Christian Heroes and Blood-Stained Villains: The Civil War in Historic Peace Church Memory, 1865-1915

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To Amanda and Millie,

For the countless moments of joy, hope, and peace they have brought to me.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the Civil War memory of the three historic peace churches (the Society of Friends, the Mennonites, and the German Baptist Brethren) in the years between 1865 and 1915. It argues that these three groups, in their Civil War remembrance, challenged the culturally prevalent definition of heroism as militaristic in nature, an expression found in military monuments, Decoration Day observances, and Blue-Gray veterans' reunion. The study looks at periodicals, books, and biographies produced by these three religious bodies (and letters and diaries written by individual members) in the fifty years after the war to uncover both their narratives of nonresistant wartime experience and their commentary on the war's aftereffects on Gilded Age and Progressive Era America. In their wartime narratives, the peace churches remembered the warm reception given to them by President Abraham Lincoln, positioned suffering nonresistant conscripts as "Christian soldiers," and occasionally used hagiographic language in order to elevate peace heroes to martyr status. In their postbellum commentary, nonresistants characterized the Civil War as a "de-moralizing" historical event resulting in countless national sins and also sought to present a "demilitarized" historical account of the war which removed the celebration of martial values.

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Introduction

The two-sentence statement, hidden away in the pages of a little-read history written by a twenty-eight year old former politician, appeared inconspicuous enough. In 1886, young Theodore Roosevelt, recently retired from a short stint in the New York State Assembly, authored a profile of longtime Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton. Roosevelt characterized early Missouri as a "lawless and violent" land populated by "pushing, restless, and hardy" people, a frontier zone where simple disputes easily erupted into bloodshed and even high-ranking state officials brandished firearms and reveled in duels. Instead of offering a wholly negative assessment of this climate of violence, however, Roosevelt credited Missourians with manifesting (albeit in exaggerated form) "the characteristic western traits" and then praised Missouri "ruffianism" as a worthy alternative to East Coast "universal peace" and "non-resistance" movements. To drive his point home, Roosevelt then wrote:

> A class of professional non-combatants is as hurtful to the real, healthy growth of a nation as is a class of fire-eaters; for a weakness or folly is nationally as bad as a vice, or worse; and, in the long run, a Quaker may be quite as undesirable a citizen as is a duelist. No man who is not willing to bear arms and to fight for his rights can give a good reason why he should be entitled to the privilege of living in a free community.

Later readers would perhaps chuckle and dismiss these lines as vintage Roosevelt, full of the exaggerated militaristic bluster and masculine bravado which marked the public career of the twenty-sixth American President.[1]

Within the circles of Christian nonresistance, however, the remarks classifying non-combatants as "hurtful" dogged Roosevelt for decades. Making a speech in 1900 in Plainfield, Indiana, a community with a significant Quaker population, Roosevelt backed away from his

[1] Theodore Roosevelt, *American Statesmen: Thomas Hart Benton* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1886), 35-37.

earlier indictment and praised the Society of Friends for their "social and industrial virtue." At this particular venue, Roosevelt classified Quakers as indispensable, rather than "undesirable," American citizens: "That the virtues and righteousness which (Quakers) practice are the foundation of good government cannot be denied, and without them we should never have been able to make the republic what it is and must be." That same year, in a letter written to William Walton of Baltimore, Roosevelt defended the opinions expressed in the Benton biography, noting that he opposed both "the man who acts on inadequate provocation" and "the man who on adequate provocation fails to act." Affirming that time had not altered his beliefs regarding pacifists, Roosevelt nevertheless again made an effort to save political face among Quakers: "…were I now to re-write the sentence, I should certainly so phrase it that it could not be construed as offensive to the Society of Friends, a body whose social virtues and civic righteousness justly command universal respect." As his political star continued to ascend, however, Roosevelt still generated suspicion among Christian nonresistants. In a mysterious letter written in July 1904 to the Mennonite periodical *The Herald of Truth,* W.J. Showalter passed along the objectionable two sentences written by Roosevelt in *The Life of Benton.* Describing himself as "a member of the corps of Washington correspondents," Showalter sounded more like a Democratic Party operative pursuing votes for the upcoming 1904 Presidential election when he concluded his letter, "I only ask that you give the above extract from the utterances of Mr. Roosevelt publicity so that your people may not, without knowing it, vote for a man who might, in the case of war force them to do military service." [2]

[2] *The Friend* 74:15, 27 October 1900, 89; Letter from J. Showalter to John Funk (Editor, *Herald of Truth)*, 1904. Box 102, Folder 4 (Conscientious Objectors). John Funk Collection, 1852-1929. HM1-1. Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen. Goshen, Indiana.

If Theodore Roosevelt was not the nonresistant bogeyman portrayed by Showalter, neither was he simply a rhetorical "straw man" for groups such as the Quakers and Mennonites. Roosevelt's 1886 observations touched a raw nerve within the peace community and prompted a vigorous defense of those holding conscientious scruples. In 1900, the Philadelphia-based Quaker publication *The Friend* still smarted over Roosevelt's earlier comparison between noncombatant and duelist. With the then-current imperialistic crusades of the United States in mind, *The Friend* chided Roosevelt both for likening nonviolence to weakness and ignoring the moral consequences brought about by bearing arms: "Again, after these cruel wars are over, and some thousands of soldiers are merged as individuals amongst the general population, who are to give the police the less trouble…the returning characters that warfare has to show for itself, or the class who conscientiously espouse the cause of peace—the class that has been stigmatized nationally 'as bad as a vice or worse?'" The passing of time and the eventual return home of countless "duelists" from overseas military expeditions, the piece concluded, would either prove or refute Roosevelt's hypothesis regarding who contributed more to the health of the nation. [3]

Fifteen years later, as World War I ravaged Europe, eight "earnest pacifists and college graduates" issued an open letter to Theodore Roosevelt in the *Friends' Messenger.* Once again, the perceived indictment of pacifists as "mollycoddles" by Roosevelt instigated a Quaker rebuttal. For all their differences, both Roosevelt and the Friends found common ground on the necessity of heroism, the ideal of self-sacrifice entailing suffering or even death for "righteousness, justice and honor." Where Quakers objected to the former President, however, was the means of warfare, "the killing and maiming of others," to acquire heroic ends. The letter then proposed a definition of heroism based on Christian nonresistance, "…an aggressive, self-

[3] *The Friend* 74:12, 6 October 1900, 89.

sacrificing, unrelenting good-will, which will endure suffering or death, not to kill or maim an enemy, but to overcome with good the evil that is in him." Noting that Jesus established a kingdom of love by dying for his enemies, the eight Friends took a swipe at Roosevelt and his fellow defenders of military preparedness as they petitioned God for national leaders that would "inspire us with the same high heroism." The arguments found in the above two articles, the moral degeneracy caused by warfare and the imperative of glorifying individuals other than generals and soldiers, served as fundamental elements of an alternative construction of American Christian heroes created in the late-nineteenth century by the historic peace churches.[4]

The immediate historical backdrops for the 1900 editorial in *The Friend* and the 1915 open letter to Theodore Roosevelt were American military incursions into Cuba and the Philippines and the debate over American entry into World War I respectively. Roosevelt's 1886 biography of Thomas Hart Benton, however, predated both of these events. In the same paragraph as the two incendiary sentences about noncombatants, Roosevelt revealed the historical occurrence which triggered his distrust of those who refused to bear arms and fight. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed "the decline of the militant spirit in the Northeast," according to Roosevelt, and such decline resulted in "the undoubted average individual inferiority of the Northern compared to the Southern troops… at the beginning of the great war of the Rebellion." While Roosevelt disagreed with the rabid secessionism of "fire-eaters," he spared no superlatives in praising Southern fighters: "The world has never seen better soldiers than those who followed Lee, and their leader will undoubtedly rank as without any exception the very greatest of all the great captains that the English-speaking peoples have brought forth." Using language similar to the most ardent of Lost Cause apologists, Theodore

[4] *Friends' Messenger* 22:7, October 1915, 4-5.

Roosevelt thus located a particularly heroic spirit within the era of "the great war of the Rebellion," and the most notable "Rough Rider" of American mythology was not alone. In the years between 1865 and 1915, while imperialism and World War I stirred their own conversations regarding bravery, self-sacrifice, and the justification of military force, a cultural battle over the proper representation of heroism also occurred on the older historical terrain of the Civil War.[5]

In the five decades between Appomattox and the debate over American involvement in World War I, the Civil War never drifted far from American consciousness. Indeed, throughout the era, many Americans busily engaged in debating the meaning and legacy of the war. Northern interpretations differed from those in the South, Republican wartime memory clashed with Democratic recollection, and African-American understandings parted ways with white understandings. While *the meaning* of the Civil War was heavily contested in the postbellum era, Americans positioned at differing loci along the sectional, political, and racial spectrum all believed in the transformative power of *the war itself* as historical event. The "Lost Cause" romantic of the South, the "bloody shirt-waver" in the North, and the African-American seeking the fullest realization of racial equality promised at war's end all used wartime military service to validate their respective beliefs and agendas. American culture did its own part in promoting the valorization of Civil War soldiers. The observances of Decoration Day and Memorial Day, the countless Civil War memorials dotting the landscape, and the governmental assistance provided by veterans' pensions, soldiers' homes, and hiring preferences for veterans all represented tangible ways of honoring the living ex-soldier and preserving the memory of the fallen soldier.

[5] Roosevelt, *Thomas Hart Benton,* 37-38.

In an era of corrupt politics and "robber barons," the sacrifices made by the Civil War soldier recalled an earlier, nobler time of self-denying heroism.

