

# “A Great and Good People”

## Midwestern Quakers and the Struggle Against Slavery

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In the writing of American history, Quakers have occupied a place out of proportion to their relatively small numbers. Probably the most important reason for this conspicuous presence is the group's pioneering work against slavery. Nearly every history of the antislavery movement affirms the Quakers' precedence, both in Europe and America, in recognizing the evil of human bondage and in speaking out against it. Typical is the verdict of Louis Filler, whose work set the standard for a generation: "Although there were always individual voices opposing slavery, the first group to take a stand on slavery had been the Quakers." Filler's evaluation was echoed by Merton Dillon, who writes that Quakers "alone grasped the dimensions of the problem." David Brion Davis, in his magisterial *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, reaches the same conclusion: "[W]hen all allowances

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*Fugitives Arriving at Levi Coffin's Indiana Farm, a Busy Station of the Underground Railroad*, no date, artist unknown. (Copy of *The Underground Railroad*, by Charles T. Webber, 1893.)

Courtesy Cincinnati Museum of Art

are made for cultural trends and climates of opinion, one must ultimately come down to the men who precipitated change." The precipitators, in his view, were disproportionately Friends.<sup>1</sup>

Opposing slavery was one thing; envisioning the place of free people of color in American society was quite another. Here we find more diversity of opinion among historians. Many Quaker historians have focused on benevolence and support for legal equality, a view some non-Friends reflected. Emma Lou Thornbrough, for example, gives extensive attention to Quaker work in

<sup>1</sup>Louis Filler, *The Crusade against Slavery, 1830-1860* (New York, 1960), 13; Merton L. Dillon, *The Abolitionists: The Growth of a Dissenting Minority* (New York, 1979), 7; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), 489.

Indiana on behalf of free blacks and highlights the relative enlightenment of Friends amidst the state's pervasive racism.<sup>2</sup>

Other historians, however, have reached different conclusions about Quaker racial attitudes. Anyone approaching the subject must confront the slow acceptance of black members in the faith, a topic exhaustively treated by Henry J. Cadbury in 1936. More recently, Jean Soderlund argued in *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* that the Quaker approach to slavery and African Americans generally was "gradualist, segregationist, and paternalistic," and that it "set the tone for the white antislavery movement in America" before 1833. A recent article by Ryan Jordan makes a similar argument, as does a new work by Stephen Vincent on African Americans in Indiana.<sup>3</sup>

Most of this work has focused on the East, especially Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley. Our study moves the focus westward, to the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends (both a regional unit and an annual convention), formed in 1821, and its offshoot bodies. This focus is appropriate for several reasons. By 1850, the Indiana Yearly Meeting (Orthodox), the largest yearly meeting of Friends in the world, stretched from central Ohio to Iowa. In short, before the Civil War, with the exception of badly fractured Quaker groups in eastern Ohio, the Indiana Yearly Meeting was midwestern Quakerism.

Midwestern Quakers were not, however, a united body. In 1828, driven by theological controversies among Friends in the East, they had split into Orthodox and Hicksite (reform) groups; thereafter both called themselves Indiana Yearly Meeting, with the Orthodox embracing about 80 percent of those who had been members before the split. Both yearly meetings, in turn, experienced division in the 1840s, when a group that called itself Indiana

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<sup>2</sup>Allen C. Thomas, *A History of the Friends in America* (Philadelphia, 1930), 112–15; Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (2 vols., London, 1921), II, 559–618; Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (New York, 1942), 357–75; Walter R. Williams, *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1962), 180–91; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis, 1957), 33–37, 43, 58, 100–102, 203.

<sup>3</sup>Jean Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, N.J., 1985), 185; Henry J. Cadbury, "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends," *Journal of Negro History*, XXI (April 1936), 151–213; Ryan Jordan, "The Indiana Separation of 1842 and the Limits of Quaker Anti-Slavery," *Quaker History*, LXXXIX (Spring 2000), 1–27; Stephen A. Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil: African-American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765–1900* (Bloomington, Ind., 1999), 33–35. See also Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (New York, 1991); and Thomas P. Slaughter, *Bloody Dawn: The Christiana Riot and Racial Violence in the Antebellum North* (New York, 1991), 190.

Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends split off from the larger Orthodox body, upset by the refusal of the majority to support the radical abolitionist movement. Hicksites experienced a similar schism, with their radical abolitionists separating to form meetings of what became known as Congregational or Progressive Friends. Finally, because of steady growth, in 1858 the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting “set off,” or established, a new yearly meeting called Western, which included Orthodox Friends in Illinois and western, central, and southern Indiana.<sup>4</sup>

These midwestern Friends lived amidst unrelenting racial prejudice. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had excluded slavery from the area, yet antislavery forces had to beat back strong efforts to legalize forms of bondage in Indiana and Illinois. All of the midwestern states imposed myriad schemes of racial discrimination, culminating in Indiana’s constitutional ban on the admission of people of color approved by voters in 1851. Those who opposed such laws usually found themselves politically isolated. For African Americans, freedom north of the Ohio River was definitely better than slavery, but it was a limited, often degrading freedom.<sup>5</sup>

From its establishment in 1821, the Indiana Yearly Meeting had maintained a Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color, sometimes called the African Committee. The committee’s annual reports are a fertile resource for understanding African-American life as Quakers saw it. Each of the

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<sup>4</sup>For the history of the Indiana Yearly Meeting, see Gregory P. Hinshaw, *Indiana Friends Heritage 1821–1996: the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Muncie, Ind., 1996). For the Hicksite separation, see H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1986). For the antislavery split among Indiana Orthodox Friends in the 1840s, see Jordan, “The Indiana Separation of 1842.” For the separation of Congregational Friends, see Thomas D. Hamm, *God’s Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842–1846* (Bloomington, Ind., 1995), 65–71, 201–202.

Some knowledge of Quaker organization is necessary for understanding the group’s history. The lowest level of organization was the individual congregation, which Friends referred to as a preparative meeting or simply as a meeting. One or more made up a monthly meeting, the basic business unit for Friends. It received and disowned members, held property, and solemnized marriages. Two or more monthly meetings made up a quarterly meeting, which took up business that was considered beyond the purview of monthly meetings. Several quarterly meetings made up the yearly meeting, the highest authority for Friends. It had the last word in matters of faith and practice. See Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800–1907* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988), xvi–xvii.

