledge of Quakerism came from holiness revivals. Many were former Union soldiers and their families. Such new members had no predilection to pacifism, and many revivalists in their eagerness to win converts did not emphasize it.<sup>9</sup>

Still, while powerful forces operated to undermine the Peace Testimony, other forces struggled to uphold it. The holiness emphasis on biblical literalism and revivalism eventually bred a reaction. After 1895 a group of young modernists emerged among Gurneyites, mostly affiliated with Quaker colleges, with leaders such as Rufus M. Jones, the Haverford College professor who would prove to be the most influential American Friend of the twentieth century. Melding commitments to modernist biblical study with an interest in the Social Gospel, these Friends also turned to the Quaker past to support their interpretations. Almost uniformly, they were committed not just to pacifism, but to peace activities, joining non-Quakers in groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation or the Women's International League

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<sup>7</sup>See Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 74-143.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 107-109.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 108-109.

for Peace and Freedom to influence public opinion and government policies and founding new Quaker groups like the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).<sup>10</sup>

Quaker "process" was also vital. Friends make decisions not by majority vote, but by seeking spiritual consensus, confident that if Friends are faithful, the Holy Spirit will come among them and lead them to agreement. Thus when Indiana Yearly Meeting considered revisions of its doctrinal statements, it took only a determined and articulate minority to force retention of traditional statements on peace, even if a majority was uninterested or hostile.<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, anyone surveying official statements from the yearly meeting would find that it had not abandoned the traditional opposition to war. For the past century, the yearly meeting has always included in its *Faith and Practice* (formerly called the *Discipline*) the Richmond Declaration of Faith, a statement adopted by a conference of Gurneyites in Richmond, Indiana, in 1887. Its section on "Peace" is unequivocal:

We feel bound explicitly to avow our unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our divine Lord and Law-giver, and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe to Him who hath said, "Love your enemies." In enjoining this love, and the forgiveness of injuries, He who has bought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them. . . .

We would, in humility, but in faithfulness to our Lord, express our firm persuasion that all the exigencies of civil government and social order may be met under the banner of the Prince of Peace, in strict conformity with His commands.

Equally unequivocal was the "query," a question by which monthly meetings were to gauge their spiritual states and those of their members: "Do you maintain the Christian principle of peace and consistently refrain from bearing arms and from performing military service as incompatible with the precepts and spirit of the Gospel?" By 1950, this query had been somewhat enlarged: "Do you consistently practice the Christian principles of love and good will toward all men? Do you work actively for peace and for the removal of the causes of war? Do you observe the testimony of Friends against military training and service? Do you endeavor to make clear to all whom you can influence, that war is inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Jesus?" A similar query remains in the *Faith and Practice*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 144-72; William Darwin Swanson Witte, "Quaker Pacifism in the United States, 1919-1942, with Special Reference to Its Relation to Isolationism and Internationalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954).

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends* (Philadelphia, 1983).

<sup>12</sup>Society of Friends, Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Discipline of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Richmond, Ind., 1905), 66-67, 115; Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends,

Historians of religion are familiar with official statements of faith that have ceased to be normative for most members. Considerable evidence shows that these doctrinal arguments did not persuade most Indiana Friends.

Before 1917 the military held little appeal for Indiana Quakers. A survey by the yearly meeting's Peace Committee in 1915 showed that only eight members out of nearly twenty thousand were in the armed forces. A Friend from Carthage, Indiana, who enlisted in the army in 1904 remembered that his parents objected not so much out of Quaker conviction as a feeling that soldiers were "thugs and ruffians."<sup>13</sup>

As the United States moved toward war with Germany in 1916 and 1917, pacifist Friends in the yearly meeting were outspoken in opposition. Among the leaders were Walter C. Woodward, the long time executive secretary of the Five Years Meeting and editor of *American Friend*, and Allen D. Hole, a professor at Earlham College who was the head of the Peace Association of Friends in America and the editor of its organ, *Messenger of Peace*. Before the United States entered the war, Woodward filled the pages of *American Friend* with editorials criticizing proposals for universal military training. After the American declaration of war in April 1917, Hole continued to advocate the traditional Quaker position. While many upheld this war as righteous, he argued that "the means involve exactly the same sacrifice of the principles of the Christian religion which has characterized other wars." When it convened in the fall of 1917, the yearly meeting reminded its members of traditional views.<sup>14</sup>

Before the war, evidence of antiwar activity is mixed. At First Friends Church in Marion, for example, in June 1916 the "Faithful Boys Sunday School Class" conducted a debate on "Peace vs. Preparedness." The "appreciative audience" voted the peace advocates the winners. In 1915 and 1916 several of the monthly meetings surveyed received requests from the Peace Association of Friends to petition Congress to oppose increases in military spending and other such "preparedness" activities. New Garden and Oak Ridge Friends reported that they had sent the petitions. At Spiceland, although the monthly meeting endorsed sending a letter indicating opposition to "greater military preparation," the committee appointed to seek sign-

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*Faith and Practice of Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Book of Discipline)* (Richmond, Ind., 1950), 40; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice of Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (Muncie, Ind., 1994), 36.

<sup>13</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends [henceforth cited as Indiana Yearly Meeting], *Minutes* (1916), 89; Thomas D. Hamm and Wilma L. Kern, *A Centennial Landmark: The History of the New Castle Friends Meeting, 1881-1981* (Hagerstown, Ind., 1981), 75-76.

<sup>14</sup>"Editorial," *American Friend* (Second Month 1, 1917), 83; Allen D. Hole, *The Great War and the Years to Follow* (Richmond, Ind., 1917), 5-6; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1917), 55-60.



ers reported in May 1916 that "for various reasons they were unable to get sufficient names to make it worthwhile." Spiceland's experience may have been typical; in 1916 the yearly meeting peace committee found that in many meetings "the interest in work for peace is at a very low ebb," with one quarterly meeting "not able to report any work for peace done within the past year."<sup>15</sup>

With U.S. entry into the war, such activities apparently ceased. By the fall of 1917 federal and state officials and many local groups had become almost paranoid about opposition to the war, as demonstrated by the passage of federal sedition and espionage acts and the activities of groups like the American Defense Society and the American Protective League. Outspoken pacifists often found themselves the targets of vigilante violence.irate neighbors threw eggs at Charles D. Hiatt, the pastor of a break-away Quaker group near Jonesboro, Indiana, for openly denouncing the war. Some other forms of harassment were legal. In Jay County, Indiana, the local draft board sent a thirty-year-old farmer Friend with a wife and three children to an army camp after he registered as a conscientious objector, although non-Quaker neighbors in similar circumstances were permitted to remain at home with agricultural exemptions. The sessions of the Five Years Meeting in Richmond, Indiana, in October 1917 were tense. One local Friend reported that two Bureau of Investigation agents were present, trying to "get something on the Quakers," and an English Friend provoked an uproar when he argued that the British people were weary of the war. A sensation-seeking Richmond newspaper embroidered the speech into a "treasonable" statement that 90 percent of the British people "wanted peace at any price." Soon the police were making inquiries, and a Richmond resident opined that the incident had "turned our local people here strongly against Friends." In the spring of 1918 the chairman of Walnut Ridge Monthly Meeting's Peace Committee reported that "there is little the peace com. can do under present circumstances except pray."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Marion Monthly Meeting Minutes, Eighth Month 10, 1916 Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives (Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind.); Oak Ridge Monthly Meeting Minutes, First Month 11, 1916, *ibid.*; New Garden Monthly Meeting Minutes, Tenth Month 16, 1915, *ibid.*; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Minutes, Second Month 5, Fifth Month 6, 1916, *ibid.*; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1916), 89-90. Well into the twentieth century, many monthly meetings continued to use the traditional Quaker calendar, which substituted numbers for the "pagan" names of the months.