Against this widespread cultural adoration of military personnel, a relatively small group of self-designated religious outsiders contributed their own Civil War reminiscences and evaluations and, in so doing, challenged those interpretations of the war's execution and outcome which sanctified military activity. Throughout the postwar years, members of the three historic peace churches (the Society of Friends or Quakers, the Mennonites, and the Brethren) spent considerable time sharing stories of their wartime experiences and offering moral appraisals of the war's aftereffects on American life. Such absorption with the Civil War as historical event seems incongruous for groups who largely declined to fight or, in the case of some Quakers, contribute directly in any way to the military effort (to the point of refusing to take advantage of monetary or humanitarian alternatives to military service). This dissertation argues, however, that during the period from 1865 to 1915, through their Civil War memory members of these three religious bodies embraced radically different ideas about the nature of "heroism," a pacifist revision of virtues such as honor, valor, courage, and (more implicitly) manliness. On both sides of the Mason-Dixon, most Americans considered military exploits to be the great testing ground of heroes, but by establishing the act of conscientious objection as the essence of authentic American heroism, the peace churches critiqued the "military establishment" itself, the cultural celebration of martial values, and the militaristic nationalism of larger "popular" American religious denominations (e.g., Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians). [6]

[6] In this study, "Friends" and "Quakers" will be used interchangeably. "Brethren" refers to the group formally known as the Church of the German Baptist Brethren, but also known by the more pejorative terms "Dunkers," "Dunkards," and "Tunkers" stemming from the group's Radical Reformation origins. This dissertation does not claim that all members of the historic peace groups refrained from fighting. See, for example, Jacquelyn S. Nelson,

This study will examine the periodicals, books, letters, diaries, and biographies composed by peace church members in the fifty years following the war in order to reveal a nonresistant body of Civil War memory. Three general observations can be made about this peace-inspired conceptualization of wartime greatness. First, peace church Civil War memory provided positive examples of heroism in the narratives of courageous male and female noncombatants who remained true to their beliefs while under duress or impressed political and military leaders with the sincerity of their convictions. A corollary of creating alternative Civil War heroes, however, involved razing the reputations of other "heroes" of the American imagination. The conception of peace church heroism thus included hostile characterizations of military personnel, and moralistic condemnations of the perceived evils unleashed by the war and, often by extension, its military participants. Second, the framers of peace church Civil War memory no doubt intended their work to be primarily for internal consumption, a record to give to future fellow nonresistants chronicling the triumphs and trials of a generation enmeshed in an extraordinary American historical event. William Wood, a Quaker living in New York, verbalized these concerns when in 1881 he issued an open appeal in the periodical *The Friends' Review* for "any fact, history, incident or anecdote" concerning Friends and the war. The increasing mortality of the wartime generation gave Wood a sense of urgency in collecting historical reminiscence for Quaker posterity: "As the facts are thus becoming forever lost, it seems necessary that the work should no longer be deferred." In several cases, however, peace church narratives reached an external audience as widely-read influential publications such as *Harper's, Atlantic Weekly, The*

Indiana Quakers Confront the Civil War (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1991) and its contested claim that 21% of Indiana Quakers fought for the Union. The scholarly consensus, however, appears to agree with peace historian Peter Brock that noncombatants "undoubtedly constituted the majority" of these groups as a whole. See Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 734.

New England Magazine, and newspapers across the country published nonresistant stories. To a national readership, peace churches occasionally presented their case for a new perception of heroism.[7]

Finally, the years 1865 to 1915 marked a new epoch in American conscientious objection. The era between the Revolutionary War and the onset of the Civil War gave the peace churches "no great crises of experience," in the words of Quaker historian Rufus Jones, as nonresistants successfully avoided service in both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. Between 1861 and 1865, the exigencies of the war transformed a theoretical nonresistance into a historical nonresistance, a rejection of militaristic imperatives lived out in real time. In the postbellum years under consideration here, in what could be considered the third stage of American conscientious objection, the historical metamorphosed into the mythical. Robert Penn Warren's famous contention that the Civil War constituted "our Homeric period (when) the figures loom up only a little less than gods" applies to peace church heroes as well as generals and soldiers. North Carolina Friend Mary Mendenhall Hobbs virtually replicated Warren by writing, "These were times to make men's hearts quail, and to *stand*, having done all that could be done, was heroic." Fearless noncombatants of the decade received plaudits often bordering on holy veneration, as demonstrated by one annalist of Quaker wartime experience: "Many very good people have said that the spirit of the martyrs no longer exists in the Christian church; but the spirit of our early days and a willingness to suffer for Christ's sake do still live and only need a suitable occasion to be drawn out." It is unclear whether the author intended "our early days"

[7] *Friends' Review* 34:26, 5 February 1881, 409.

to mean the early Christian church or the early Quaker movement, but in either instance the Civil War delivered the first "suitable occasion" for new hallowed Christian heroes on American soil.[8]

The Civil War memory of the peace churches dovetailed nicely with their own longstanding ideal of Christian heroism. For nonresistants, the word "hero" carried a spiritual meaning of bravely but quietly holding fast to Christian principles, especially when those beliefs came under attack. As the war was still being bloodily waged in the summer of 1863, an article entitled "The Society of Friends and the Draft" appeared in the *Delaware County American* naming "a testimony against war" as one of the "peculiarities of doctrine and profession" distinguishing the Quakers from other religious communities. Maintaining "the right of conscience" as the most sacred of human rights, the author, referred to only as "Dr. Parrish," observed young Quaker men in his region suffering for their refusal to fight and held up these individuals as exemplars of steadfast faith. Presumably an outsider looking into the Society of Friends, Dr. Parrish linked heroism to nonresistance and bestowed the honor of greatness upon these noncombatants: "…there is a moral heroism in the submission of such men as are compelled to suffer for conscience sake, which demands the respect and confidence of loyal citizens everywhere." Over three decades later, a Mennonite author still defined heroism as determinedly standing for the right in the face of adversity: "Christian heroism is boldness to carry out our convictions of right, regardless of who may oppose us; to defend and live the true

[8] Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism, Volume II* (London: Macmillan, 1921), 718, 721-22; Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditations on the Centennial* (New York: Random House, 1961), 82; *Quaker Biographies, Series II, Vol. V* (Philadelphia: Society of Friends Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Book Committee, c. 1929), 279; Fernando G. Cartland, *Southern Heroes or the Friends in Wartime* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1895), 143.

principles of the gospel under all circumstances, not only when the circumstances are favorable to us, but in *all* circumstances, favorable or unfavorable."[9]

In the 1890s, as nonresistants sought to wrestle heroism away from its military connotations, their traditional conception of heroism as spiritual endurance grew more oppositional in tone. In 1896, two years before the advent of the Spanish-American War, a Quaker editor scoffed at the "stupid idea" that war was needed periodically to arouse "heroism, virtue, courage, loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice." The "heroic virtues" practiced daily by ordinary men and women confronting death undermined such an argument: "The fireman has a training for heroism and self-sacrifice of a much higher order than that of the soldier, but who would fire a city in order that the firemen might develop their courage? The trained nurse is more heroic than the naval gunner, but who would start a pestilence in order that nurses might have an opportunity to show self-sacrifice?" Two years later, in a recurring theme of Civil War narratives told of peace church conscripts confined against their will, the same Quaker publication extended the reach of heroism: "… the sacrifices of self far away from excitement and enthusiasm…these make our daily, common life infinitely more heroic than most of us realize, and it makes us feel that military heroism has been celebrated at the expense of a still better type." American celebration of military heroism heightened Quaker antagonism in the fall of 1899, as New York City threw a lavish welcome for Admiral George Dewey after his resounding naval victories in the Philippines. *The American Friend* admitted that Dewey only performed the duty asked of him by his country, but the true object of disgust in the editorial appeared to be a society which

[9] "The Society of Friends and the Draft," manuscript written for the *Delaware County American,* August 1863. Box 3, Edward G. Smedley Papers, 1863-1866 Folder. Sharpless-Kite Family Papers, c. 1748-1875. MS Coll. 1111. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; *Herald of Truth* 34:12, 15 June 1897, 181.

turned "upside down with enthusiasm" over "the military chieftain" and "the naval hero": "…our people cannot recognize and properly honor a man until he has slain his thousands and his tens of thousands." These words, spoken in the context of war with the Spanish, captured the essence of postwar peace church Civil War memory. Nonresistants looked at postbellum American culture and found a nation only too eager to honor the Civil War soldier, a fighter pledged, if necessary, to slay his thousands or tens of thousands. In their narratives of the past and their commentary on the war's effects on the present, the historic peace churches sought to celebrate the "still better" heroism practiced away from the battlefield and the individuals who struggled in silence far from the gaze of newspaper reporters, parade organizers, and monument builders.[10]

The following study seeks to interpret Civil War nonresistance by incorporating several branches of the historical discipline. This multifaceted approach starts at the level of belief, examining the individual or religious group's decision to refuse to participate in combat. Recognizing that in times of war such beliefs cannot occur in a vacuum, peace history draws on the perspective of political history as nonresistant actors attempt to influence favorable legislation and stay in the good graces of prominent lawmakers in order to sustain exemption. Once a legislative bill regarding a measure such as conscription becomes reality, military authorities assume the responsibility of enforcement, so peace history frequently intersects with military history. As a collection of narratives describing ordinary men and women living through an extraordinary historical moment, peace history includes social history and its emphasis on those residing outside of the military, political, and economic centers of power. Finally, this dissertation sees peace history coinciding with cultural history. The historic peace churches

[10] *The American Friend* 3:44, 29 October 1896, 1044; *TAF* 5:20, 19 May 1898, 460; *TAF* 6:40, 5 October 1899, 941.

listened to how the larger American culture defined national greatness, what it valued, and who it admired, and responded with their own language, symbols, and motifs intended to foster recognition of and admiration for nonresistant heroes.