Orthodox Friends in Iowa, even after the formation of the Western Yearly Meeting, remained part of the Indiana Yearly Meeting until 1863, when they began to hold the Iowa Yearly Meeting. See Louis Thomas Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1914), 74–84.

<sup>5</sup>See Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*; and Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961), 69–103, 115–16.

quarterly meetings had a similar committee. While not all of the records of these committees have survived, many have. Also useful are the diaries and letters, published and unpublished, of Quaker ministers on both sides of the Atlantic who traveled through the Midwest and recorded their impressions before 1870. Finally, we have collections of Quaker family papers in various repositories. One must be clear about the limitations of these resources, however. They reflect African-American life as Quakers saw it. Only occasionally do we hear the voices of black people themselves.

The racial attitudes and practices of Friends in what was then the West differed significantly from those of Friends back east. As organized bodies, midwestern Friends systematically and repeatedly condemned racial prejudice. They did not segregate their schools, their meetinghouses, or their graveyards. They opposed legal limits on African-American rights, such as the notorious Indiana and Ohio black laws. They gave considerable time and effort to promoting black education and relieving cases of poverty. They aided fugitive slaves, and gave time and money to rescue kidnapped free people from slavery.

Still, midwestern Friends had their limits. Some were not free from the racist attitudes of the larger society. At least a few were colonizationists who could foresee an America free of slavery as one that also must be free of black people (a view that some black leaders also embraced). Many Friends were doubtless apathetic; a relatively small number conducted most of the meetings, and many members were probably nominal in their commitments beyond attending worship. The quarterly meeting committees on the concerns of the people of color often bewailed lack of interest. Quaker benevolence was frequently accompanied by a paternalistic outlook in which African Americans had to be instructed in the virtues of thrift, hard work, and sobriety. But Friends usually saw this need as growing not out of innate racial characteristics, but rather from the ignorance and degradation of slavery.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>*Indiana Yearly Meeting* [Orthodox] *Minutes*, 1839, 24; Henry Hough to H. P. Bennet, February 7, 1847, box 1, Huff-Nixon Family Papers (Friends Collection, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind.). For rates of participation in monthly meeting business, see Thomas D. Hamm *et al.*, "Moral Choices: Two Indiana Quaker Communities and the Abolitionist Movement," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXVII (June 1991), 151–52. Similarly low rates of participation are found in a study of four other monthly meetings at the time of the Hicksite separation. See Hamm, "A Crisis of Communication: The Hicksite Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends," manuscript in co-author Hamm's possession. For low rates of participation in a quarterly meeting committee, see West Branch Quarterly Meeting Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color Minutes, 1828–1841 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives, Earlham College).

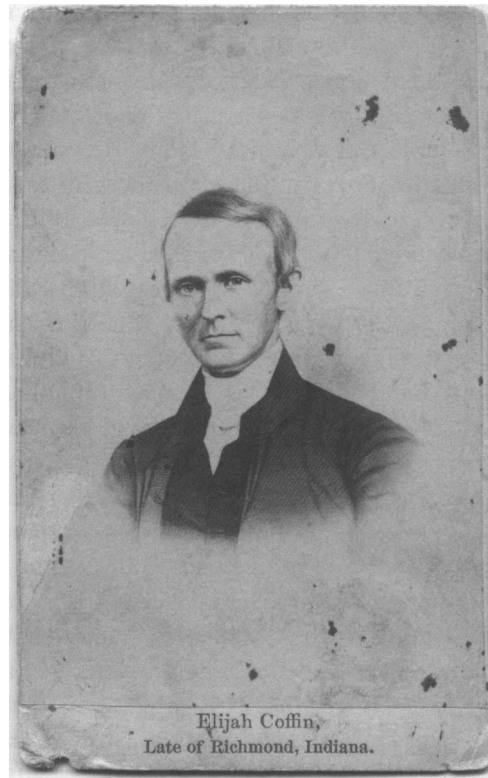
Even in light of these important qualifications, midwestern Quakers were remarkably consistent in their opposition to slavery and racial injustice in the nineteenth century. Most Quaker attitudes and concerns—aiding fugitive slaves, educating free blacks, providing charity, protesting discriminatory laws—remained constant from the time of the Quakers' crossing of the Ohio River in the early 1800s until Reconstruction. Change came largely in response to forces in the larger society: court decisions that forced freed people to leave North Carolina in the 1820s, discriminatory black laws in Ohio and Indiana from the 1820s into the 1850s, the rise of the "immediate abolitionist" movement, and the Civil War and its aftermath. While Friends sometimes responded to these events with new tactics (and sometimes differed over whether change was appropriate), the underlying religious and moral foundations of their actions remained the same.

To present-day minds, the most praiseworthy efforts of midwestern Friends were their protests against legal disenfranchisement and discrimination. Friends protested black laws with some regularity, and they opposed the exclusionary clauses of the new Indiana constitution in 1851. Like most states in the antebellum period, North or South, Indiana and Ohio imposed severe disabilities on people of color. They could not vote, serve on juries or in the militia, or testify in court against a white person. Neither state allowed black children to attend public schools, nor did they provide separate schools before 1849, even though African Americans paid school taxes. After 1831, both states required free blacks entering the state to post bonds against becoming public charges, and in 1851 Hoosier voters approved by a four-to-one margin a constitutional provision banning the entry of people of color into the state.<sup>7</sup>

Friends condemned these laws and urged their repeal. In 1831, for example, when the Indiana legislature debated the law requiring free blacks entering the state to post a five-hundred-dollar bond, Elijah Coffin, the clerk of the Orthodox yearly meeting, strongly protested. As one state senator recorded: "He urged that the negro was a stranger in our land not of his own

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<sup>7</sup>Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 55–91; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 69–74, 93–94, 115; David A. Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860–1915* (Urbana, Ill., 1976), 3–24. The Ohio black laws were modified in 1849 to allow blacks to enter the state and testify in court against whites and to provide tax support for segregated schools. See John Niven, *Salmon P. Chase: A Biography* (New York, 1995), 119–22.