<sup>16</sup>Ralph D. Kirkpatrick, *Local Historical and Genealogical Abstracts from Jonesboro and Gas City, Indiana Newspapers, 1889-1920* (Bowie, Md., 1996), 95; Althea Brown, "The Quakers of Indiana in the War," May 31, 1919, Friends Collection, Earlham and World War I series (Earlham College archives); Esther Griffin White to Timothy Nicholson, n.d., box 1, Esther Griffin White Papers (Lilly Library, Earlham College); William Dudley Foulke to William P. Bancroft, October 26, 1917, Miscellaneous Letters Collection, *ibid.*; H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Seattle, Wash., 1968), 13-29; Walnut Ridge Monthly Meeting Minutes, Fifth Month 18, 1918, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives.

Indiana Friends may have escaped further harassment because so many publicly supported the war. Some simply repudiated pacifism. Alpheus L. Baldwin, a Quaker from Webster, Indiana, wrote in the spring of 1917 that 90 percent of the Friends he knew “hold a view concerning war and the carrying of arms similar to that of other Christians in other churches.” He condemned as “very, very wrong” any “printed or spoken word advising, urging, or suggesting that conscription be resisted, and that Friends refuse to carry arms.” Baldwin was exceptional in taking such a public stance, but other actions of Indiana Friends were consistent with his views. A New Castle Friend, George M. Barnard, was the chairman of the county Council for Defense, charged with advancing the local war effort, while a Richmond Friend, Edward H. Harris, headed the Liberty Loan drive there. The experience of the Wabash Monthly Meeting is telling. Twenty-six members served in the military, while only three were conscientious objectors. Wabash Friends followed the careers of all, but clearly they took pride in the achievements of their soldiers. In 1917 “a record book was secured [sic] and the names and addresses of the boys were listed as they left for camp. Each month a letter was written by some one to the boys. . . . Each time a transfer was made to a new camp or company, or a promotion given, the proper notation was made in the book.” By the end of the war Wabash Friends had written three hundred letters and mailed four hundred packages to their soldiers. However, at least one Wabash Friend who enlisted in the marines, Loren J. Talbert, came home a confirmed pacifist haunted by his experiences.<sup>17</sup>

Some faculty and students at Earlham College, the yearly meeting’s school, also supported the war. Most of the faculty were Quakers, and they included some of the yearly meeting’s leading pacifists, such as Hole. The college newspaper, the *Earlham Press*, deplored the wave of militarism that it saw sweeping the country. Yet the overwhelming majority of Earlham men of military age went into military service: at least 253 served, as opposed to only 47 who can be identified as conscientious objectors. The first to enlist from campus, Thomas R. Barr, was the son of a well-known Indiana Yearly Meeting pastor, Daisy Douglas Barr, who served as president of the Indiana War Mothers organization. The Earlham soldiers enlisted with the blessing of President Robert L. Kelly, who said, in a statement endorsed by the college board, “Each man is answerable before God as to his duty in the situation which now confronts him. Every man

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<sup>17</sup>A. L. Baldwin, “Another Point of View,” *American Friend* (Fifth Month, 24, 1917), 411; M. B. Culbertson to Michael Foley, May 27, 1918, vol. 20, Council on Defense Records (Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); George M. Barnard to Michael Foley, August 28, 1918, vol. 8, *ibid.*; “Wabash Service Records,” in “The History of Wabash Friends Meeting, 1918–1940,” Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Loren J. Talbert, *A Quaker Marine on Four Fronts* (Richmond, Ind., 1936).

ought to be able to find in his own heart his duty in the present crisis." The new president who took office in the fall of 1917, David M. Edwards, stated that the college would provide anything short of "technical military training" to aid the national effort.<sup>18</sup>

There are no complete figures on the number of Indiana Yearly Meeting Friends who served in the military during World War I; it may be significant that the yearly meeting did not collect statistics. One historian has estimated that about two-thirds of all American Quaker men of military age rendered military service. In Indiana Yearly Meeting, the figure may have been higher. Suggestive is a survey done in the spring of 1919 by Althea Brown, an Earlham student. She sent out questionnaires about participation in war-related activities to all of the monthly meetings in Indiana. Of the fifty monthly meetings in Indiana Yearly Meeting, thirty-eight responded. While some important monthly meetings, such as Richmond First Friends and most of those in Randolph County, are not included, the results reflect a cross section of the yearly meeting. The statistics, shown in Table 1, are revealing. In some monthly meetings, like Amboy and Fairmount, conscientious objectors were in the majority. In others, every eligible man entered the service.<sup>19</sup>

Explaining these results is difficult. No geographical pattern emerges. The two monthly meetings in the city of Marion showed striking divergence—South Marion had a strong contingent of conscientious objectors, while Marion First Friends had none. Similarly, Fairmount, Back Creek, and Oak Ridge were within a few miles of one other in Grant County, but their members' responses to the war differed considerably. Liberal/evangelical divisions in the yearly meeting also appear to have been irrelevant. Meetings sympathetic to theological modernism, such as Muncie, New Castle, and West Richmond, had high rates of army enlistment. So did those that were strongly evangelical, such as Farmland, New Garden, Walnut Ridge, and New Holland.

Indiana Friends had an alternative to military service that many supported, the Reconstruction Unit of AFSC. Growing out of a conference held in Richmond, AFSC was a leader in relief work in Europe during and after the war. Although Philadelphia Friends were its driving force, a number of Indiana Friends served on its staff and board. At least fifty members of Indiana Yearly Meeting traveled to France as part of its Reconstruction Unit in 1917 and 1918. Most

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<sup>18</sup>Earlham (College, Richmond, Ind.) *Press*, April 14, 1917; Thomas D. Hamm, *Earlham College: A History, 1847–1997* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997), 126–27.

<sup>19</sup>Gerlof D. Homan, *American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1994), 184; Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (New York, 1942), 516; Brown, "Quakers of Indiana in the War." The Friends who responded to Brown's questionnaire may have been inconsistent in how they defined conscientious objection. Brown, for example, shows no conscientious objectors at Wabash, while the Wabash history cited in note 17 shows three.