Through such an approach, this work seeks to broaden the scholarship involving the relationship between religion and the Civil War. Academic works devoted solely to the experience of the historic peace churches in the Civil War are few in number. *Conscientious Objectors and the Civil War* by Edward Needles Wright is considered the seminal work on Civil War Christian nonresistance, but it is now over eighty years old and is more descriptive than analytical in content.[11] Mennonite scholars James Lehman and Stephen Nolt helped rectify this shortage of scholarship with their insightful 2007 study *Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War,* but their work gives limited space to both Brethren and Quakers.[12] The more numerous general works on Civil War religion largely ignore nonresistance. In *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis,* Mark Noll admirably describes the hermeneutical conflict over slavery between North and South, but fails to address another contentious "theological crisis" involving the strand of scriptural interpretation which favored Christ's radical demands for peace and its tension with submission to civil authorities.[13] Harry Stout's *Upon the Altar of the Nation* purports to be a moral history of the Civil War, but by measuring the execution of the war against the standards of just war theory (*jus in bello*), Stout limits his discussion of moral issues to military affairs without considering the pacifist alternative. [14] In his claim that American civil

[11] Edward Needles Wright, *Conscientious Objectors in the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931).
[12] James O. Lehman and Stephen M. Nolt, *Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).
[13] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
[14] Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006), xi-xvi.

religion both prolonged the war and fueled the intensity with which it was fought, Stout joins other scholars who argue that nationalism infiltrated religious sentiment in both the Union and the Confederacy during the war. [15] One cannot deny that government leaders and clergy alike used religion as an instrument to bolster military recruitment, sustain troop morale, and explain crushing battlefield defeat. The experiences and memory of the Civil War nonresistants, however, prove that religion was more than a tool of nationalist coercion and that Christians did not always easily acquiesce to the wartime demands of the state. As Lehman and Nolt write in their history of Civil War-era Mennonites, "If spiritual convictions could *keep* people from participating in a national crusade and not just lend justification, then religion legitimately becomes an independent variable in the interpretation of human choices that shaped the 1860s rather than a secondary measure of something else." For their part, members of the peace churches distinguished Christian nationalism from Christian patriotism, a professed "love of the land" and strong Unionism (among members in both the Union and Confederacy) which nevertheless refused to subscribe to the theory, "My country, right or wrong." [16]

The latest attempt to write a sweeping religious narrative of the Civil War still stresses the chokehold of Union and Confederate nationalism on religion. In *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, George Rable seeks to synthesize the variegated religious responses to the war and concludes that many Americans, including the peace churches, believed in "a providential narrative" which saw God's hand in the "causes, course, and consequences" of the war.

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[15] Ibid., xvi, xxii. See also James W. Silver, *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Company, 1957); James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), and Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

[16] Lehman and Nolt, *Mennonites and the Civil War,* 7, emphasis mine.

Generally speaking, Rable is correct, but the wartime and postbellum nonresistant assumptions about *who God favored* and *why God favored them* differed drastically from other Christian denominations. As Abraham Lincoln insightfully observed in his second inaugural address, war supporters in both the North and South read the same Bible and petitioned the same God for defeating the military and political "enemy." Peace churches, however, located "God's chosen people" in a spiritual rather than a national community and, in their telling, received favored status from the divine precisely because of their refusal to fight. While nonresistants shared the belief in a providential world where God worked out his plans and purposes, the God who commanded swords beat into plowshares bore little resemblance to the God who "loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword." Thus, while Rable needs the story of the nonresistants to make his religious history comprehensive, setting the peace churches alongside Baptists, Methodists, and other denominations supporting the war quickly becomes a confusing exercise in incongruity. [17]

A second aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the scholarly body of work concerning Civil War memory. While fighting formally ceased in April 1865, the Civil War lived on in American life for decades through personal narratives and corporate ritual conducted at the local, sectional, and national levels. For years, "Civil War memory" scholarship appeared to focus primarily on the creation and sustainment of the "Lost Cause" myth in the former

[17] George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 9. This same confusing approach to locating the peace churches within Civil War Christianity can be found in the recent monograph *A Visitation of God* by Sean A. Scott. Scott includes Mennonites John Brenneman and John Funk and their nonresistant writings as part of his discussion of "Northern interpretations" of the war, but his thesis states, "The majority of ministers and laymen who frequently supported Federal armies…effectively clothed patriotism in spiritual garb. In the process of trying to create a sacred nation, they trivialized religion by making it the handmaiden of politics." See Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 125-27, 266.

Confederacy, but in the past decade works by scholars such as Drew Gilpin Faust and David Blight have explored exciting new vistas of the war's cultural, social, and political effects on postbellum America.[18] Blight's groundbreaking 2001 book *Race and Reunion* serves as a key inspiration for this dissertation. In what he terms "a clash of contending memories," Blight argues that three distinct Civil War "visions" battled for the heart and soul of American public memory in the fifty years after the war. By the time World War I arrived, "reconciliationist" and "white supremacist" visions had joined forces to discredit an "emancipationist" remembrance of the war as, in Blight's estimation, healing between North and South came at the expense of racial progress.[19]

This dissertation inserts militarism in place of race into Blight's fundamental thesis and finds parallels. One of the underlying themes of *Race and Reunion* is that the battle for public memory encompasses more than stale stories and benign symbols; power ultimately resides in the hands of those who control historical memory. Throughout the postwar era, but particularly in a more belligerent decade such as the 1890s, the allure of martial glory caused peace memory to appear irrelevant and even subversive to national interests. The heroic reputation of their fighting fathers, for example, no doubt induced the sons of the Civil War generation to enlist in the Spanish-American War alongside physically-able Civil War veterans. Theodore Roosevelt asserted as much when he promoted American imperialism by looking back to the "iron in the

[18] Notable examples of influential "Lost Cause" studies include Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970); Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), and Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). See Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008) and David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[19] Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 1-5.

blood of our fathers, the men who upheld the wisdom of Lincoln, and bore the sword or rifle in the armies of Grant!"[20] With Civil War soldiers being held up as the original exemplars of "the strenuous life" and the crusades in Cuba and the Philippines seemingly vindicating the courage of the Southern soldier, a "masculinized" memory of the Civil War prevailed, recognition of military bravery accelerated the pace of sectional reconciliation, and nonresistance faded in the American popular mind, if it was there in the first place.[21] The trajectory of the pacifism espoused by the historic peace churches thus closely mirrored the fate of the emancipationist vision uncovered by Blight. Nonresistance and the pursuit of racial justice appeared largely discredited by the time American troops joined World War I, but if both receded to the peripheries of American society, neither completely disappeared, as developments in the mid-twentieth century would prove. If the civil rights movement brought the racial causes and consequences of the Civil War back into the American consciousness, Vietnam elevated, for many, the moral objectives of military activity over the ideals of soldierly bravery and devotion.[22]

For the historic peace churches, the Civil War represented a struggle of living out theological and intellectual beliefs first articulated in the European sixteenth-and-seventeenth

[20] Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Century, 1901), 4-5; quoted in George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965; reprint, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 224-25.

[21] Alice Fahs argues that "masculinized memory" of the Civil War did not supplant "a feminized antebellum culture of sentimentalism" until the 1880s and 1890s, and further defines this shift in interpretation as a "reconceptualization of the war as primarily a military event rather than a larger social event involving entire societies both north and south." See Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 110, 314. For more on the role of the Spanish-American War in effecting sectional reconciliation, see Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 351-53 and Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy,* 145-49.

[22] Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 391.

centuries in the American nineteenth century. Both the Mennonites (originating around 1536 when Menno Simons left the Roman Catholic Church) and the German Baptist Brethren (founded in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany) owed a great theological debt to the Anabaptism forged during the early sixteenth-century Radical Reformation, while the Friends arose out of the same seventeenth-century milieu that gave birth to English Puritanism. Despite their theological differences, all three viewed nonresistance, the refusal to counteract evil with violence, as one of the vital doctrines of the Christian faith. For literary variety, this dissertation will occasionally use the terms "pacifist," "noncombatant," and "conscientious objector" to describe members of the peace churches, but the self-designation preferred by Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren during the Civil War era was "nonresistant," a point of reference derived from Christ's teaching in the gospel of Matthew, "…do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." This one verse of scripture held countless ramifications for social relationships in day-to-day living (e.g., a warning against arguing, gossiping, or bringing lawsuits), but the peace churches also found this teaching to be justification for refusing involvement in war and military service. John Funk (1835-1930), one of the prominent Mennonite writers and leaders of the late-nineteenth century, referred to nonresistance as both "the anti-war doctrine" and a "peculiarly strange doctrine…which the world cannot understand, which the great mass of professed Christians reject and very few accept." [23]

[23] Matt. 5:39 NASB (New American Standard Bible); John Funk Sermon Notes, n.d. Box 59, Folder 18 (Peace/Nonresistance). John Funk Collection, 1852-1929. HM1-1. Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen. Goshen, Indiana. For concise, easy-to-read accounts of the origins of the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends respectively, see William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 151-76; Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1997), 23-50; and Brock, *Pacifism,* 8-13. The term "conscientious objector" did not appear in popular usage until the twentieth century, while the phrase "historic peace churches" originated at a conference held in North Newton, Kansas in 1935. See Wright, *Conscientious*

In writing these words, Funk tapped into an Anabaptist philosophy developed well over three centuries earlier. The Anabaptist promotion of nonresistance as a crucial Christian belief grew directly out of the historical experience of contention with and occasional persecution by European governmental authorities. On the one hand, Anabaptists believed that God himself instituted earthly government as a means of preserving order. John Funk spoke for Anabaptists past and present when he wrote, "We believe in government. There is no government except of God, the powers that are ordained are ordained of God." In language similar to that used by the apostle Paul in Romans 13, Funk maintained that submission to the civil authorities also involved paying "taxes and assessments of whatever form" and refraining from speaking ill of the nation's rulers.[24]

If God intended for the state to be in charge of earthly affairs and the church to reign supreme in the spiritual sphere, however, this arrangement was rarely tidy. Funk proclaimed, "…where government requires us to do wrong or do what the word forbids we must obey God rather than men," and warfare offered a significant example of the tenuous relationship between Christ and Caesar. Peace churches declined to fight on the basis of spiritual precepts, while state authorities upheld military service as an obligation of citizenship. Nonresistants then countered that citizenship was more than political in nature. An 1868 article in the John Funk-edited Mennonite publication *The Herald of Truth* drew an analogy between a Christian and a citizen of England residing in America as "a stranger and a foreigner." The Englishman could not vote or exercise other rights of the "fully naturalized" because he had not assumed the "obligations of allegiance" to America; likewise, as "spiritual citizens," Christians "cannot, nor do they desire to

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Objectors, 1, and Donald B. Kraybill, ed., *Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 6.