Elijah Coffin

Courtesy Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

choice but by oppression & fraud. That it was wrong to abridge his rights by law. It was against the Holy Scriptures." That fall, the yearly meeting, faced with a similar law in Ohio, branded it "unjust and oppressive," and directed that memorials asking for repeal be sent to the legislature. On other occasions, Orthodox Friends in Indiana and Ohio sent petitions to the legislatures of both states requesting the repeal of some or all of the black laws. In 1847 Orthodox Friends published an *Address to the Citizens of the State of Ohio, Concerning What Are Called the Black Laws*, urging their repeal: "usages or laws which measure the rights and privileges of the African race by a lower standard than that which we apply to our own, are irreconcilable with the manifested will of our Great Creator." The Indiana Yearly Meeting of

Anti-Slavery Friends and the Hicksite-seceder Green Plain Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends took similar action. Bills for the repeal of the black laws were introduced in the Indiana legislature by representatives from counties with large Quaker populations. Hicksite Friends in Ohio were also active. In 1846, for example, David Evans, a leading Hicksite from Waynesville, Ohio, wrote a public letter criticizing a Democratic state senate candidate for his refusal to support repeal of the black laws, and in 1850 a member of the Miami Quarterly Meeting (probably Evans) urged the amendment of the state constitution "that there shall be no constitutional distinction on account of color." After the Civil War, in the first such effort since the Hicksite separation, a joint committee from the Hicksite Indiana Yearly Meeting and the Orthodox Indiana and Western yearly meetings attended the Indiana legislature with a memorial urging it to repeal all discriminatory laws and to grant black men the right to vote.<sup>8</sup>

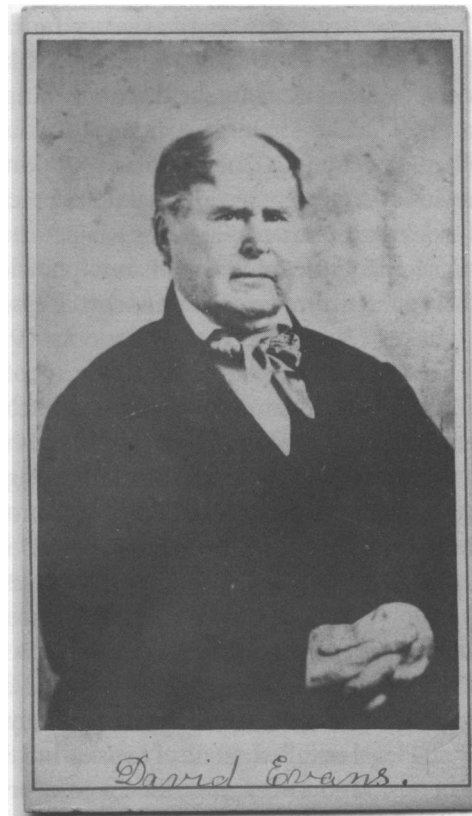
Indiana Friends reacted strongly to the 1851 Indiana constitution's ban of further black immigration into the state, and its accompanying fund to encourage the colonization of African-American residents. The Meeting for Sufferings of the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting, the equivalent of an executive committee, sent a long memorial to the state constitutional convention decrying the proposal and invoking the Declaration of Independence to argue for legal equality. The only concession that opponents gained, however, was a provision for a popular vote on this clause separate from general approval or disapproval of the new constitution. The pattern of voting on the exclusion provision also is revealing. Statewide, it passed with about 84 percent approval. Only four counties rejected the clause. Of these, Steuben,

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<sup>8</sup>The Elijah Coffin quotation is from *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, Gayle Thornbrough, Dorothy L. Riker, and Paula L. Corpuz, eds., (9 vols., Indianapolis, 1972–1983), VII, 315; *Indiana Yearly Meeting [Orthodox] Minutes, 1831*, 14; 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), 104–105; *Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends [Orthodox], Address to the Citizens of the State of Ohio, Concerning What Are Called the Black Laws* (Cincinnati, 1847); David Evans to Voters, September 1, 1846, box 1, Evans Family Papers (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus); Anonymous to Miami Quarterly Meeting, 1850, box 2, *ibid.*; *Indiana Yearly Meeting [Hicksite] Men's Minutes, 1866*, 7–9 (Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Archives, Wilmington College, Wilmington, Ohio); "The Late Indiana Yearly Meeting Held at Waynesville, Ohio, the 1st of the Tenth Month, 1866," *Friends' Intelligencer*, December 8, 1866, 634; Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 58. Jordan, who states that the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting took no action against racial discrimination between 1843 and 1857, apparently was unaware of the 1847 pamphlet and the 1850 memorial. See Jordan, "Indiana Separation of 1842," 20.



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David Evans

Courtesy Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

Lagrange, and Elkhart were on the northern edge of the state, the one part of Indiana settled largely by New Englanders. The other county, Randolph, had probably the largest proportion of Quakers to non-Quakers of any county in the state.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Dorothy Riker and Gayle Thornbrough, comps., *Indiana Election Returns, 1816–1851* (Indianapolis, 1960), 388–90; Indiana Yearly Meeting [Orthodox] Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, November 25, 1850 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives); Mary C. Johnson, ed., *The Life of Elijah Coffin, with a Reminiscence by His Son Charles F. Coffin* (Cincinnati, 1863), 80; Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 82–84.

Even more revealing is a focus on the twenty Indiana counties that contained at least one monthly meeting of Friends in 1851. We do not have any firm statistics on the number of Quaker men of voting age at this time, or even on the number of Quakers in Indiana, but it is undoubtedly significant that in the twenty Quaker counties, the margin of support for exclusion of African Americans was 66.5 percent as opposed to 84 percent statewide. Of the four counties to cast more than 800 votes against the proposal, three were the strongly Quaker counties of Wayne, Randolph, and Henry. Another way of gauging the apparent impact of Friends' votes is to consider that while the twenty Quaker counties accounted for only 19.7 percent of the total votes cast on the provision, they supplied 41 percent of the votes against it. To be sure, one should not assume that every anti-exclusion vote in the Quaker counties was cast by a Friend, or that all Friends voted against exclusion. Certainly that must have been the case in Orange County, where only 24 votes were cast in opposition, and there were probably more than 24 Quaker men of voting age there. But the conclusion is clear: levels of opposition were significantly higher in the Quaker counties than in the state generally.<sup>10</sup>

The radical abolitionist offshoots of the two Indiana Yearly Meetings, the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends and the Green Plain Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, were, not surprisingly, even more outspoken in condemning legal manifestations of racism. In 1844, for example, the Anti-Slavery Friends petitioned Congress not just for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, a ban on the interstate slave trade, and repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, but also for the repeal of "all laws of Congress making a distinction on account of color." The Green Plain Congregational Friends in 1848 similarly demanded the repeal of all of "the unjust and iniquitous laws which make distinction between men on account