**Table 1**  
Military Service and Conscientious Objection  
in Indiana Yearly Meeting during World War I

<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	<i># Draft Age</i>	<i># in Mil. Serv.</i>	<i>#CO</i>
Amboy	92	19	29
Anderson	15	6	1
Back Creek	26	6	6
Carthage	62	16	0
Chester	5	2	0
Dublin	19	4	0
Duck Creek	30	0	1
Economy	10	7	0
Fairmount	45	10	21
Farmland	16	4	1
Greenfield	11	9	0
Greensfork	8	1	2
Hopewell	2	4	0
Knightstown	15	5	3
Little Blue River	20	2	0
Marion	35	25	0
Milton	6	2	0
Muncie	118	24	(3?)
New Castle	26	17	1
New Garden	43	11	1
New Holland	9	5	0
Oak Ridge	39	4	4
Olive Branch	16	4	4
Pleasant Valley	18	4	8
Poplar Run	82	7	0
Portland	8	3	5
Salem	11	5	0
Shirley	14	3	3
S. Marion	72	8	14
Spiceland	75	24	0
Springfield	12	3	0
Sycamore	20	6	0
Upland	12	0	3
Wabash	20	29	0
Walnut Ridge	28	9	4
West Grove	23	4	1
West Richmond	—	14	9
Westland	30	4	0
White Oak	12	0	0
	1105	307	124

Source: Althea Brown, "The Quakers of Indiana in the War," May 31, 1919 (Friends Collection, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind.)

Indiana meetings provided support, giving either money or clothing, an activity that continues down to the present day. AFSC would become more controversial as, later in the century, it grew more radical and political in advocating peace.<sup>20</sup>

World War I thus set a pattern for Indiana Friends. The yearly meeting would continue official adherence to traditional positions, but most of the members would not consider them binding. Pacifists would be a minority. World War II continued this trend.

By the mid-1930s, pacifists, especially those in the Society of Friends, appeared to have reasons for optimism. World War I had created a backlash against the use of military force, reinforced by revelations of the machinations of bankers and armaments manufacturers who had seemingly duped the United States into conflict. Certainly, as conflicts in Asia and Europe claimed increasing American attention late in the decade, there is considerable evidence that Indiana Quakers opposed U.S. participation. Anecdotal accounts suggest that the overwhelming majority were isolationist Republicans in their sympathies. Earlham College President William C. Dennis was one of the state's leading isolationist figures. In 1941 he toured the nation, speaking on behalf of the America First Committee. "Every day I am more convinced that this is not our war," he wrote to his congressman in 1940. When war broke out in Europe in 1939 the yearly meeting sent a telegram to President Franklin D. Roosevelt stating its opposition to anything that threatened American neutrality.<sup>21</sup>

Isolationism was not necessarily pacifism; Dennis, for example, was outspoken in justifying defensive war. Late in the decade, however, some saw encouraging growth in pacifist sentiment. The yearly meeting's Peace Committee, headed by Earlham professor Perry Kissick, a conscientious objector who had gone to jail during World War I, organized conferences and distributed literature. At Earlham pacifist groups attracted broad student support. At the local level some Friends made uncompromising pacifist commitments. In 1937, for example, twenty New Castle Friends, led by pastor Howard W. Cope, recorded in the monthly meeting minutes their determination "not to participate in the prosecution of any war of any nature." Thirty Anderson Friends signed a similar statement.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>J. William Frost, "Our Deeds Carry Our Message: The Early History of the American Friends Service Committee," *Quaker History*, LXXXI (Spring 1992), 1-51; Rufus M. Jones, *A Service of Love in War Time: American Friends Relief Work in Europe, 1917-1919* (New York, 1920), 267-82; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1918), 78; *ibid.* (1919), 80.

<sup>21</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1939), 41; Hamm, *Earlham College*, 169; "Friends Address the President," *American Friend* (June 5, 1941), 230; Lawrence W. Wittner, *Rebels against War: The American Peace Movement, 1945-1960* (New York, 1968), 1-33; Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1971), 259-61, 295-96.

<sup>22</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1939), 36-40; New Castle Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh Month 8, 1937, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Anderson

When the U.S. entered the war after Pearl Harbor, most such sentiments evaporated. The editors of the *Earlham Post* probably described the experience of most Indiana Friends: "There is a minority which still holds that conflict was avoidable and to be regretted, but what was for the most part a previously more or less isolationist campus swung quickly over to the band-wagon with the national collapse of isolationist leadership." Willard Heiss, a Friend from Randolph County, doubtless stood for hundreds in believing that, at the time, the most important thing in the world seemed to be stopping Hitler; he enlisted in the navy. Although the yearly meeting did not compile numbers, a story in the Indianapolis *Star* in 1943 estimated that 90 percent of the men of military age in the yearly meeting were in the armed forces, a figure that some Friends thought accurate. At New Castle, the proportion was 68 members in the military, 2 conscientious objectors.<sup>23</sup>

All surviving evidence indicates that such Quaker enlistees had strong support from Friends. First Friends in Marion, like thousands of other churches, hung in its vestibule an "Honor Roll" plaque with the names of members in the service. New Castle Friends split over the idea; they compromised by posting both the names of soldiers and of those in Civilian Public Service (CPS). The actions of West Richmond Monthly Meeting, where support for peace activism probably ran stronger than in any other meeting, were significant. Even before the U.S. entered the war West Richmond recorded its decision that it would follow "with loving concern all of its young men who are engaged these days in various forms of national service . . . . Respecting and maintaining the sovereignty of the individual conscience, we freely concede to each other the right and the responsibility of making his own decision on the basis of what seems to be the right course for him to take." Two young Friends who enlisted, one from Dublin, Indiana, and the other from West Elkton, Ohio, recall that they had the full support of local Quakers; in fact, they had little awareness of the Peace Testimony as they made their decisions. At least one pastor, Robert D. Wilburn of Spiceland, left his pulpit to join the army as a chaplain with the blessing of his monthly meeting.<sup>24</sup>

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Monthly Meeting Minutes, Ninth Month 13, 1939, *ibid.*; Hamm, *Earlham College*, 156-58.

<sup>23</sup>Indianapolis *Star*, September 25, 1943; New Castle (Ind.) *Friendly News* (March 1945), 2; Percy M. Thomas, "The Cock Crows Twice," *American Friend* (November 18, 1943), 455-56; Hamm conversation with Willard Heiss, Indianapolis, 1986. Nationally, Friends estimated that between 75 and 80 percent of eligible members were in the armed forces. See Charles B. Hirsch, "Indiana Churches and Conscientious Objectors During World War II," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLVI (June 1950), 146.