[24] John Funk Sermon Notes.

retain full citizenship in the world with those that belong to the worldly kingdom." Thus, in Anabaptist thought, two kingdoms existed, one temporal and one eternal, and when the two came into conflict, the heavenly king trumped the earthly magistrate.[25]

This "two kingdom" theology with its sharply delineated boundaries between church and state profoundly influenced Anabaptist views on political participation as well as military enlistment. The state occasionally had to resort to the use of "carnal weapons" in order to fulfill its divinely ordained function of fighting evil and preserving order. This disqualified Anabaptist Christians from holding office, the *Herald of Truth* argued, as the job requirements made Christians accessories to acts of violence: "Those…who profess and desire to be non-resistant, usually also maintain that it is not right for a non-resistant man to hold any worldly office, in which violence is required, since this would be inconsistent with a non-resistant profession." John Funk applied the same line of reasoning to jury duty: "It is wrong to kill a fellow mortal under any circumstance…For that reason it would be wrong for a child of God to sit on a jury where human life is at stake." [26]

The fear of finding metaphorical blood on their hands also steered some Mennonites away from the polling place. One such Mennonite wrote in the *Herald of Truth*, "…if it is an inconsistency for a non-resistant man to hold a worldly and civil office, it must unquestionably be also an inconsistency for him to help choose or vote another into such offices. For what it is a sin for me to do, it is also a sin for me to help put on another to do." John Funk held a much less

[25] John Funk Sermon Notes; *Herald of Truth* 5:6, June 1868, 89; Brock, *Pacifism,* 3-8.
[26] *Herald of Truth* 5:6, June 1868, 89; John Funk Sermon Notes.

adamant stance towards elections as he simply commented, "…don't go if you do not feel that you can do it with a good conscience."[27]

For all the time spent considering the implications of state-authorized violence for office-holding and voting, however, the Anabaptist position on warfare contained at least one glaring theological inconsistency. By conceding the state's need occasionally to wage warfare but denying that the state's responsibility extended to themselves, Mennonites and Brethren claimed a spiritual exclusivity which appeared to fly in the face of Biblical principles. As one Brethren author writing in the 1940s summarized the Civil War-era views of his predecessors, "If the civil government must do something which a Christian cannot, then it is some men's duty not to be Christian." This viewpoint thus exposed Anabaptist groups and the pacifism they practiced to charges of legalism, sectarianism, and "self-preservationism."[28]

In contrast to Anabaptists, Quakers practiced a more experiential and quietistic faith. The doctrine of "the Inner Light" distinguished Friends from other Protestants with its emphasis on "the direct revelation of Christ to the soul," or, as seventeenth-century Quaker Robert Barclay defined it, "the stamp of God's spirit…known by inward acquaintance." While Quakers maintained that this inner revelation of the spirit of Christ did not invalidate or contradict the word of scripture, their form of nonresistance grew more out of an intuitive sense of the evil of war than the Biblical literalism of the Mennonites and Brethren. If, for Anabaptists, warfare created conflict between the state and church, Quakers found the great struggle of wartime to be

[27] Ibid.

[28] Brock, *Pacifism,* 3-8; Edward Frantz quote in Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708-1941* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1944), 120. For a complete and cogent critique of the Anabaptist attitude towards the state and warfare, see Bowman, *Brethren and War,* 119-22. For Mennonite patterns of and disputes over antebellum and Civil War-era voting, see Lehman and Nolt, *Mennonites and the Civil War,* 92-95, 112-15, 179-82.

between the government and the individual conscience. In May 1861, one month after the firing on Fort Sumter, the Meeting for Sufferings of the Western Yearly Meeting (comprising all Friends meetings in Western and Southern Indiana, and Eastern Illinois) addressed "the commotion which so much pervades our beloved country." Like their Anabaptist contemporaries, Friends believed in submitting to the dictates of the state and paying "lawful tribute" to the authorities, albeit with the qualification that "we cannot for conscience sake comply with some things enjoined by human laws." When the state encroached on religious matters, Quakers were compelled to follow the stirrings of the Spirit instead: "While the citizen gives support to human government as ordained by authority of the Divine Lawgiver, he is in no wise deprived of remonstrating against such things as are evidently incompatible with the Divine Law." Encouraging suffering for the sake of principle over active compliance with un-Christian laws, the Meeting of Sufferings sounded like any good Anabaptist when it declared, "…he is the best citizen of Earth whose citizenship is in Heaven." As will be shown later, many Friends during the Civil War heeded this advice by choosing conscience-driven suffering over state-authorized instruments for military exemption.[29]

Quiet inner reflection constituted the core of Quaker theology, but this did not automatically lead Friends towards a retreat into social seclusion. The same "Inner Light" dwelling in each woman and man offering the possibility of personal salvation was also capable of regenerating society, and this principle made the Quaker worldview considerably more optimistic than its Mennonite and Brethren counterparts. Peace historian Peter Brock provides

[29] Robert Barclay quote in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 177; Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 2; Brock, *Pacifism,* 8; Report of Meeting for Sufferings of Western Yearly Meeting, 2 May 1861. Box 1, Folder 1. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

further helpful contrast when he differentiates the "nonviolent resistance" of Quakers (the belief that "unrighteousness must be cast down, but not with the weapons of unrighteousness") from the more isolationist "nonresistance" of the Anabaptists. In 1869, while remembering the recent Civil War experience, *The Friends' Review* congratulated Quaker readers for upholding their reputation as "salt of the earth" during the bloody national conflict: "The mission of Friends as a people has never been merely to fold around themselves a cloak of isolation, leaving the rest of mankind to find for themselves the dove-like wings with which they might soar from earthly to heavenly things." Friends thus drew less pronounced borders between themselves and civil authorities than the Anabaptists. The universality of the indwelling Spirit made a "godly ruler" a distinct possibility, the state could be a positive source of reform rather than simply a bulwark against evil, and voting was seen as a perfectly legitimate exercise provided one did not endorse a "directly warlike function." While Mennonites and Brethren combatted worldly contamination, Quakers saw their mission as redemption of self and society, a "leavening" influence of light and life where sin and injustice existed.[30]

History, however, often wreaks havoc with cherished theoretical assumptions, and the Civil War created moral dilemmas involving the collision of theology with political reality. First, going back to the eighteenth century (if not earlier), the historic peace churches had formally denounced slavery as a gross iniquity, but the war forced nonresistants to weigh the evil of chattel bondage against the evil of warfare. In the first month of 1865, *The Friend* marveled at the efficacy of the war in bringing about "the probable extirpation of slavery" and referred to the extermination of this "cherished evil" as "one of the most extraordinary events that history has had to record." As proof of the extraordinary nature of this historical moment, the article

[30] Brock, *Pacifism,* 9-10, 756; *Friends' Review* 23:1, 28 August 1869, 10.

contained a lengthy list of longstanding abominations directly attributable to slavery including "the ingenuity with which… laws were framed so as to render emancipation hopeless," "the universal tone of education given the young… in justification of slavery," and "the prostitution of the pulpit to advocate (slavery's) compatibility with the requirements and spirit of the gospel." The firm, evil grip of slavery on the national consciousness did not, however, necessitate a call to arms for its removal. In a statement issued in May 1865, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting affirmed its commitment to peace, whether war provided subsequent moral victories or not: "We are convinced that war, under any and every circumstance, is opposed to the plain commands and the benign precepts of Christ." The lure of either "plausible reasoning" or "the military spirit" often proved difficult to resist, the Meeting continued, but fighting to secure emancipation, or to preserve the Union, or under the compulsion of conscription law, all represented compromise of the Christian testimony.[31]

Voting during wartime also created a moral quandary for the peace churches. Fearing their support of the Union would be questioned, most nonresistants stringently distanced themselves from both "Copperheads" and "slackers." The New York (Orthodox) Yearly Meeting of Friends issued a statement in September 1863 designed to alleviate uncertainty in the public mind: "…it is cause of embarrassment to us at this time, that unscrupulous men, assuming the name of peace makers, are doing all they can to further the objects of those who seek to destroy our general Government, and to rivet the chains of slavery in this land." Voting Republican, on the other hand, opened peace churches to the charge that they supported military action and

[31] *The Friend* 38:21, 21 January 1865, 167; *Friend* 38:36, 6 May 1865, 287. For more on the development of antislavery thought in the respective peace churches, see Brock, *Pacifism,* 52-55, 71-74, 360-63; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 61-64; Lehman and Nolt, *Mennonites and the Civil War,* 29-32; and Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 265-70. Fewer Friends in Philadelphia fought for the Union than those under the jurisdiction of the Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings. See Hamm, *Transformation of Quakerism,* 68-69.

favored prolonging the war. One Quaker author eloquently described the tension involved between electoral support of the Lincoln administration and refusing military service:

> The President we have aided to elect, in the fulfillment of his official duty, calls upon us, through his subordinate, to do our share of military service…Our demanding officer is struck with surprise, and inquires where our Christianity and conscientious scruples were at the time we voted for the President, whose official duties, in part, we knew to be of a military character…Is there not some reason to fear that those who, without scruple, submit to military burdens themselves, may conclude that Friends' testimony against war must be grounded upon a principle possessed of remarkable elasticity? Can we escape the conviction, that willingly to countenance war, even indirectly, is to be in some degree responsible for its evils..