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<sup>10</sup>Riker and Thornbrough, *Indiana Election Returns*, 388–90. Midwestern Friends did not begin collecting membership statistics until the 1860s. Estimates put the membership of the Indiana Yearly Meeting [Orthodox] around 1850 at about 30,000, of whom about one-third were under age 21. At least 40 percent of the yearly meetings' membership lived in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, or Iowa, meaning that about 12,000 adult members lived in Indiana. Assuming that half were men, this would mean about 6,000 potential Orthodox Quaker voters, with Anti-Slavery Friends and Hicksite Friends accounting for possibly another 1,000 at most. Thus Friends could have accounted for about 5 percent of the 135,000 votes cast on the proposal. For calculations of membership, see Richard Eugene Wood, "Evangelical Quakers in the Mississippi Valley, 1854–1894" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1985), 6, 13–14.

of color." In 1850, a memorial from the Congregational Friends in Dublin, Indiana, to the Indiana constitutional convention urged that black men be given the vote on the same terms as whites, rendering some delegates nearly apoplectic.<sup>11</sup>

Doubtless the editor of the Salem *Democrat* spoke for many of his Indiana neighbors when he wrote of Quakers in 1859: "Their *tenacious* and *universal* adherence to negro equality is the rotten spot that has marked them since the days of the Revolution." In asserting the legal rights of African Americans, Quakers were tenacious and, in the eyes of their contemporaries, radical.<sup>12</sup>

The most notable parallels between western Friends and those in Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere east of the Appalachians emerged in their works of charity. By far the greatest amount of Quaker energy went into African-American education, with Friends sometimes receiving black students in Quaker schools, but more often subsidizing schools that black parents controlled. As mentioned earlier, black children were excluded from all forms of public education in Indiana, and it was not until 1849 that Ohio provided funds even for segregated public schools. Indiana did not provide public education for black children until 1869.<sup>13</sup> Orthodox Friends paid particular attention to black education after the separation of 1828, establishing a boarding school as well as day schools. Hicksite Friends took a similar course. Friends of both persuasions reported great satisfaction. For example, Hicksites recorded in 1832 the progress of pupils in two schools in Brown County, Ohio: "The children learned quite as fast as white children in similar circumstances"; at the end of a three-month term most could read and write. The number of students and schools varied; the high point came in 1851, when the Orthodox yearly meeting entirely supported or partially subsidized twenty-one black schools. During and after the Civil War, Friends put even more energy into establishing schools among the freed people in

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<sup>11</sup>Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends Minutes, 1844, 10–11; Minutes and Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of Friends, Composed of Persons from Parts of Ohio and Indiana, Held at Green Plain, Clark County, Ohio, Who Have Adopted the Congregational Order (Springfield, Ohio, 1848), 7–8; Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, 1850 (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1850), I, 77.

<sup>12</sup>"Our Quaker Neighbor," Salem (Indiana) Democrat, December 1, 1859.

<sup>13</sup>Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 3–24; Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 323.

the South, including Southland College in Arkansas, the first black college west of the Mississippi.<sup>14</sup>

In supporting black education, midwestern Friends were following a practice that dated back to the beginnings of the denomination, when leading Friends such as George Fox had encouraged Quaker slaveowners to teach their slaves to read and write. In the eighteenth century, Friend Anthony Benezet had been the pioneer in education for African Americans in Philadelphia. Yet when eastern Friends established schools for black children, they were almost invariably separate from those for white Quaker children.<sup>15</sup>

West of the mountains the pattern is less clear. Black children were sometimes admitted to schools under the care of Friends. The English minister Benjamin Seebohm, visiting Parke County, Indiana, in 1850, noted that Friends there "have no school at present amongst the coloured people themselves, but a number of their children are admitted into Friends schools, and taught amongst their white schoolfellows." In 1856 Friends in Grant County, Indiana, tried to win the admission of a black child to a local public school; in a few cases in Randolph and Wayne counties they were successful. In 1866 a black student in the Richsquare Friends Academy in Henry County, Indiana, wrote to the local newspaper about the kind reception he had received there. Friends played a leading role in the establishment of the Union Literary Institute in Randolph County, the first school established in the state for the express purpose of integrated secondary education. Yet most Quaker money and energy went into the establishment of separate schools for black children.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 161; Frank U. Quillin, *The Color Line in Ohio: A History of Race Prejudice in a Typical Northern State* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1913), 23, 45; *Indiana Yearly Meeting* [Orthodox] Minutes, 1832, 17; *ibid.*, 1833, 11; *ibid.*, 1834, 11; *ibid.*, 1840, 21; *ibid.*, 1851, 37–38; *Indiana Yearly Meeting* [Hicksite] Men's Minutes, 1832, 41. For work during the Civil War and Reconstruction, see Thomas C. Kennedy, "Southland College: The Society of Friends and Black Education in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XLII (Autumn 1983), 207–38; Francis C. Anscombe, "The Contribution of the Society of Friends to the Reconstruction of the Southern States" (Ph. D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1926), 239–58; and Linda Selleck, *Gentle Invaders: Quaker Women Educators and Racial Issues during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Richmond, Ind., 1995).

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, Thomas Woody, *Early Quaker Education in Pennsylvania* (New York, 1920), 236–61; Selleck, *Gentle Invaders*, 15–45; Martha Paxson Grundy, "The Bethany Mission for Colored People: Philadelphia Friends and a Sunday School Mission," *Quaker History*, XC (Spring 2001), 50–82; and the essays in Eliza Cope Harrison, ed., *For Emancipation and Education: Some Black and Quaker Efforts, 1680–1900* (Philadelphia, 1997).