<sup>24</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1942), 25-26; Hamm and Kern, *Centennial Landmark*, 17; West Richmond Monthly Meeting Minutes, Sixth Month 12, 1941, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Marion Monthly Meeting Minutes, March 9, 1950, *ibid.*; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Minutes, Third Month 1, 1944, *ibid.*; Thomas D. Hamm *et al.* interview with Ray E. Stewart, Richmond, Ind., May 3, 1995, transcript,

Some members used the war to advocate a new understanding of the Peace Testimony. Among them was Dennis, a specialist in international law. He argued that since Friends approved of police forces, they should support them on an international basis, distinguishing such "police actions" under international auspices from traditional warfare. In 1943 the yearly meeting debated Dennis's proposals; some journals, like *Time* magazine, gave them wide coverage as a Quaker endorsement of the war. A badly divided yearly meeting approved them with some modifications; members differed about whether Dennis's ideas conflicted with traditional Quaker teaching. The statement affirmed pacifism but also recognized divisions in the yearly meeting. "We do not censure Friends who have conscientiously participated in any way in the war effort," it recorded. "We know that it is extremely difficult for anyone to avoid a relationship to the war and to maintain the status of an absolute pacifist and that we are all in some way aiding the present conflict." The yearly meeting also endorsed the concept of an international peacekeeping organization, recognizing that such an organization might well use force "in a world accustomed to the use of force."<sup>25</sup>

Some Friends took strong stands for traditional Quaker pacifism. Percy M. Thomas, a well-known pastor and former clerk of the yearly meeting, branded participation in the war a denial of Christ. When Spiceland endorsed the decision of its pastor to become an army chaplain, the monthly meeting's clerk (or presiding officer), Clara Symons, resigned in protest, "stating that she could not conscientiously sign this minute." The most visible means of protest was conscientious objection. When Congress approved conscription in 1940, a few Indiana Friends recorded statements with their monthly meetings. Typical was Spiceland Friend Stanton Baily, who wrote, "I believe that war is wrong . . . I believe that in war time a person can do nothing both to help democracy, or to put forward the divine qualities of man, or to show a belief in the brotherhood of man,—than to protest taking part in the military system." In January 1941 Milo S. Hinckle, then the yearly meeting superintendent, urged pastors not to take ministerial exemptions, but to register as conscientious objectors. There are no statistics on the number of conscientious objectors from the yearly meeting. In the summer of 1941 a survey by the yearly meeting Peace Committee showed that 42 men in 16 meetings intended to become conscientious objectors, but some may have changed their positions after Pearl Harbor.<sup>26</sup>

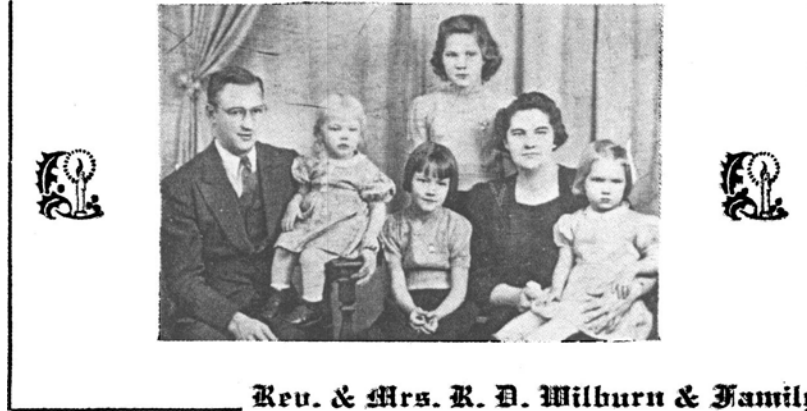
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Oral History Collection (Lilly Library, Earlham College); Hamm *et al.* interview with Carl Jordan, Richmond, Ind., May 17, 1995, transcript, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>"Friends' Meeting is Divided on Dennis Peace Resolution," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 25, 1943; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1943), 61-62, 71-72; "Indiana Yearly Meeting Resolutions: A Symposium," *American Friend* (November 4, 1943), 436-41; "Force or Power," *Time* (October 11, 1943), 46, 48.

<sup>26</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1941), 27-30; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Minutes, Ninth Month 5, 1940, Third Month 1, 1944; Milo S. Hinckle, "Will Quaker

## Season's Greetings



REV. R. D. WILBURN OF SPICELAND LEFT HIS CHURCH TO BECOME  
AN ARMY CHAPLAIN IN 1944.

Courtesy of Richard P. Ratcliff



CLARA SYMONS, CLERK OF THE  
SPICELAND MONTHLY MEETING,  
RESIGNED IN OPPOSITION TO THE  
CONGREGATION'S SUPPORT FOR  
WILBURN.

Courtesy of Richard P. Ratcliff

Religious groups administered the CPS camps to which conscientious objectors were assigned during World War II. AFSC oversaw the Quaker camps, with Thomas E. Jones, an Indiana Friend and future president of Earlham, in charge. Over the course of the war Indiana Yearly Meeting contributed about \$30,000 to CPS and

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Ministers Accept Exemption?" *American Friend* (January 2, 1941), 12; Thomas, "Cock Crows Twice," 455-56.



repeatedly commended its support to meetings and members. At least two members of the yearly meeting, Earlham professors Ernest Wildman and Murvel Garner, took leaves from the college to serve as camp directors.<sup>27</sup>

Greenfield Monthly Meeting was frank in noting when one of its "boys" registered as a conscientious objector that his was a "difficult stand." One public opinion poll found that between 1940 and 1944 the Midwest changed; after having been the section of the country most sympathetic to conscientious objectors in 1940, it became the least supportive in 1944. Pacifist Friends found that non-Quaker neighbors neither wanted nor appreciated their activities. Ernest Mills, a Friend from Hopewell Meeting in Henry County and a member of the yearly meeting Peace Committee, chose not to take the agricultural deferment that he almost surely would have received because he felt that he "must register as great a protest as possible to this whole thing by stressing the C.O. position." He fought a long battle with a hostile draft board, which was determined that Henry County would have no "slackers," before gaining a conscientious objector classification. One enlistee from West Richmond was frank in writing to his pastor that "one has to have more gumption than I to keep out of the conflict." In 1941 the yearly meeting Peace Committee bemoaned what it saw as "the long failure to stress peace in local meetings." More disturbing was opposition from other Friends. In some places the issue was so controversial that meetings refused to discuss it. At one rural meeting in Randolph County, for example, the sole conscientious objector, who had only recently joined the meeting, found himself facing suspicions that he had become a Quaker only to dodge the draft. James P. Mullin vividly remembered his experience in Richmond working for AFSC in 1941. AFSC wanted to open a CPS camp at Quaker Hill on the northern edge of the city. This brought protests from the American Legion, which objected to the planned presence of such "yellow-bellied slackers." Public opinion quickly turned against the project. Several area Friends went to work to change feelings, but they made little headway. Finally, Mullin told a conference of local Quakers that "we need to . . . lay this concern before the First Friends Men's Bible Class." Silence followed; then someone responded, "I think the Men's Bible Class at First Friends will feel just like the American Legion does." "You can see what that did to me inside. I was absolutely devastated," he recalled fifty years later. "During that particular period of crisis, there wasn't support here in the area for conscientious objectors." The year-

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<sup>27</sup>George A. Scherer, *Ernest Atkins Wildman: A Biographical Sketch* (Dublin, Ind., 1984), 54; "Civilian Public Service Information," *American Friend* (April 22, 1943), 159; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1943), 27-31; *ibid.* (1944), 49-51; *ibid.* (1945), 45; Thomas E. Jones, *Light on the Horizon: The Quaker Pilgrimage of Tom Jones* (Richmond, Ind., 1973), 135-50.

ly meeting admitted at the end of the war that “the membership of Indiana Yearly Meeting has greatly departed from their testimony against all war.”<sup>28</sup>

So, during what has come to be called “the good war,” Indiana Friends continued the course that they had set earlier in the century. Officially, they remained committed to the Peace Testimony and to support of conscientious objection. For many Friends, these were fundamental Quaker tenets for which they made real sacrifices. For most Indiana Friends, however, these views had to give way to the need to combat evil. What is striking is that Friends’ disagreement about peace activism seemed to lack political consequences. In the 1950s, that changed, following changes in the larger American peace movement.