The editor of the *Lancaster (Pennsylvania) Intelligencer*, a fiercely anti-Republican paper, warned that blanket exemptions for groups such as the Mennonites only produced an "invidious distinction between sects or denominations" and reminded readers that "nearly the entire membership" of local nonresistants supported the "Abolition party." Defenders of the peace churches in other Lancaster area papers argued that pacifist belief in no ways nullified the "most sacred political duty" of voting, but nonresistants themselves wrestled with the implications of wartime ballot-casting. After receiving a query concerning the advisability of voting, the 1864 Brethren Annual Meeting offered an indirect answer appearing to authorize political withdrawal: "We exhort the brethren to steadfastness in the faith…and to endure whatever sufferings and to make whatever sacrifice the maintaining of the principle may require, and not to encourage in any way the practice of war."[32]

It was, however, the proper response to federal conscription, the challenge of gaining exemption from military service through means which would not aid the war effort, which became the great crisis of conscience for many nonresistants throughout the war. Six months

[32] Meeting for Sufferings of New York (Orthodox) Yearly Meeting Minutes, May 1863, quoted in Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 2; *Friends' Intelligencer* 17:45, quoted in Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 41; *Lancaster Intelligencer,* October/November 1862, quoted in Lehman and Nolt, *Mennonites and the Civil War,* 93, 95; 1864 Brethren Annual Meeting, quoted in Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 281.

after hostilities officially commenced, *The Friend* still held out hope that an abundance of volunteers would render Union conscription unnecessary: "The government has satisfactory assurances that there will be as many volunteers tendered as will be needed, without resorting to drafting, and has, therefore, refused to sanction the latter process for filling the ranks of the army." The Federal Militia Act of July 17, 1862 diminished such optimism by granting the President authorization to muster state militia members into the Union army, and Abraham Lincoln promptly exercised this expanded executive authority the next month by calling for 300,000 men for nine-month service. When this legislation did not produce the desired number of soldiers, a full-fledged federal conscription act passed on March 3, 1863. The law made no mention of an exemption for religious conscientious objection but did provide exemption for those who procured a substitute (exempting the draftee for the duration of the war) or paid a $300 commutation fee (exempting the draftee from the current draft only). Both alternatives proved disappointing to Friends. Quakers detested the thought of paying others to commit a sinful act, and found no difference between paying commutation fees and furnishing a substitute, as the proceeds of commutation money went towards hiring soldiers. A subsequent act approved by Congress on February 24, 1864 exempted those "members of religious denominations, who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms" who served in military hospitals, contributed to the welfare of freedmen, or paid a fee of $300. The legislation promised nonresistants that commutation fees would be applied to "the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers," but Quakers remained unimpressed. *The Friend* criticized the bill as "an assumption on the part of the government of a right to oblige the subject to violate his conscience," a demand for money or services in exchange for religious freedom. In a letter to a fellow Quaker, Philadelphia Friend Elton Gifford found that, for all its humanitarian intentions,

the 1864 Draft Act carried an invidious threat to Quaker liberty: "…in reality we are in a worse position than before as they will very naturally say that the Govt. has done what it could for you…and now you will not accept it, we will have to comply with the Law &c." [33]

Despite a much smaller numerical presence of peace church members in the South than in the North, the Confederacy officially recognized nonresistants before the Union did.[34] In the first year of the war, individual southern states oversaw the draft and exemption fees varied from as little as $100 in North Carolina to an exorbitant levy in Virginia of $500 plus two percent of the applicant's taxable property. The Confederacy, however, assumed full control of the conscription process in April 1862 through an act which allowed draftees to provide substitutes but did nothing to recognize the scruples of nonresistants. On October 11, 1862, in the same sweeping exemption act containing the infamous "twenty negro" provision for plantation overseers, the Confederacy released Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren, and a shadowy fourth group known as the "Nazarenes" from military service upon provision of a substitute or payment of a $500 tax. Those nonresistants willing to pay an exemption fee complained about the onerous "double taxation" caused by state and Confederate commutation fees. Quakers, on the other hand,

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[33] Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 65, 82; Brock, *Pacifism,* 734-38; James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 492-93, 600-02; *The Friend* 35:5 and 37:27, quoted in Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 49, 84; Letter from Elton Gifford, March 1864. Box 3, Edward G. Smedley Papers, 1863-1866 Folder. Sharpless-Kite Family Papers, c. 1748-1875. MS Coll. 1111. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania. For both the 1863 Conscription Act and the 1864 Draft Act, see *Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America, Vols. XII and XIII* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company: 1863-65), Vol. XII, 731-37 and Vol. XIII, 9. For full-length scholarly studies of Union conscription, see Eugene Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971) and James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991).

[34] In a memorial dated April 14, 1862, the Meeting of Sufferings of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends estimated that the number of Quakers in the Confederacy was less than 10,000 compared to around 200,000 in the North. See Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 99. A few years later, the NCYM, easily the largest group of Quakers in the South, placed their 1861 membership around 2,000. See North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, *An Account of the Sufferings of Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, in Support of their Testimony Against War, from 1861 to 1865* (Baltimore: William K. Boyle, 1868), 6.

objected to the act on more philosophical grounds. The North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, assembled in early November 1862, confirmed its commitment to paying "tributes" and "customs" due to the government, but not at the expense of free religious practice: "…we cannot conscientiously pay the specified tax, it being imposed upon us on account of our principles, as the price exacted of us for religious liberty." [35]

As the war progressed and the manpower limitations of the Confederacy became increasingly evident, the threat of removing exemption hovered over the nonresistants and other protected classes. In a speech before his Congress in December 1863, Confederate President Jefferson Davis pointed to the large-scale conscription efforts of "the enemy" in the North and concluded that "no effort must be spared to add largely to our effective force as promptly as possible." The measures that Davis recommended to increase the pool of prospective soldiers included "modifying the exemption law" and restoring all "improperly absent" individuals to the military, phrases with ominous implications for nonresistants. In response to these threats, a letter written to Davis by a group of North Carolina Friends argued that the agricultural expertise of nonresistants more than overshadowed their military usefulness: "…we can confidently state our belief that (Friends) will be of more real service to the country if allowed to pursue their usual occupations of farming &c. than if forced into the army when according to one of their primary principles they could not in any event bear arms." On March 18, 1865, in one final act of

[35] Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 100, 104-06; Brock, *Pacifism,* 764-69; McPherson, *Battle Cry,* 430-32, 611-12; North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes from November 3 1862 quoted in Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 107-08. For the October 11, 1862 Confederate Exemption Act, see James M. Matthews, ed., *The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America,* Vol. II (Richmond, Va.: R.M. Smith, 1862), 78 (First Congress, Second Session). For a dated but still helpful study of Confederate conscription, see Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York: Macmillan, 1924). For more on the "Nazarenes," a religious group seemingly lost to history, see Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 6-7, but Wright's contention that Nazarenes were mystics from the Ephrata commune in Pennsylvania appears far-fetched.

desperation, the Confederate Senate approved a bill entitled "An act to diminish the number of exemptions and details," but the end of the war made this legislation irrelevant. Thus, the 1862 exemption act notwithstanding, the position of nonresistants in the Confederacy remained constantly in jeopardy throughout the war. While the Confederacy gave nonresistants alternatives to military service, commutation was not always respected by officers and privates at the individual level, and all exemption (as was also true in the North) could be considered conditional in nature, a privilege granted by the state with strings attached.[36]

The thorny issue of paying commutation fees and the larger debates over absolute versus conditional exemption, or exemption versus equivalency, divided Mennonites and Brethren from the Friends (at least in their official pronouncements). For the two peace churches influenced by Anabaptism, exemption fees represented a general tax paid in "loyal support of our civil authorities." If the state was a divinely-ordained institution worthy of tribute, the great question for Mennonites and Brethren was not *whether* to pay commutation fees, but rather *how* to raise the necessary funds. With the threat of a draft on the horizon in February 1865 (a draft which never materialized), the *Herald of Truth* urged Mennonite congregations to establish "a general fund, so that when a brother from any congregation is drafted, his commutation fee should be paid out of this general fund." Such a fund, the article reasoned, would both preserve the integrity of nonresistance and build unity as Mennonites joined in "a common cause and…a common interest in the great work of human redemption and our soul's salvation." Quakers, on the other hand, made a bolder distinction between "ordinary taxes…for support of government"

[36] Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 120, 151; Jefferson Davis quote in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, including the Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865,* Volume I (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1905), 370. Letter from North Carolina Yearly Meeting members to Jefferson Davis, 16 March 1864. Box 2, Folder 4. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

and "taxes…imposed for the purpose of buying guns, drums, colors or for other war-like purposes." The Society of Friends also used more of the language of human liberty, as documented in a memorial written by the Indiana Yearly Meeting to members of the House and Senate in late 1863. Referring to monies paid or services rendered in lieu of military service as "a compromise of vital principle," the Meeting drew inspiration from the Founding Fathers when it proclaimed, "We further believe that liberty of conscience is both a civil and religious right, inalienable, and not to be restricted by human laws," and any attempt to place a price-tag on religious conscience ran "contrary to the genius and spirit of our free and republican government."[37]

The same "free and republican government" which promised the free exercise of religious belief, however, also discouraged absolute exemption for reasons of personal faith. In the summer of 1862, prior to the presence of federal conscription in the Union, *The New York Herald* demanded to know why New York state law relieved Quakers from mandatory military service: "Why should (Quakers and Shakers) be exempted any more than the Catholic, the Methodist, the Presbyterian or the Mormon?" Government representatives no doubt asked themselves the same question. While American democracy theoretically provided a safe haven for religious beliefs, it also sought to ensure that no individual or group of individuals received special favors. In the clash of the ideal of religious freedom with the preservation of equality,

[37] Mennonite scholar Theron F. Schlabach distinguishes between "exemption" in its unconditional meaning and "equivalency" in *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1988), 174, 199; Brock, *Pacifism*, 783; *Herald of Truth* 2:1, January 1865, 7; Meeting for Sufferings of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 3 February 1863 minutes in NCYM Meeting for Sufferings Records, 1860-1881. Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College. Greensboro, North Carolina; Memorial from Meeting of Sufferings of Indiana Yearly Meeting, 22 December 1863, in William H.S. Wood Collection, Box 1, Folder 2.