<sup>16</sup>Herbert Lynn Heller, "Negro Education in Indiana from 1816 to 1869" (Ed. D. diss., Indiana University, 1951), 164–65; Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 166, 173–75; Northern Quarterly Meeting African Committee Minutes, December 19, 1856 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives); Indiana Yearly Meeting Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color Minutes, September 29, 1859,

The reason for the discrepancies is not apparent. No surviving document records the thoughts of either Friends or African Americans on the subject. In some cases, such as the schools that Hicksite Friends oversaw in Brown County, Ohio, no Friends lived nearby and so attendance at a Quaker school was impossible. The desire to maintain "select" schools, which enrolled only Quaker children, a practice often urged by influential Friends, may have played a role, since almost no African Americans were Friends. In other cases, Friends may have deferred to the wishes of black parents. Usually, Friends simply provided money to schools that African Americans controlled, and black communities may have preferred this. They may also have found Quaker schools, with their mandatory attendance at midweek meetings for worship and enforcement of Quaker peculiarities of speech and dress, strange and uncomfortable. A survey by the West Branch Quarter in Ohio in 1847 found that most of the families enrolling children in the black schools that it supported were church members. Black Methodists and Baptists may simply have preferred that their children not receive a Quaker education. No one, not even Anti-Slavery and Congregational Friends bitterly critical of the bodies from which they had seceded, suggested that the absence of African-American children at Quaker schools grew out of a desire to separate white from black children.<sup>17</sup>

At least some Friends, when establishing schools that were not under the auspices of monthly or quarterly meetings, either refused to admit black students or provided for their separate education. Dr. Jesse Harvey of Harveysburg, Ohio, was an outspoken abolitionist whose family had been involved in helping local African Americans establish a school in the community as early as 1830. In 1837, when Harvey founded an academy not limited to Quaker students he admitted black students, but educated them in a separate department; unfortunately, he left no record of his motive. Within a few years, however, he faced such intense criticism from local abolitionists that he changed policy and integrated his classrooms. After Harvey went

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ibid; Ebenezer C. Tucker, *History of Randolph County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1882), 179–80; *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm* (London, 1873), 326.

<sup>17</sup>West Branch Quarterly Meeting Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color Minutes, August 13, 1847. For midwestern Quaker attitudes on education, see Ethel Hittle McDaniel, *The Contribution of the Society of Friends to Education in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1939), 23–48. For African-American desires for independent institutions, see James Oliver Horton and Lois Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York, 1997). For black disinterest in becoming Quakers, see Forrest G. Wood, *The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America from the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1990), 284.

west to teach the Shawnee Indians, Wilson Hobbs, a member of a prominent Indiana Quaker family, took over. He created a new controversy by wavering on the admission of African-American students. At first he accepted, then rejected, a student of mixed European and African ancestry, Margaret Campbell. Local abolitionists, particularly Congregational Friend Valentine Nicholson, scored Hobbs for the decision. Significantly, Hobbs's response was not a straight-out defense of white supremacy. Instead, he insisted that he was bound by the wishes of a majority of the stockholders in the school, who were not Friends. Privately, he confided to Nicholson that he would gladly have admitted Campbell had the decision been left to him, and that he was sure that the other students would have accepted her. If the Harveysburg case is typical, Friends were embarrassed to be accused of ties to racial segregation.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to their efforts to improve educational opportunities for black children, Friends also helped impoverished blacks find employment, rescued freed blacks who had been kidnapped into slavery, and aided fugitive slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad. For example, in 1824 the New Garden Quarterly Meeting in Indiana reported that it had "been attentive to the situation of a number of Persons of Color, who have arrived from North Carolina; they have given them such advice as they apprehended might be useful, provided places and procured wages for them." Similarly, when the Englishman Seebohm visited Parke County, Indiana, in 1850, he found Friends there deliberating on how best to aid a party of thirty-two free African Americans who had just arrived from North Carolina, and "were likely, as strangers in a strange State, to need a little assistance, to promote their getting properly located, and finding the means of employment and subsistence." Friends provided money to support impoverished blacks, and in other cases paid doctor bills and defrayed funeral expenses. A particular concern was rescuing free people of color who had been kidnapped and sold south as slaves. The Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting dealt with a number of such cases, hiring lawyers and paying legal expenses. In one instance, a group of Friends from Hamilton County, Indiana, pursued a kidnapper and his victim all the way to Louisiana, finally gaining the black man's freedom. In another case, Indiana Orthodox Friends spent six hundred dollars to send

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<sup>18</sup>*The History of Warren County, Ohio, 1882* (Chicago, 1882), 659–60; Valentine Nicholson Ledger, pp. 33–40, Theodore C. Steele Collection (Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis).

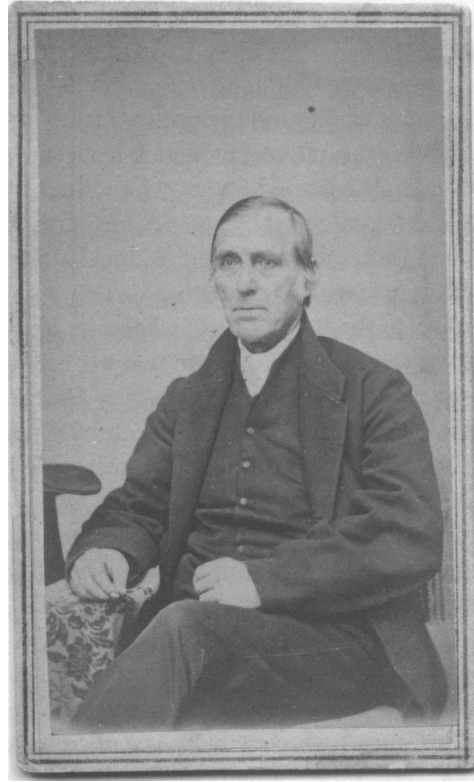
an attorney and two witnesses to Texas to gain the freedom of a free black man enslaved there.<sup>19</sup>

Individual Friends were willing to take more dangerous public stands to aid African Americans who found themselves facing public prejudice and attack. The best-known example is of Frederick Douglass, probably the leading black abolitionist in the United States, who visited Pendleton, Indiana, in the fall of 1843 and was attacked by anti-abolitionists. Rebecca Fussell, an abolitionist Hicksite Quaker woman, tried to shield Douglass from the mob by standing in front of him with her baby, but to no avail. After Douglass was injured, he was taken to the home of a Quaker couple, Neal and Elizabeth Hardy. Douglass ever remembered the care that the kindly Elizabeth Hardy gave him. The next day, despite the violence, the Hicksite Friends opened their meetinghouse near Pendleton for a speech by Douglass. Three years earlier, when a black man married a white woman in Indianapolis, a mob had stormed the house where they were spending their wedding night and ridden the bride through town on a rail. The husband barely escaped with his life, but found refuge at Newport in Wayne County, working for Friend Levi Coffin. Eventually, he was reunited with his wife. In 1844, when a slaveholder from Missouri named Vaughan tried to claim John and Louann Rhodes, fugitives who had found a home in Hamilton County, Indiana, Friends bedeviled him at every turn. First they tried to prevent his apprehension of the couple, then helped them escape, then took them to safety in a Quaker settlement near Knightstown, and finally helped the Rhodeses to prevail in court.<sup>20</sup>