Many conscientious objectors were radicalized by their experiences in CPS; they spoke out not only against injustices in the larger society but also against the churches for cooperating with the military in administering the camps. Influenced by such views, AFSC announced that in future conflicts, it would not compromise with the government. Increasingly, peace activists resisted war and denounced the injustices that they saw underlying war. This often meant forming ties with leftist political groups. Some Indiana Friends embraced this new peace activism, but many others, including some who had previously been sympathetic, found it troubling.<sup>29</sup>

From 1945 to 1955 the yearly meeting remained officially committed to the Peace Testimony. Statements regularly came forth denouncing the draft and proposals for universal military training. In 1946, for example, the yearly meeting condemned the latter “heartily and unhesitatingly” and characterized it as “a most apt and dangerous instrument of authoritarian dictatorship. We know of no other measure which strikes more directly at the very foundation of our free society.” Some monthly meetings and individual Friends sent letters to their congressmen in this vein or collected funds to use in opposition.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Charles B. Hirsch, “Conscientious Objectors in Indiana during World War II,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLVI (March 1950), 71; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1941), 28; *ibid.* (1945), 47; Hamm *et al.* interview with James P. Mullin, Richmond, Ind., May 10, 1995, transcript, Oral History Collection; Hamm *et al.* interview with Ellen Stanley, Richmond, Ind., April 19, 1995, *ibid.*; Howard Murdock to R. Furnas Trueblood, [May 1942], West Richmond Monthly Meeting Minutes; Greenfield Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh Month 23, 1942, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Dorothy Heironimus, “Indiana Yearly Meeting Rises to Emergency,” *American Friend* (October 9, 1941), 438; *Indianapolis News*, November 12, 1991; Hamm conversations with Ernest Mills, Richmond, Ind., 1989–1994. Gregory P. Hinshaw of Farmland, Indiana, shared the story about the Randolph County c.o. in a conversation with Hamm, Richmond, Ind., 1992.

<sup>29</sup>For recent developments in American pacifism see Charles Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York, 1992), and Wittner, *Rebels against War*.

<sup>30</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1946), 58–59; Walnut Ridge Monthly Meeting Minutes, Fourth Month 18, 1956; New Garden Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh

The yearly meeting's Peace and Service Committee continued to work; they held conferences, distributed literature, and in 1949, produced a "monthly peace program calendar." At the local level pastors gave "peace sermons." Friends donated money, soap, and old clothing to AFSC for relief work, while women's circles contributed items they sewed. Collections were taken for the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) to use to lobby against new draft legislation. In 1948 Wabash Monthly Meeting sent information on conscientious objection to every minister in the county. Friends at Fairmount, Indiana, showed a movie about the horrors of atomic warfare. Pastors and other members provided counseling on conscientious objection, and conscientious objectors continued to come from meetings whose evangelicalism was unquestionable. Some meetings invited staff members from the Five Years Meeting to speak on peace at worship or in Sunday school classes. In 1951 four Muncie Friends traveled to Washington at their own expense to lobby members of Congress.<sup>31</sup>

While these manifestations of the Peace Testimony found support in the yearly meeting, others proved more controversial. The most public disagreements came in 1948 and 1949, when eleven Earlham College students, citing reasons of conscience, protested the newly enacted draft law by refusing to register. Although only two of the students were members of the yearly meeting, the cases of all received considerable publicity, and they left Earlham and Indiana Quakers facing a dilemma.

Nonregistration first became an issue for Indiana Quakers in the summer of 1948. In July the Five Years Meeting and Friends General Conference sponsored a peace conference at Earlham. Wide divisions quickly became apparent, mirroring splits in the national peace movement. Traditional Quaker pacifists were determined to take maximum advantage of provisions for conscientious objectors in the recently approved draft law. Radicals wanted to protest the draft by refusing to register. The conference participants, running out of time and unable to reach consensus, let a subcommittee summarize the conference's conclusions. The result was radical, espe-

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Month 14, 1948; Muncie Monthly Meeting Minutes, First Month 16, 1952, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; "The Fight against Universal Military Training," *American Friend* (February 24, 1955), 54; "Friendly Life Far and Near," *ibid.* (January 17, 1952), 28.

<sup>31</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1946), 53-54; *ibid.* (1947), 25-26; *ibid.* (1949), 48; Greenfield Monthly Meeting Minutes, Sixth Month 28, Eighth Month 26, 1948, Seventh Month 27, 1950; New Garden Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh Month 11, 1956; Oak Ridge Monthly Meeting Minutes, Tenth Month 6, 1954, First Month 5, 1955; Wabash Monthly Meeting Minutes, Eighth Month 29, 1948, Second Month 17, 1949, Fourth Month 1, 1953; Marion Monthly Meeting Minutes, Ninth Month 9, 1954; Portland Monthly Meeting Minutes, June 2, 1949, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Muncie Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh Month 12, 1950, Tenth Month 18, 1950, Fourth Month 18, 1951, Seventh Month 16, 1952; "Friendly Life—Far and Near," *American Friend* (February 17, 1949), 61; *ibid.* (February 26, 1953), 79.

cially the statement that "We warmly approve civil disobedience under Divine Compulsion as an honorable testimony fully in keeping with the history and practices of Friends." For many Indiana Friends, this was too much, especially after the Richmond American Legion came into possession of some pamphlets distributed at the conference by a radical absolute pacifist group, the Peacemakers, and branded them "criminally seditious." Leading Indiana Quakers such as Errol T. Elliott, editor of the *American Friend*, and Earlham president Thomas E. Jones, quickly distanced themselves from the conference. Soon Indiana Friends had to deal with the Earlham draft resisters.<sup>32</sup>