exemption, in the truest sense of the word, on religious grounds was not to be attained in either the Union or Confederacy.[38]

Southern Friends more freely admitted to paying commutation fees than their spiritual counterparts in the Northeast. Within the North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 182 conscripted male members paid the commutation fee, while only seven refused to pay out of principle. Isham Cox, a prominent member of the North Carolina Meeting, confirmed these numbers when several years after the war he wrote, "…those who were the immediate sufferers generally appeared more willing to suffer in *purse* than in *person* and consequently (with a few exceptions) complied with the law, at the same time protesting against the justice of such a requisition on the part of the authorities." At the end of 1868, *The Friend* published an article which, at first glance, expressed sympathy for Quakers in North Carolina in their recent wartime travails. After the Philadelphia paper bemoaned the impoverishment and "cruel persecution" of their fellow Friends, however, it attacked North Carolina Quakers for paying exemption fees and therefore manifesting a "deficiency in maintaining the testimony against war." *The Friend* accused Quakers in the Tar Heel State of contributing to "the utter repugnance of the war system" and placing themselves at risk for further government interference: "…if we once admit that government may punish the people by fine, for serving their Almighty Father according to their conscientious belief of what He requires of them, we grant the principle on which a State religion is founded, and sanction the persecution exercised to force all to comply with it." All the indignation emanating from the avowed City of Brotherly Love, however, masked the compromise of absolutist principles occurring in southeastern Pennsylvania. A report compiled by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1866 revealed that, of the 150 Meeting members drafted,

[38] *The New York Herald,* 18 August 1862.

thirty-four were released from duty when others paid their commutation fee ("generally without their privity or consent," the Meeting noted), twenty-four paid the $300 fee themselves, seven hired substitutes, and four entered the army.[39]

"Fighting Quakers" and their postwar place in the Society posed a special dilemma for Friends. In an address circulated to Friends throughout North America in 1863, the London Yearly Meeting acknowledged that the issues appeared so momentous and the influences so persuasive in the Civil War that bearing arms was irresistible for some ("by comparison very few") young Friends: "We can, to some extent, understand how, under the pressure of popular excitement, (Friends who fought) may believe themselves to be actuated by a sense of duty to a Govt. under which they feel that they have been greatly blessed." Because love and reconciliation lay at the heart of Quaker belief and perhaps because the war resulted in the end of slavery and a preserved Union, local meetings rarely disowned combatant members permanently, yet typically required "an acknowledgment of error" from transgressing Quakers before receiving them back into the fold. Nathan Winslow Jr. expressed his personal contrition to the Back Creek Monthly Meeting in Randolph County, North Carolina in a confession written in the summer of 1863:

> I, Nathan Winslow Jr., was reared a member of the Society of Back Creek Church and during that time there were some principles instilled into my mind which I shall never forget. But since then I have broke loose from the above society and run at large with the vain things of this world, Bearing arms against my fellow man, against the laws of God, and against the laws of the above Society; until ultimately time and observation have proven plainly to me the impropriety of so doing. I therefore ask and beg that the above Society will again receive me into its keeping, that by its so doing I may be restrained from some of the many evils

[39] Abbie Rogers, "Confederates and Quakers: The Shared Wartime Experience," *Quaker History* 99:2 (Fall 2010): 10; *A Brief Account of the Life and Travels of Isham Cox, Written by Himself,* p. 11. Isham Cox Papers. MS Coll. 234. Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College. Greensboro, North Carolina; *The Friend* 42:15, 5 December 1868, 119; Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia (Orthodox) Yearly Meeting, 13 April 1866, quoted in Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 183.

incidental to the kind of life I was leading.

A subsequent face-to-face meeting with Winslow apparently satisfied church leaders, as the clerk endorsed Winslow's application for reinstatement: "From his conversation I am fully of the opinion that he has become to have conscientious scruples against bearing arms." [40]

If the absolutist rhetoric of Quaker Yearly Meetings often failed to reflect local reality, maybe it was because such rhetoric was misguided in the first place, one Quaker suggested. Writing in 1881, John Thomas, a Friend living in New York, found that many of his spiritual compatriots "labored under a mistake" during the recent war. A fee paid or service provided which would go "directly and wholly to employ others to fight" was understandably unacceptable to Thomas. When, however, the Washington government offered the Friends humanitarian alternatives to military service such as working in hospitals in 1864, Quakers demurred with the objection that "they were not to pay any fine or tax in lieu thereof." Thomas believed that this "old rule" weakened Quaker testimony at a time when their light had great potential for shining: "…they refused to do a work even of mercy, when offered to them. They not only refused to do evil but to do good also."[41]

Effectively ignoring those peace church members who paid commutation fees, provided substitutes, performed alternative service, or fought, an absolutist mindset dominated postbellum peace church Civil War memory. The benevolence of a nonresistant working in a military hospital or the bravery of a peace church member who dared fight for emancipation or the sanctity of the Union were nowhere to be found in Civil War reminiscences. It was the quiet but

[40] Brock, *Pacifism,* 728-34; Address from London Yearly Meeting, May 1863, William H.S. Wood Collection, Box 1, Folder 1; Letter from Nathan Winslow Jr., 8 July 1863 and Back Creek Monthly Meeting response, William H.S. Wood Collection, Box 2, Folder 5.

[41] Letter from John J. Thomas, 7 February 1881, William H.S. Wood Collection, Box 2, Folder 3.

resolute individuals, those few who refused to acquiesce in any way to the military establishment and its political backers, those conscripts and civilians who suffered in person and purse while upholding the traditional peace testimony, which nonresistants of later decades would designate as authentic heroes.

The historic peace churches propagated their unique recollection of the Civil War during a time of increased interaction with American culture. These stories instructed postwar nonresistants on how to maintain traditional principles while acting resolutely American. Before the Civil War, the collapse of the Holy Experiment in Pennsylvania and the trauma of their Revolutionary War experience forced American Quakers into what peace historian Peter Brock calls a period of "widespread aloofness from politics (and) a withdrawal from society" in the antebellum years. Brethren and Mennonites used their agricultural lifestyle and their German language as a bulwark against cultural intrusions in the years before the war. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, however, dissension and division racked all three religious bodies, with the essential dispute being the pace and extent of American acculturation. By 1890, American Orthodox Quakerism consisted of three factions: a conservative group (Wilburites) dedicated to traditional Quaker ministry and worship, a second group inspired by the Holiness movement placing emphases on faith healing and premillennialism, and a final group (Gurneyites/Moderates) initially influenced by evangelicalism but open to more progressive stances such as the social Gospel and theistic evolution late in the nineteenth century. Brethren underwent a three-way conservative-moderate-progressive split in the early 1880's over issues such as the propriety of higher education, uniformity in dress, and the adoption of evangelistic techniques such as the protracted meeting, religious periodicals, and

Sunday schools. The same factors inspired at least four major schisms within the North American Mennonite community in the years between 1872 and 1901.[42] During this period of upheaval, members of all three groups wrestled with the great tension of how to preserve their core theological principles while also adopting elements (albeit often cautiously) of American religious and intellectual culture. As acculturation proceeded, those peace church factions who were most guarded in their interactions with American culture (Moderate Brethren and Mennonites, Conservative Quakers) sought not only to prove faithfulness to distinctive beliefs such as nonresistance, but also to show that those beliefs mattered in the larger American context. Quakers brought pacifist principles with them from England; Brethren and Mennonites imported the same from the European continent. The problem was how to sustain beliefs such as nonresistance as relevant and viable in a postbellum American environment.[43]

Civil War memory addressed these concerns by forwarding the notion that nonresistants were spiritual heroes *and* American heroes. While the more progressive-minded nonresistants shared the occasional wartime reminiscence, most of the Civil War narratives and commentary came from Conservative Friends and Moderate Mennonites and Brethren, those groups most

[42] Comparing the standard tripartite divisions of Quakers to Mennonites and Brethren quickly becomes confusing. The designations of Traditional/Old Order, Conservative/Moderate, and Progressive are typically applied to the two Anabaptist-influenced groups, but the term "Progressive" suggests an affinity with the broad-based early-twentieth century reform movement which is not applicable. Thomas Hamm classifies the three Quaker divisions by their level of interaction with evangelicalism: Conservative, Moderate, and Holiness Revivalists. The Moderates of the 1860s, however, became much more intellectually "progressive" than their revivalist counterparts by 1890. See Hamm, *Transformation of Quakerism,* 98. Finally, concerning their attitude towards the surrounding society, the Conservative Quakers more closely resembled Moderate Brethren and Mennonites than Old Order Brethren and Mennonites.