Probably best known, and doubtless considerably embroidered by legend, is the role of Quakers in the Underground Railroad. While it was the fugitive slave, not the "conductor," who took the greatest risk, and while free blacks in the north were as central, if not more so, to the enterprise as whites,

<sup>19</sup>*Indiana Yearly Meeting Minutes*, 1824, 10; *ibid.*, 1825, 12; *ibid.*, 1833, 17; *ibid.*, 1845, 23; *ibid.*, 1850, 32; New Garden Quarterly Meeting Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color Minutes, May 21, 1852, February 26, August 26, 1853 (Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives); West Branch Quarterly Meeting Minutes, November 15, 1855; *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, 327. For kidnapping cases, see Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780–1865* (Lexington, Ky., 1994).

<sup>20</sup>Rebecca L. Fussell Reminiscence, n.d., box 78, Wilbur H. Siebert Collection (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus); Jason W. Macy to Siebert, September 1, 1894, box 80, *ibid.*; Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 109–10; Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (Hartford, Conn., 1882), 287–88; Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad* (Cincinnati, 1880), 155–60.



Levi Coffin

Courtesy Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

it is nevertheless true that midwestern Quakers worked closely and in a relationship of trust with African-American neighbors. One abolitionist in southwestern Ohio remembered that fugitives would first approach free blacks but that the free blacks referred them to nearby Quakers, "for the colored people thought them safer among the whites than with themselves, and they were right, for the slave hunters would be more apt to use violence on them than on whites." According to later reminiscences, fugitives crossing the Ohio River into Indiana at Jeffersonville made contact with free African Americans who in turn put them in touch with James L. Thompson, a Friend who lived near Salem. Thompson then contacted Willis Parks, a black man in southern Bartholomew County, who conducted the freedom-seekers to John Thomas,



a Quaker who lived in nearby Azalia. He in turn made arrangements for them to go on to the African-American and Quaker settlements in Rush and Henry counties. Some Friends hired fugitives to work at "corn husking, wood chopping, butchering, etc. Earning a little money to help them start in Canada." If Anti-Slavery Friends are to be believed, some more conservative Friends opposed aiding fugitive slaves, but those criticized responded with denials.<sup>21</sup>

What, if anything, do Quakers' actions reveal about racial attitudes of ordinary Friends as they struggled with questions of colonization, black migration, interracial marriage, membership, and the roles of black people in their communities and the larger American society? As any historian of religion is aware, doctrinal and policy statements by denominational leaders and authorities are often not normative for the membership. Several historians have pointed to examples of prejudice among Friends in the East. There the handful of African-American Quakers before 1860 were often seated in galleries or at the rear of meetinghouses, and black graves were separated from white in Quaker cemeteries, when they were allowed at all. Quaker charity in institutions such as orphanages and "free schools" was dispensed in the same manner. Occasional applications for membership from black people were sometimes subjected to long procedural delays. Abolitionists after 1830 denounced what they saw as the prejudice of more conservative Friends. "They will give us good advice. They will aid in giving us a partial education—but never in a Quaker school, beside their own children. Whatever they do for us savors of pity, and is done at arm's length," was the lament of one black activist.<sup>22</sup>

In the Midwest, relatively few Friends left behind any record of racial feelings, and we have almost nothing from people of color about their experiences with Friends. One fact that does speak eloquently to the issue is how

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<sup>21</sup>Isaac P. Cox to Siebert, April 20, 1896, box 78, Siebert Collection; John Thomas to Siebert, April 5, 1896, *ibid.*; Isaac M. Beck to Siebert, December 29, 1892, box 102, *ibid.*; Abraham Allen Biography, n.d., box 103, *ibid.*; Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 239–41.

<sup>22</sup>Cadbury, "Negro Membership," 160–61, 168–69, 172–81; Philip S. Benjamin, *The Philadelphia Quakers in the Industrial Age, 1865–1920* (Philadelphia, 1976), 128; Margaret Hope Bacon, "New Light on Sarah Mapps Douglass and Her Reconciliation with Friends," *Quaker History*, XC (Spring 2001), 30–32; Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York, 1969), 72. The authors are indebted to Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel, who are writing a history of Quakers and African Americans, for directing us to the citation in Quarles.

African Americans in the Middle West voted with their feet. In Indiana, and to a lesser extent in Ohio and Michigan, they were found disproportionately living near Quaker communities. In 1860, for example, the largest black populations in Indiana were found in Wayne and Randolph counties, major Quaker centers. Similarly, one of the largest rural black communities in Michigan was in Cass County, which had a considerable Quaker population. Free blacks often turned to Quaker neighbors for legal help or support. Other whites were well aware that Quakers "have always befriended these unhappy people."<sup>23</sup>

Still, there are indications of ambivalence on the part of some Friends, and an embrace of the racial attitudes of the larger white society by others. A good example lies in Quaker response to the colonization movement, which sought to link the abolition of slavery to the removal of free blacks to Africa or the Caribbean. Abolitionists after 1830 decried such requirements. In 1836 the Indiana Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) officially condemned what it called "the unrighteous work of expatriation." Yet at least one leading Orthodox minister, Jeremiah Hubbard, was known for his colonization sympathies. Even more striking is the case of the long-time clerk of the Orthodox yearly meeting, Elijah Coffin. Early in the 1840s, Coffin penned a long essay that he entitled "On Home Colonization." In it he suggested that emancipation be linked to the establishment of an independent black nation in the great American desert (meaning the West in general), with blacks forcibly removed to it, if necessary. Coffin was quite willing to invoke the horrors of "amalgamation" as justification for his proposal. Even one actively abolitionist Friend finally embraced colonization. Alfred Hadley, who lived near Annapolis, Indiana, had aided many fugitive slaves, but as an acquaintance remembered, "finally came to the conclusion that as his forefathers helped to bring slavery in the country it would be better to tax him with other property and create a fund for their purchase and settlement in some good place."