The draft resisters, not all of whom were Quakers, all cited religious convictions in refusing to register. Even to give their names voluntarily to the government was a compromise with evil, to do something that Christ would not do. In 1949 the yearly meeting endorsed their right to take this position. "We believe that every young man who, under a sense of religious compulsion, feels that he must refuse to comply with the Draft Law, at any point, should follow the supreme authority of his inner guide," the yearly meeting recorded. "We believe that every Christian and every Christian Church body should encourage and support him in his loyalty to the highest that he knows." Clyde Harned, a member of Richsquare Meeting in Henry County, was more direct; responding to the publisher of the Richmond daily newspaper that vociferously denounced the "draft dodgers," Harned wrote, "Your editorials stink." Mills, the new clerk of the yearly meeting Peace Committee, headed an informal committee to raise funds for the nonregistrants' legal defense, while Earlham professors Wildman and George Scherer, both members at West Richmond, administered the funds.<sup>33</sup>

Most Indiana Friends, even those who respected conscientious objection, apparently looked askance at such activities. Robert N. Huff, a Richmond Friend, doubtless spoke for them in arguing that very few Quakers were such "zealots"; Huff was sure that most Indiana Friends viewed nonregistration as simple lawbreaking. While Earlham president Jones refused to condemn the nonregistrants publicly, neither did he endorse their decision. Privately he tried to persuade them to change their minds, as did D. Elton Trueblood, a member of the Earlham faculty and the best known Friend in the

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<sup>32</sup>"Advices on Conscription and War," *American Friend* (August 5, 1948), 259; "Civil Disobedience?" *ibid.* (September 2, 1948), 183; "Trouble Bubbles," *Earlhamite*, LXX (Winter 1949), 4; Wittner, *Rebels against War*, 156-67.

<sup>33</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1949), 27-28; Clyde Harned Letter, clipping, April 19, 1949, Conscientious Objector File, Controversial Issues Collection (Lilly Library, Earlham College); Muncie Monthly Meeting Minutes, Eighth Month 17, 1949; Contributors List, 1950, Ernest E. Mills Papers (Lilly Library, Earlham College); Hamm, *Earlham College*, 211-17.

yearly meeting. Muncie was the only meeting to take up a collection for the defense fund. Even there only four Friends made a donation.<sup>34</sup>

The willingness of some Indiana Friends to question pacifism publicly is even more striking. While Jones at Earlham remained personally a pacifist, he was also a passionate supporter of the United Nations, and he argued that the Korean War was a "police action" that did not violate the Quaker testimony against war, a view that Elliott thought had merit. Philip Johnson, the pastor at West Elkton, Ohio, cited the defeat of Hitler as evidence of the impossibility of pacifist methods: "Fortunately for the pacifist," he wrote, "the majority of men are willing to meet evil with adequate means, even if that means war." Pacifists, he argued, were proponents of "a false doctrine and a dangerous practice." Trueblood, who served as an official in the Eisenhower administration in 1954-1955, was equally emphatic. In 1956 he denounced proposals by Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson to end both the draft and atmospheric nuclear weapons tests: "The Quaker, providing he is sincere about wanting peace, will not try to undermine the deterrent power of the West, as a few misguided ones do now."<sup>35</sup>

In the years following the Korean War tensions over pacifism erupted into open conflict in at least one meeting. Dublin was polarized between Friends who were World War I veterans and members of the American Legion and pacifists like Mills and Ray Stewart, a World War II veteran who had resigned a lieutenant colonel's commission when he became convinced that war was wrong. The breaking point came in 1956, when nonpacifists forced the dismissal of a pastor who was an articulate peace advocate. The pacifists left to take over the nearby Hopewell meetinghouse, which had been closed a few years earlier. There they made the reborn meeting an outspoken advocate of peace.<sup>36</sup>

The split at Dublin and the formation of Hopewell Meeting highlighted new lines of cleavage in the yearly meeting. With the onset of the Cold War, fear of communism pervaded American society, and Indiana Friends shared such fears. "With communism creeping in our government, schools and churches as it is we must seek God's grace often," Walnut Ridge Friends recorded. In the minds of many Americans, pacifism was tinged with "procommunism." Neighbors

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<sup>34</sup>Hamm *et al.* interview with Lorton Heusel, Richmond, Ind., January 25, 1990, transcript, Oral History Collection; Hamm *et al.* interview with D. Elton Trueblood, Lansdale, Pa., April 20, 1994, *ibid.*; Robert N. Huff to J. Douglass Foster, March 16, 1949, Conscientious Objectors File; Huff to Milton Mayer, July 7, 1949, *ibid.*; Hamm, *Earlham College*, 212-17; Muncie Monthly Meeting Minutes, Eighth Month 17, 1949.

<sup>35</sup>Hamm, *Earlham College*, 218-19; "Korea and Pacifist Ideology," *American Friend* (August 17, 1950), 263-64; Philip Johnson, "Pacifism and Crisis," *ibid.* (January 12, 1953), 55-56; "Request for Views," *ibid.* (November 15, 1956), 361.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Stewart; Ray E. Stewart to D. Elton Trueblood *et al.*, August 11, 1956, and attachment, Hopewell Monthly Meeting Historical and Miscellaneous Papers (Lilly Library, Earlham College).

labeled Hopewell Meeting “the place where communism is supported.” And certainly many pacifist Friends combined their peace advocacy with liberal politics and theology. *American Friend* advocated a nuclear test ban and recognition of Red China. It condemned loyalty oaths and McCarthyism. “Thought control wrapped in the American flag is just as repugnant and as dangerous as thought control bearing the stamp of the hammer and sickle,” it editorialized. Members of the yearly meeting expressed increasing discomfort with AFSC, which was becoming more leftist in its politics. In 1960 the editor of the Richmond daily newspaper, a member of First Friends Meeting there, wrote articles attacking a local AFSC youth camp as being under communist influence, charges that many in the yearly meeting echoed in an acrimonious debate. The editor claimed that “reds” were using gullible Friends to undermine national defense. Perhaps in reaction to such developments, the yearly meeting Peace Committee increasingly stressed the Christian and biblical bases of the Peace Testimony.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout this period, local meetings and the yearly meeting were frank in acknowledging the limits of their peace witness. Some meetings admitted that they had no members capable of counseling young men about conscientious objection. “As we look over the last year’s work we realize very little has been done in the name of Peace,” Walnut Ridge Friends recorded in 1949. “We are still weak in our Peace Testimony,” was the conclusion at Portland six years later. That same year Friends at New Garden noted that the only activity of its Peace Committee in the past year had been to collect a free will offering to be sent to AFSC for clothing for refugees. “It is with grave concern that we note the indifference and in many meetings the complete disregard of some members to the basic teachings of the Society of Friends,” the yearly meeting told members in 1948. “We deplore the trust our members put in military preparedness and use of force as a substitute for Christ’s teaching of Love and Brotherhood among all men.” In 1952 the Peace Committee reported that it found little interest in its activities because “the Peace Testimony of Friends is neglected in all too many of our monthly meetings.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>“Friends and Loyalty Oaths,” *American Friend* (December 18, 1952), 418; “How New Will Be Our Foreign Policy?” *ibid.* (January 1, 1953), 4; “Editorial,” *ibid.* (August 27, 1953), 264; William J. Reagan, “A Political Choice,” *ibid.* (December 17, 1953), 395; H. Stanton Baily, “A Plea for No Flags,” *ibid.* (October 22, 1953), 331; interview with Stewart; interview with Stanley; Stewart to Trueblood *et al.*; Edward H. Harris to Stewart, October 26, 1960, Hopewell Papers; H. Stanton Baily *et al.* to “Dear Friends,” Ninth Month 6, 1960, *ibid.*; Richmond (Ind.) *Palladium-Item*, June 22, 23, 1960. For AFSC in the 1950s see Wittner, *Rebels against War*, 228–29; and Susan Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times: Racial Justice, Peace, and Feminism, 1945 to the 1960s* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 68–110.