[43] Brock, *Pacifism,* 257. The first and greatest division among American Friends was the Orthodox-Hicksite split of the late 1820s, a separation fueled primarily by doctrinal differences. See Hamm, *Transformation of Quakerism,* 15-20. The Wilburite-Gurneyite split occurring among Orthodox Friends during the 1830s and 1840s resulted more from a dispute over the application of evangelical methods to Quaker truths. Ibid., 20-35. For more on the postbellum divisions within each of the three respective peace churches, see Hamm, *Transformation of Quakerism*, especially pp. 98-173, Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, and Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 291-315.

dedicated to preserving noncombatant distinctiveness in an American context. In his study of Southern Friends in the era between 1865 and 1920, Damon Hickey rightly observes the fond admiration postbellum Conservative Friends showed towards "the witness of southern Quaker heroes before and during the Civil War, and their determination to uphold their cause by maintaining Quaker distinctiveness." In a sense, peace church Civil War memory functioned as a pacifistic "Lost Cause" mythology, a traditionalist defense of valiant deeds performed against a foe with superior resources and power. When Hickey, however, writes of the preservation of "suffering witness" by Southern Friends as "a special obligation to defend and even to advance that witness in all its traditional distinctiveness, and not to submit to the elements of the dominant culture, however religious its pretensions," he is only half-correct. While the heroism of the peace churches challenged the dominant culture and its "religious pretensions," it also borrowed language, symbols, and motifs from that same culture. In so doing, the three historic peace churches created a distinctly nonconformist American hero and cloaked their European theological and intellectual heritage in a red-white-and-blue exterior.[44]

While nonresistants sought to insert themselves into the grand Civil War narrative, they also stood resolutely outside of it. In their periodicals and correspondence, the peace churches chronicled a nation in social, political, economic, and spiritual decline during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. According to the nonresistants, the root causes of this national moral deterioration pointed back to the Civil War, and the same individuals who refused combat during the war believed themselves uniquely qualified to explicate the aftereffects of the war. As they positioned themselves as moral heroes fighting the national iniquities brought about by war,

[44] Damon D. Hickey, *Sojourners No More: The Quakers in the New South, 1865-1920* (Greensboro, NC: North Carolina Friends Historical Society, North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends: 1997), 142, 79.

nonresistants often insinuated that military wartime participants were perpetrators of postwar vice and decay.

Chapter One, Revealing Demoralization: The Nonresistant as Societal Critic

On 17 May 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt and numerous other political dignitaries gathered at Arlington National Cemetery to reinter the remains of Union Major-General William Rosecrans, a former commander of the Army of the Cumberland. Patriotic and reconciliationist sentiment pervaded the rostrum rhetoric of the day. The master of ceremonies, a man named Henderson who fought alongside Rosecrans at the Civil War battle of Corinth, praised the deceased general for his "fearlessness and heroic dash" and offered the benediction: "General Rosecrans, sleep peacefully in the bosom of the country you fought heroically to save." In his turn behind the pulpit, Roosevelt applauded the efforts of military personnel, both Union and Confederate, forty years previous and congratulated ex-soldiers for forging a new nation: "…the builder rather than the destroyer is the man most entitled to honor amongst us; …the man who builds up is greater than he who tears down…you were soldiers who fought to build; you were upbuilders; you were the men to whose lot it fell to save, to perpetuate, to make strong the national fabric." Roosevelt then contrasted nearby Mount Vernon with Arlington Cemetery. Both stood as "great memorials of the nation's past," but while the former commemorated "the founding of the nation," Arlington's countless rows of entombed Civil War soldiers symbolized "the saving of the nation."[1]

That same year, an article appearing in the Quaker periodical the *Friends' Intelligencer and Journal* entitled "The Inherent Immorality of War" contained the following quotation: "We

[1] *Idaho Statesman,* "Rosecrans Honored," 18 May 1902. America's Historical Newspapers Database.

have then, inherent in war, injustice, manslaughter, cruelty, revenge, cunning, deceit, treachery, robbery, gambling, intemperance, oppressive taxation, poverty, impurity of life, a transgression of sanitary laws more fatal than battles, and the terrible sorrow that comes to the hearts of the people." Although intended as a generalization applying to all wars, this laundry list also constituted a collection of perceived evils which the peace churches (primarily the Quakers) linked directly back to the Civil War throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. While the speeches of Roosevelt and Henderson memorialized the war as the means of saving and "upbuilding" the nation, nonresistants remembered the Civil War as "demoralizing" in its more literal sense, an event which contributed to diminished *morals* as much as lessened *morale*. The peace churches maintained that, instead of strengthening the "national fabric," the Civil War left in its wake a moral form of collateral damage on the populace, ushered in a new era of national iniquity, and represented a detour on the linear path to American progress. [2]

In the summer of 1865, the Quaker periodical *The Friend* looked back on the recently-ended war and concluded that the numbers of dead and wounded told only half the story: "Our civil war was, perhaps, as terrific for the numbers engaged on each side, as embittered by malignant passions, and as destructive, for the time it lasted, as any history has recorded; and we fear it has been *equally as prolific of evil,* and that its *moral taint is as traceable* throughout the community as that of any war that has preceded it." Throughout the period lasting from 1865 to 1915, nonresistants traced the origins of the social, economic, and political ills of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era back to the Civil War and, in so doing, extended the reach of the war in both time and space. Peace church periodicals of the era frequently noticed the persistence of the "war spirit," an almost endlessly elastic term. At times, "war spirit" meant simply the enduring

[2] *Friends' Intelligencer and Journal 59:3,* 18 January 1902, 34.

embrace of militaristic values by the American public. The term could also, however, refer to the crime, social decay, greed, and political partisanship present in postwar America. Although the expression "war spirit" suggested something ethereal, flesh-and-blood entities bore responsibility for keeping the spirit alive. In their societal criticism, Friends intended to expose the evils perpetuated by those at the top of the military hierarchy, yet they frequently ended up implicating common soldiers in the spread of national sins. Part of creating a "Civil War as the start of American declension" narrative involved positioning the nonresistants as crusaders battling the lingering moral residue of the war. In 1912, another Quaker newspaper argued, "The soldiers of peace are as brave and patriotic as the soldiers of war." The article called for "the soldiers who dare to do right" to battle "the enemies in our midst" and exemplify that patriotism deemed most needed by the nation, namely "the patriotism which fights evils in business and politics." While this piece portrayed nonresistants as "soldiers of peace" and the nation's true "upbuilders," the rhetoric was often less about encouraging the self-proclaimed warriors of morality than impugning the former soldiers of war. The moral terrain of postwar America thus became a battleground for Civil War memory and the proper conception of heroism.[3]

Both Quakers and Mennonites argued that their beliefs and behaviors, while at times outside the national norm, uniquely qualified them to act as the American conscience. Such a rationale for postwar societal criticism can be found in a short booklet from the 1890s entitled *The Quakers as Makers of America.* It is unclear whether the author, one Dr. David Gregg, was a Friend himself but his sympathies were indisputable. In Gregg's estimation, "…The Quakers are more than an embodiment of oddities; they are an embodiment of great principles and an incarnation of a grand life." The "great principles" of the Society of Friends formed "the bone

[3] *The Friend* 38:50, 12 August 1865, 399 (emphasis mine); *American Friend* 19:33, 15 August 1912, 522.

and sinew of our republic," and Gregg considered future adherence to those values "necessary for the realization of ultimate America." As concrete examples of the Quaker influence on American history, Gregg pointed to penal reform ("it was they who changed our prisons from sties to sanatoriums") and emancipation. If many Americans respected Quakers for their "self-assertion and honest argument and right living" and their foresight regarding issues such as prison reform and emancipation, then perhaps the national mind could also be changed to embrace principles (and gender assumptions) based on nonresistance: "We call guns, swords, powder forts, iron-clads and armies national powers; the Quakers have taught us that there are powers beyond these. The powers beyond these are right thoughts, high ideals, holy visions, righteous principles, burning aspirations. These make a strong manhood and womanhood, make a strong pure state." The Mennonites appropriated Gregg's language of historical and potential moral influence in casting themselves as "makers of America." In a 1903 article in the Mennonite periodical *The Herald of Truth,* the author proudly noted that Mennonites were "the first to protest against slavery in this country," and further lauded the group as "the pioneers of religious toleration and liberty of conscience, as well as of that true democracy of which this country claims to be the greatest exponent." Sharing the same vision as Dr. David Gregg, the *Herald* anticipated a time when American culture would appreciate the noncombatant stance of the Mennonites: "…nonresistance, if faithfully adhered to, in spirit as well as letter, is bound to accomplish infinitely more for the cause of national and international peace than all the armies of Europe and of the world." [4]

[4] Dr. David Gregg, *The Quakers as Makers of America* (Columbiana, Ohio: Edgerton & Morlan, c. 1896), 1, 3, 6, 15; *Herald of Truth* 40:41, 8 October 1903, 322.

Pride in their past moral record caused the Quakers to exude optimism regarding the national and international progress of peace. On the grand timeline of human history, Friends found the scale and scope of warfare to be decreasing. In 1867, the *Friends' Intelligencer* reported, "…there can be no doubt that modern warfare is less imbued with ferocity than that we read of in ancient times." That same year, *The Friend* contrasted the past with the present and concluded, "…we see many great changes for the better, which have sprung from the moral power of Christianity so operating on the minds and hearts of the people." Qualifying its enthusiasm by admitting that "most Christian professors" still tolerated war, *The Friend* nevertheless affirmed the steady march of peace: "War is now much more generally condemned as being contrary to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, than it was a century or two ago, and nations resort to its dreadful arbitrament with far less recklessness than formerly." By 1893, a third Quaker publication, the *Friends' Review,* observed peace sentiment and "the grounding and spiking of arms all over the world" to be so prevalent that it placed Quaker distinctiveness in jeopardy: "Friends cannot any longer claim a monopoly of the testimony that Christianity is a religion of which peace and good will toward men are an essential part." To an extent, Mennonites shared this same confidence in the ongoing power of the peace testimony. John F. Funk, publisher of the Mennonite periodical *Herald of Truth,* wrote an editorial in 1875 which may have lacked gushing optimism, yet was not a declaration of declension: "In America, while there has been a large falling away of the faithful, it is our opinion that the doctrine (of nonresistance) has not lost ground. The steady growth of the church, and the continual gain by new accessions both from the rising generation and emigration from foreign countries gives us reason to believe that we have not lost." Because peace churches spoke as the true moral "makers of America" and the larger American culture adopted their past pushes for social and

racial reform, so the argument went, then there was every reason to believe that Americans would also embrace the notion of nonresistance. [5]