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<sup>23</sup>Gregory S. Rose, "Quakers, North Carolinians, and Blacks in Indiana's Settlement Pattern," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, VII (Fall/Winter 1986), 35–48; Rose, "The Distribution of Indiana's Ethnic and Racial Minorities in 1850," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXVII (September 1991), 249–55; Harold B. Fields, "Free Negroes in Cass County before the Civil War," *Michigan History*, XLIV (December 1960), 375–83; Jane East Karkalits, "The Story of Birch Lake Quakers," typescript, 1963, pp. 6–7 (Friends Collection); Vincent, *Southern Seed*, 35; Tucker, *History of Randolph County*, 197–98, 217; "Jacob Cummings Reaches Cabin Creek, Randolph County," n.d., box 80, Siebert Collection; J. H. Mendenhall, "The Old Underground Railroad," January 1, 1896, *ibid.*; Philip J. Schwarz, *Migrants against Slavery: Virginians and the Nation* (Charlottesville, Va., 2001), 131.

In a similar case, William Talbert, a Friend in Union County, Indiana, wrote in 1826 that "I hold it as indisputably correct, viz that every free person has a right to go where he pleases, if he has means to Justify it & if there are people of colour found here amongst us we feel bound to advise & assist them in getting employment Etc. But there is a very strong prejudice in the minds of many people, against the emigration of the people of colour to the western States—and from various considerations on the subject, I had much rather Government would locate a colony for them some where in the S[outh] West of this continent." Still, one should distinguish between colonizationists who rejoiced at the prospect of a lily-white United States and those like Hadley and Talbert who had sadly concluded that massive white prejudice made any other solution impossible.<sup>24</sup>

Other Friends expressed different fears, particularly at times when large numbers of free blacks were settling in Indiana and Ohio. In 1826, for example, Samuel Charles of Richmond wrote to Friends in North Carolina that "the prejudice against a colored population was as great in Indiana, as in North Carolina, and that there was as much of it in the minds of members of our Society there as in other people." That same year, another elderly Friend said that he would rather see Indiana a slave state than to have free blacks in it. In the 1840s, an Orthodox Friend in Indiana was quoted as saying "she would be afraid of her life if the slaves were set free." For virtually all Friends, interracial marriage was more than they could bear; even committed abolitionists like Levi Coffin opposed it, although he did not think that it should be illegal.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York, 1961); Paul Goodman, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998), 11–22; *Indiana Yearly Meeting [Orthodox] Minutes*, 1836, 14; Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, Conn., 1950), 141–42; Thomas D. Hamm, ed., "'On Home Colonization,' by Elijah Coffin," *Slavery and Abolition*, V (September 1984), 154–68; William L. McIntyre to Wilbur H. Siebert, January 3, 1896, box 78, Siebert Papers; William Talbert to Nathan Mendenhall, November 12, 1826, Meeting for Sufferings Papers, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Archives (Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C.). Orthodox Friends like Elijah Coffin also defended colonization when it was voluntary on the part of blacks. See Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 134, 138.

<sup>25</sup>Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History* (Baltimore, 1896), 232–33; William Parker to Josiah Parker, July 26, 1826, box 1, Josiah Parker Papers (Friends Collection); Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 295; Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 159. In 1840 the well-known abolitionist Sarah M. Grimké wrote that Friends were reluctant to receive black members because under the Discipline they would have to marry within the Society and no white person would marry them. Thus when they married non-Quaker blacks they would face the loss of their membership. See Cadbury, "Negro Membership," 179.

We also have evidence that Friends were more accepting of lighter-skinned people of color than darker ones. Mary C. Thorne, an Orthodox Friend in Clark County, Ohio, remembered that in 1856 her family sheltered a fugitive slave. "She was quite superior to the ordinary class of persons whom we had met in that way: in the first place she was white with light brown straight hair," Thorne wrote. "Her eyes were gray with a quick nervous flash about them that took in her surroundings at a glance." The family was so taken with her that she remained with them until her death sixteen years later.<sup>26</sup>

For many, the most perplexing aspect of the relationship between African Americans and Quakers was the extremely small number of blacks who joined the Society of Friends. This was a cause of concern for visiting English Friends. In 1819, for example, a traveling Friend visiting eastern Ohio asked Quakers there "whether Black People were admitted in Friends Society. The answer they returned was that some of their members were opposed to it, but those only that were prejudiced against them by education." There were some black members, however. The English ministers Robert and Sarah Lindsay, visiting Cass County, Michigan, in 1858, recorded that in the Birch Lake Meeting, "one of their members is a coloured man; others of the same race were present." Richard Chopple, a black member of the New Garden Monthly Meeting in Wayne County, Indiana, died in 1848 at the reputed age of 107. The fervent abolitionist Rebecca L. Fussell, attending the Orthodox meeting in Richmond, Indiana, just after the separation in 1842, recorded that an African-American woman who was a member at Spiceland was given a place of honor at the front of the building and spoke during meeting for worship. But such cases were few. Racism may have been a factor. In 1859 and 1860, William Tallack, an English Friend traveling in America, noted that Friends in Richmond explained the lack of black interest in becoming Quakers on the basis of the inability of blacks "to appreciate the abstractions and refinements of our spiritual views." Another cause may have been the traditional Quaker reluctance to proselytize; Friends were not interested in attracting large numbers of new members. And potential converts attracted by Friends' relative enlightenment on racial matters may have found silent worship and Quaker peculiarities more than they wished to embrace.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Mary C. Thorne to Siebert, March 3, 1892, box 103, Siebert Papers.

<sup>27</sup>Robert and Sarah Lindsay Diaries, August 3, 1858, vol. 1, 224 (Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London); Cadbury, "Negro Membership," 183, 186; William Tallack, *Friendly Sketches in*

Still, for every example of individual prejudice we have just as many indicating more enlightened views. It may mean something that Elijah Coffin never published "On Home Colonization." He recorded in his diary that the atmosphere of the Meeting for Sufferings session that condemned the black exclusion provision of the pending Indiana constitution in 1850 was "low," suggesting that the protest was more than just *pro forma*; Friends were genuinely disturbed. The fear of African-American immigrants on the part of some Friends did not prevent others from welcoming new arrivals, even after such immigration became illegal in Indiana in 1851. At times we see Friends struggling with their prejudices. A good example is the 1826 report of the Committee on the Concerns of the People of Color on the emigration of free blacks from North Carolina. The report conceded the possible desirability of avoiding "an accession of this class of population as neighbours," but then added that the committee members were "concerned to impress the minds of Friends that our prejudices should yield to the interests and happiness of our fellow beings, and that we exert no influence that would deprive them of the rights of free Agents in removing to any part of the world most congenial to their interests." Similarly, an Orthodox Friend (probably Elijah Coffin) responded to criticism from Anti-Slavery Friends in 1843 by admitting that "there may be too much prejudice among us," but, insisting, "if there is, we have reason to hope and believe that there is a disposition to be corrected, when convinced, and to endeavor to come to the right standard."<sup>28</sup>