<sup>38</sup>Walnut Ridge Monthly Meeting Minutes, Seventh Month 14, 1949; Portland Monthly Meeting Minutes, Sixth Month 2, 1955; New Garden Monthly Meeting Minutes, July 13, 1955; Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1948), 44–45; *ibid.* (1952), 45, 66.

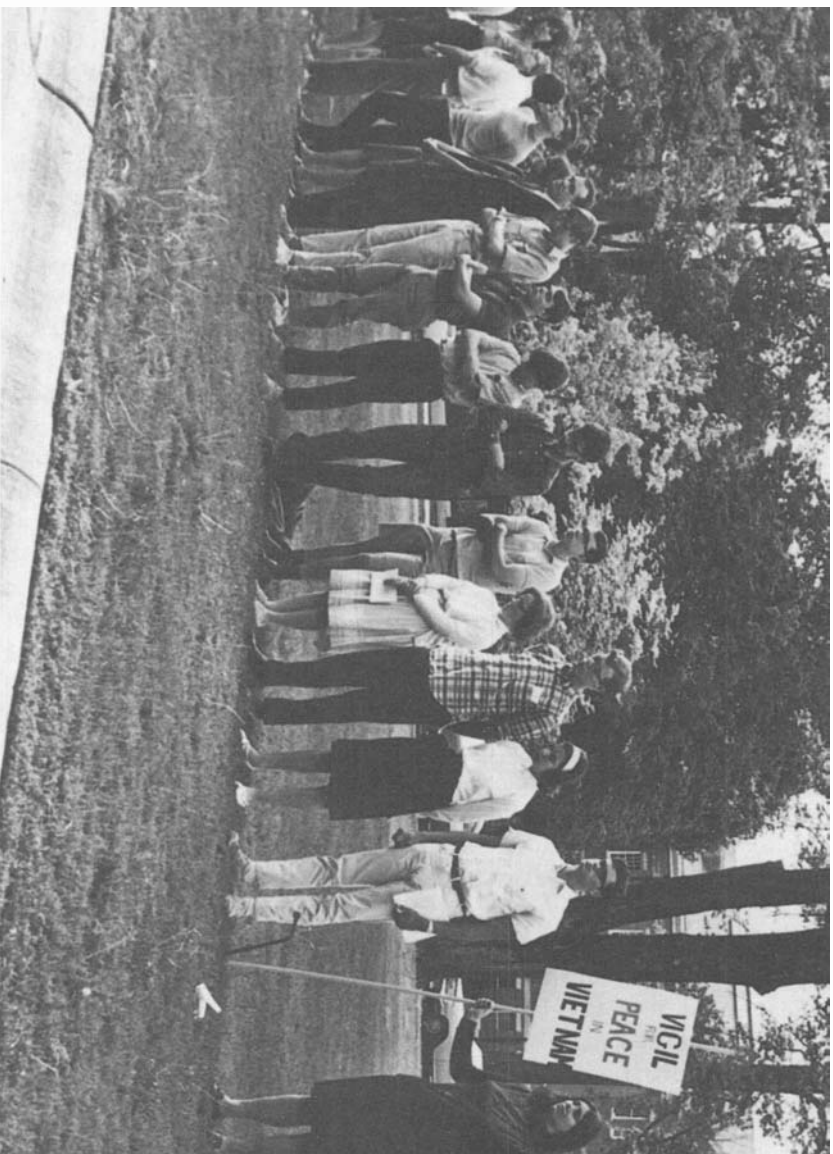
Indiana Yearly Meeting's response to the Vietnam War reflected this reality. In its official actions the yearly meeting called for a negotiated peace and affirmed its support of conscientious objectors. Active antiwar activity was largely confined to theologically liberal Friends in a small number of meetings, especially West Richmond, Hopewell, and Clear Creek, the last a new meeting, founded in 1950 and held on the Earlham College campus. By 1967 more conservative Friends were responding to the antiwar movement with protests of their own, denouncing what they saw as its "un-American" bent.

AFSC was among the first organizations to express concern about American involvement in Vietnam. In 1965 Indiana Yearly Meeting approved a statement by Wilmer Cooper, the dean of the Earlham School of Religion and a member of West Richmond Meeting, "appeal[ing] to all nations and parties to this dispute for a cease-fire, and an end to fighting, and a peaceful solution." A year later the yearly meeting endorsed a national call for an "open-ended cease fire," an end to U.S. bombing, and negotiations by all parties. The yearly meeting repeatedly urged monthly meetings to provide draft counseling and support for conscientious objectors. Still, after 1966 the yearly meeting minutes show little relating specifically to the war, other than in reports from AFSC and FCNL.<sup>39</sup>

Some individuals and meetings were extremely active in upholding conscientious objection and opposing the war. Lorton Heusel, the general secretary of Friends United Meeting, in 1972 signed a national statement of religious leaders opposing the Vietnam War; Earlham College president Landrum Bolling, a member at West Richmond who was avowedly not a pacifist, signed a similar statement of college presidents. The staff at *Quaker Life*, the successor to *American Friend* and the organ of Friends United Meeting, regularly ran articles supporting a wide variety of antiwar activities, ranging from conscientious objection to active involvement in the antiwar movement. The yearly meeting did not collect statistics on conscientious objection, but scattered records and anecdotal evidence indicate that some Quaker young men affirmed the traditional stance and registered as conscientious objectors. Some came from meetings not known for political or doctrinal liberalism. At least one Spiceland Friend took the extreme step of returning his draft card to his draft board. A few Friends in Richmond withheld from their telephone bills the special excise tax that Congress had imposed to help pay for the war. Beginning in 1966 a group of Earlham students and faculty, the latter largely members of Clear Creek Meeting, began regular antiwar vigils in downtown Richmond. Friends at Hopewell were especially

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<sup>39</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1965), 14, 91; *ibid.* (1966), 95-96; *ibid.* (1967), 46; *ibid.* (1968), 14-16, 38-40, 81. See also the essays in Chuck Fager, ed., *Friends and the Vietnam War: Papers and Presentations from a Pendle Hill Conference, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, July 16-20, 1998* (Wallingford, Pa., 1998).