Friends carried this resolve to struggle against prejudice into their personal relationships. There is no indication that Friends in the Midwest ever segregated their few black members and visitors. The surviving records of Quaker graveyards in Indiana and Ohio indicate that they were not segregated by race. Levi Coffin recorded that he caused consternation in taverns in Ohio and Virginia by insisting on sitting at the same table as his free black traveling companion, and implied that such behavior was common among Friends. When English Friend John Candler visited a Quaker family in Parke County, Indiana, in 1853, he found that the wife of his host "was gone from

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*America* (London, 1861), 52; Rebecca Fussell to Graceanna Lewis, December 6, 1842, box 3, Graceanna Lewis Papers (Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Penn.); Richard Chopple obituary, *Western Friend*, October 12, 1848, 363.

<sup>28</sup>Mary Coffin Johnson, *M. Morris White, 1830–1913* (New York, 1917), 35–47; Johnson, ed., *Life of Elijah Coffin*, 80; John Davis to Trustees of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, October 3, 1826, Meeting for Sufferings Papers; Edgerton, *History of the Separation*, 148; *Indiana Yearly Meeting Minutes*, 1826, 13–14.

home to assist in a quilting in the house of a colored neighbour, where a company of the new settlement women had gone for an afternoon to assist in making a new quilt, and to sup together." Another English Friend, Joseph Crosfield, attending the Western Yearly Meeting in 1865, wrote home that he was sharing quarters with "a colored Friend. . . , an intelligent man, with whom I have had much conversation. . . . We do not however allow him to eat at the same table with us, but however the table was full before he came." Crosfield apparently considered racial prejudice laughable. Nathan Coggeshall, a Friend in Grant County, Indiana, remembered that as a young, unmarried man he had often shared a bed with a fugitive slave his family was sheltering. The oldest known letter we have from an African American in Indiana, dated 1829 and written to a North Carolina Quaker woman, is written in terms that suggest friendliness and first-name familiarity, not deference. A brief account from a black man born in Grant County in 1857 affirms his memories of Quaker kindness and charity: visiting schools, providing clothing and shoes for needy pupils, supplying meat and other provisions without concern for payment. "The Friends were a great and good people," he concluded. "My oldest brother and I were both named for Friends, and that shows what my parents thought of them."<sup>29</sup>

What may be most striking is what is missing from the records. The correspondence and diaries of numerous Indiana Friends examined for this article contain many references to African Americans as impoverished, ignorant, and degraded, but almost never were these failures attributed to any innate racial characteristic, even when the Friends were clearly vexed by complaints from former slaves they were shepherding north in the 1820s, or by lack of cleanliness and punctuality among the freed people they were

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<sup>29</sup>Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 121–25; *A Friendly Mission: John Candler's Letters from America, 1853–1854* (Indianapolis, 1951), 47; Joseph Crosfield to Children, September 16, 1865, typescript, 52, Joseph Crosfield Letters (Friends Library, London); Nathan Coggeshall interview, Marion [Indiana] *Leader* clipping, box 79, Siebert Collection; Hannah Elliott to Martha Parker, September 21, 1829, box 1, Parker Papers; Ellwood O. Ellis, *Early Friends in Grant County, Indiana (1825–1913)*, ed. by Willard Heiss (Indianapolis, 1961), 9; "Letter from a Young Woman of Color," *Free Labor Advocate* (New Garden, Indiana), October 8, 1841, 265. Burial plats for Quaker graveyards in Indiana and Ohio before 1860 are scarce. Seven were located as a result of researching this article: the Bloomfield Preparative Meeting in Parke County, Indiana, the Rush Creek Preparative Meeting in Parke County, Indiana, the White Lick Preparative Meeting in Morgan County, Indiana, and the Mill Creek and Sugar Grove Preparative Meetings in Hendricks County, Indiana, all in the Western Yearly Meeting Archives at Earlham; the Nettle Creek Preparative Meeting in Wayne County, Indiana, in the Indiana Yearly Meeting Archives; and the Miami and Springboro Preparative Meetings in Warren County, Ohio, in the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Archives.

teaching in the 1860s. Instead, Friends saw such faults as the inevitable fruits of slavery and prejudice, and placed blame with the oppressors, not the victims.<sup>30</sup>

Thus the experience of Quakers and African Americans in the Midwest was complex. Some Friends certainly did share the attitudes of the larger society; some, perhaps a majority, were simply apathetic on issues relating to race. In the Ohio Valley, Friends of all persuasions favored legal equality, and eschewed the segregation that characterized the world around them. As Forrest Wood points out in *The Arrogance of Faith*, "the Quakers are easy targets because everyone has come to expect more of them."<sup>31</sup> While by contemporary standards observers and critics can find much wanting, by comparison to the rest of white American society between 1800 and 1870 midwestern Quakers were indeed "a great and good people."



<sup>30</sup>Schwarz, *Migrants against Slavery*, 145–46. For Quaker attitudes on these subjects, see William Parker to Josiah Parker, October 8, 1828, box 1, Parker Papers; Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, November 25, 1850; Gershom Perdue Journal, August 18, 1839, March 12, 21, 1841 (Quaker Collection, Wilmington College of Ohio, Wilmington, Ohio); Perdue to William and Jane Crossman, November 1836, *ibid.*; James Jones to Richard Mendenhall, December 18, 1827, Meeting for Sufferings Papers; *Report of Indiana Yearly Meeting's Executive Committee for the Relief of Colored Freedmen* (Richmond, Ind., 1864), 15, 20–47; Rowland and Drusilla Reed to Hannah A. Dickinson, April 18, 1867, Dickinson-Francisco Papers (Friends Historical Library); Walter T. Carpenter Diary, January 11, 1864 (Ohio Historical Society); and Daniel Salamson, ed., "The Diary of Elkanah Beard," *Southern Friend*, XX (Spring 1998), 20.

<sup>31</sup>Wood, *Arrogance of Faith*, 287.