PEACE VIGIL, EARLHAM  
COLLEGE, 1966  
Lilly Library, Earham College



vigorous, urging the yearly meeting to take a more active role in opposing the war, writing antiwar letters to local newspapers, and arranging for materials on conscientious objection to be distributed to local high school students.<sup>40</sup>

The Vietnam War exposed and probably widened fissures in the yearly meeting. While there are no statistics available, observers agree that a majority of young men of draft age in the yearly meeting were not conscientious objectors. Some members of the yearly meeting openly backed the war, while others were vocal in dissociating themselves from the antiwar movement in general and liberal Quaker antiwar activists in particular.

Among the members of the yearly meeting who were public supporters of the war was David W. Dennis, a member of West Richmond Meeting and the son of William C. Dennis; he was elected to Congress as a Republican in 1968, where he consistently supported Nixon administration policies. More vexing to liberal Friends was the support of the war by Trueblood, unquestionably the yearly meeting's best-known member. Trueblood valued his personal ties with Nixon and consistently argued that Nixon's "Peace with Honor" policies were in accord with Quaker beliefs. Trueblood, while upholding the integrity of conscientious objectors, blasted the New Left elements of the antiwar movement. There is no doubt that Dennis and Trueblood spoke for many Indiana Quakers, like those at Greenfield who in 1967 recorded their "support to the United States Government in its actions to protect the free peoples of the world from Communism, at home, in Viet Nam, and elsewhere."<sup>41</sup>

Open conflict grew first out of the activities of AFSC and an offshoot, A Quaker Action Group. AFSC not only opposed U.S. policy but argued that it had a moral duty to help heal the wounds of war in North Vietnam by supplying medicines and artificial limbs. Fearful of prosecution and of endangering other projects, it backed down. But in 1967 A Quaker Action Group, which described itself as "radical Quakers who believe the Peace Testimony should be taken seriously," chartered a ship, the *Phoenix*, to deliver medical supplies to Hanoi. The

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<sup>40</sup>Interview with Stewart; interview with Stanley; Hamm *et al.* interview with Thomas J. Mullen, Richmond, Ind., May 10, 1995, transcript, Oral History Collection; Hamm, *Earlham College*, 263, 267-68; Clear Creek Monthly Meeting Minutes, Fourth Month 12, 1970 (Lilly Library, Earlham College); West Richmond Monthly Meeting Minutes, Fifth Month 11, 1967; Nettle Creek Monthly Meeting Minutes, Second Month 11, 1968, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; "A Call to a Quaker Witness against the Indochina War," May 3, 1972, Indiana Yearly Meeting Executive Committee Papers, *ibid.* The Hopewell Monthly Meeting records in Earlham's Lilly Library contain extensive materials on opposition to the war.

<sup>41</sup>David W. Dennis Congressional newsletters, May 7, November 20, 1971, Alumni Collection (Lilly Library, Earlham College); D. Elton Trueblood, "The Vocation of Peacemaking," *Quaker Life*, XI (April 1970), 116; Trueblood, "Prisoners of War," *ibid.*, XIV (May 1973), 35; James R. Newby, *Elton Trueblood: Believer, Teacher, and Friend* (San Francisco, Calif., 1990), 148-51; Greenfield Monthly Meeting Minutes, September 10, 1967.



D. ELTON TRUEBLOOD

Lilly Library, Earlham College

voyage took place amidst considerable publicity and demands by “hawks” that the *Phoenix* crew be prosecuted. Some Indiana monthly meetings openly condemned the venture; Greenfield urged banning “the use of the name Friends or Quaker” for “subversive programs” and advocated “restraining publicity reflecting adversely on the Society of Friends.” Spiceland pronounced itself “bothered by the actions that appear to be detrimental to the body and people of the Religious Society of Friends and to the people of the United States. Specifically the trip of the *Phoenix*.” Two years later, an appearance by a member of the *Phoenix* crew at New Castle Meeting, which was relatively liberal, had to be cancelled after fierce protests from some members. One, a veteran, reportedly threatened to sit on the front row and wave an American flag throughout the speech.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Greenfield Monthly Meeting Minutes, Eighth Month 27, 1967; Spiceland Monthly Meeting Minutes, Ninth Month 24, 1967; Fountain City Monthly Meeting to

Divisions like these underscored the discomfort of socially and politically conservative Friends with the drift of American society in the late 1960s: they simply could not endorse lawbreaking. The case of the Spiceland Friend who returned his draft card demonstrated the hostility of Indiana Yearly Meeting Friends to civil disobedience. Hopewell Friends took the lead in raising a defense fund; the Spiceland pastor told them that he dared not even propose discussing support from Spiceland, because it would split the meeting. The contrast with the Friends' reaction to the Earlham draft resisters in 1949 is striking; then the yearly meeting expressed sympathy for their actions. No endorsements of civil disobedience were forthcoming in the late 1960s; at least two monthly meetings specifically condemned it. Patriotism played a part as well; most Indiana Friends considered themselves intensely loyal Americans, and they doubted whether that was true of many protesters. Antipathy to AFSC, which took the lead in Quaker antiwar activities, doubtless played a part as well. "I was aware of an enormous amount of violent, negative reaction against AFSC in most of the circles I moved in . . . in this yearly meeting," one prominent Friend remembered. Criticism of AFSC ranged widely. Many Indiana Friends saw it as a bastion of theological liberalism; one Friend noted that the most furious denunciations of the *Phoenix* came from fundamentalist Friends in the yearly meeting. Such theological conservatives could respect conscientious objection but found peace advocacy frightening. In turn, the meetings most involved in peace activities, such as West Richmond, Clear Creek, and Hopewell, were the most theologically liberal in the yearly meeting. Indiana Quakers had been riven by the same issues that split the larger society.<sup>43</sup>

A century after it first began to tolerate active participation in war by members Indiana Friends were still pondering the Peace Testimony. Officially and institutionally, they remained committed to it; as recently as 1990 the yearly meeting recorded its opposition to the use of force in the Gulf War. Increasingly, however, Indiana Friends have become part of the world around them. A small minor-

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Indiana Yearly Meeting, September 26, 1967, Fountain City Monthly Meeting Historical Papers, Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; Henry Harris, "A *Phoenix* Sailor Answers Your Questions," *Quaker Life*, VII (June 1967), 193-95; Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam* (New York, 1994), 88-91.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Stewart; Hamm *et al.* interview with Virgil Peacock, Richmond, Ind., May 17, 1995, Oral History Collection; Hamm *et al.* interview with Harold Smuck, *ibid.*; Stewart to Eddy Cline, April 10, 1968, Hopewell Papers. For a hostile and controversial critique of AFSC politics in the 1960s see Guenter Lewy, *Peace and Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1988), 26-55. For a more balanced account see Brock and Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century*, 338-45. For a useful general overview of Friends United Meeting and the war see Johan Maurer, "Was There a War Going On?" in *Friends and the Vietnam War*, ed. by Fager, 306-29.

ity of pacifist Friends sympathized with the larger peace movement, with the political implications that entailed. The majority, who no longer considered themselves pacifists, became much like their neighbors. The uncertain status of the Peace Testimony thus reflects wider uncertainties that most American Quakers have faced in reconciling their heritage with the larger culture.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (1991), 34.