The problem with such rhetoric, however, was that members of the peace community had made similar pronouncements before the Civil War. For nonresistants, the war arrived with bloody fury as a catastrophic historical event, an untimely interruption of the march towards national (if not human) betterment. Around 1863, John Funk delivered to his Mennonite congregants a sermon describing the war as a disruption of national peaceful inclinations: "We began to believe that the calamities of war could never reach us again at least in this, our own country. The arts of peace were followed—a spirit of peace pervaded the people—and there were strong hopes that the meek and lowly Jesus was fast gaining a stronger foothold than it ever held before." In 1861, however, "the shrill trumpet blast of war" sounded, inaugurating a period of conflict which, at the time of Funk's sermon, saw no end soon in sight: "…after two years of bloody strife we behold our country distracted almost ruined." Four years after Funk's sermon, the *Friends' Intelligencer* extended the Mennonite leader's assertion into the international arena: "Prior to the late sanguinary conflict which desolated a portion of our country, we had cherished the belief that the spirit of war was subsiding throughout Christendom, and that a feeling of universal brotherhood was beginning to arise in all enlightened nations." The *Intelligencer* described the coming of the war as a soul-searching disappointment for nonresistants: "The animosity manifested in that conflict, and the immense sacrifice of life involved in it, caused many misgivings as to the reality of that fraternizing spirit which the friends of peace had fondly hoped was in progress." Such historical analysis contained more than its fair share of

[5] *Friends' Intelligencer* 24:30, 28 September 1867, 467; *The Friend* 40:25, 16 February 1867, 198; *Friends' Review* 47:4, 17 August 1893, 49; *Herald of Truth* 12:8, August 1875, 131.

revisionism, conveniently forgetting such recent international conflicts as the Crimean War and the accelerating pace of domestic sectional animosity after the end of the Mexican War. Nevertheless, the Civil War did come to nonresistants as a disturbance of the peace witness, the Christian message, and the American legacy.[6]

How exactly did the Civil War contribute to moral degeneracy? Quakers argued that the military necessities of wartime, more specifically killing and destruction of property, produced a moral indifference to wrongs committed later outside the battlefield. Judging postwar evils through the lens of wartime behavior thus provided the peace churches with an opportunity to critique the American military establishment. An 1868 article in *The Friend* explained how military vices disseminated throughout American society:

> Familiarity with plundering in the field makes it easy to overlook the difference between *meum* and *tuum,* when opportunity to take that which is another's offers the temptation elsewhere; and the feeling which once led (the soldier) to shrink with horror from imbruing his hands in the blood of his fellow man, being deadened, he is prepared, under provocation or resistance, to sacrifice the life of his antagonist. These evils are first felt by those who are actively engaged in the dread game of war, but they are diffusive, and cannot be confined to the comparatively few. When the armies are no longer kept in the tented field, and hundreds of thousands who have been thus trained and drilled, are scattered throughout the community, they spread the moral poison, and are much more effective in assimilating others to their want of conscientious sensibility, than society is in bringing them back to the standard of good citizens.

Under the 1879 headline "The Present Demoralization," Quaker Josiah Leeds also connected military experience to a breakdown in national virtue: "Now, how is it possible that a human heart can thus be filled with the war-spirit without being injured throughout? The whole moral sense is blunted." For Leeds, the act of "gloating over bloody fields of human massacre" opened the door to easy toleration of sins such as "cupidity (and) lust," and failure to restrain one's wrath

[6] John Funk Sermon Notes, c. 1863. Box 59, Folder 18. John F. Funk Collection, 1835-1930. HM1-1. Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen, Indiana; *Friends' Intelligencer* 24:30, 28 September 1867, 467.

on the battlefield led to "cruel, dishonest or untruthful" behavior in non-military avenues of life. Two observations can be drawn from such an argument. First, for the peace churches, on a moral scale, the means conducted of war outweighed the ends. A war which resulted in such favorable outcomes as the preservation of the Union and the end of chattel slavery nevertheless opened the floodgates to unscrupulous behavior through its methods and directives. Second, as the two above excerpts suggest, former soldiers returning to civilian life were either active agents or misled dupes in spreading moral contamination, and neither characterization proved flattering.[7]

If one took Quaker editorials at face value, it appeared that nearly every postbellum American economic, political, and social malady owed its existence to the war. In 1865, several years before Mark Twain coined the phrase "The Gilded Age," *The Friend* charged the war with inaugurating a new era of unhealthy acquisitiveness: "There is no little boasting of the power of the United States, much congratulation on the success that has crowned the efforts to subdue the rebellion, and glowing predictions of the future wealth and power of the great republic." In the eyes of the editorialist, such preoccupation with "material prosperity" ignored the "necessity for amendment of life" made urgent by the end of the war: "The daily papers teem with accounts of murders, robberies and arson, in outstanding numbers, and perpetrated under circumstances which show that the lessons of cruelty and dishonesty, learned in the camp and the battlefield, are not forgotten amid scenes of more peaceful life." Three years later, *The Friend* saw the influence of the war seeping into American political life as well: "It would not be difficult to bring home to the late war, as the fertile source of degeneracy…the unprecedented prevalence of embezzlements, bribery and other corruptions among public officers…the loss of confidence in

[7]*The Friend* 42:6, 3 October 1868, 47; *The Christian Neighbor*, 10 April 1879, clipping found in Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907. MS Collection 1102. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

commercial circles, and the increased distrust of legislative integrity and disinterestedness." Josiah Leeds compiled his own list of war-inspired moral lapses in 1879 including "speculation" [gambling], "intoxicating drinks and tobacco," and "the leprous curse of an unclean literature." The true American prophetic voices, Leeds maintained, were those nonresistants who boldly proclaimed the causal connection between the war and rampant postwar vice: "But where will there be found one—except it be in the papers representing the Society of Friends, or the Mennonites, or the declared exponents of peace principles—to arise and boldly declare that the *war* was the cause of this irruption of crime and immorality, that *it* has demoralized the people, and that we were surely guilty of a grievous error when we thought to settle our differences by an appeal to the sword." A readily visible decline in the moral standards of American social, economic, and political life appeared to have recent origins, and all perceived "loosening of principle" pointed directly to the Civil War. [8]

Quakers found the "war spirit" wafting into areas as banal as popular music. Josiah Leeds passed along the following anecdote illustrating the "feelings of combativeness and deadly wrath" awakened by military music: "An old army officer sat next to me during a celebrated parade. When the music had passed he said, turning a flushed face on which there was painted the most repulsive expression I had ever seen him wear, 'Look out now, I may hurt you. I never hear a military band without being roused to a terrible desire to kill. That is what such music is for.'" In an era when the marches of John Philip Sousa thrilled and entertained many, such advice as that given by the old army officer could not be taken lightly: "The military band is an expensive, yet seemingly an essential adjunct of the regimental equipment." Leeds credited martial music with "warding off homesickness and melancholy" in camp and "(stirring) up the

[8] *The Friend* 38:50, 12 August 1865, 399; *The Friend* 42:6, 3 October 1868, 47; Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks.

spirit of carnage and… (drowning) the groans and the moans of the wounded and dying" on the battlefield. Though the war was over, military music proved capable of both stirring up the "spirit of carnage" and contributing to moral delinquency: "The harmonious strains of the regimental band, not only are of no effect in drowning such discord as this (intemperance, vice, and profanity), but rather seem to bring out the evil in more lurid colors." Songs as seemingly innocuous as *The Stars and Stripes Forever* provoked aggressive behavior as they musically returned former fighters to the Civil War and rekindled memories of wartime immorality and battlefield bloodshed.[9]

Within the pages of the peace church periodicals, however, the most referenced manifestation of the war spirit was the postwar outbreak of crime in its personal, political, and corporate varieties. In 1867, *The Friend* listed "murders of the most frightful character; incendiarism directed to the consumption of large portions of real estate, and often involving the loss of life; robberies of immense sums of money or its representatives (and) reckless gambling practiced in open day, and by persons occupying respectable positions in society" as indicative of a "dreadful demoralization" present throughout the land. Four years later, the same publication found little changed. Robberies, embezzlements, gambling in stocks and public securities, arsons, and murders all revealed "more than usual proportions" of national iniquity. Certainly, the article continued, some great force bore responsibility for these immoral acts: "…crime has become so common and shameless as to indicate that some unusually active cause must have been at work, loosening the hold of correct principles on the conduct of the people, and reconciling them to dereliction and contempt of moral law." Who or what was this

[9] *The Friend* 75:16, 2 November 1901, 124.

"unusually active" culprit? "That potent, all pervading cause, we believe to have been the late civil war." [10]

In 1875, *The Friend* reiterated its concern over the lingering epidemic of postwar crime: "…a marked depreciation in the moral tone of the community, and a consequent increase of crime in various phases, have been brought to view since the late civil war." While it was tempting to attribute increased criminal activity to the severe depression gripping America in the mid-1870s, *The Friend* would hear none of it. This particular Quaker column found economic "hard times" to be merely a "secondary cause" of widespread crime: "We believe the truth to be, that in the harvest of crimes of the deepest dye, so continually brought to light, the people are but reaping what is in large measure the legitimate fruit of war." Mennonites also linked the increased occurrence of crime to the wartime experience. In 1889, the *Herald of Truth* gave its own definition of the war spirit: "Baneful indeed are the effects of war. An evil growth continues to spring up and trouble humanity, long after the actual conflict has ended." For a "conspicuous and striking illustration of this truth," the author pointed to the realm of the criminal: "…an enormous increase of almost every description of offense, especially of violent attacks, followed that conflict [the Civil War], and has been a marked feature in America ever since, as is incontestably shown by the statistics published by the most eminent of American jurists and penologists." Peace church periodicals occasionally sounded a tone of self-congratulation for noticing this causal relationship before other alleged Christian publications, as demonstrated by this 1867 piece in *The Friend*: "We are glad to see most of the 'religious journals' imputing this alarming increase of atrocious crime to the late war… it gives reason to hope that those who edit these influential publications…cannot be blind to the worse than folly, of palliating and

[10] *The Friend* 40:24, 9 February 1867, 191; *The Friend* 44:37, 6 May 1871, 295.

defending a system which saps the foundations of morality, and educates its votaries in a low estimate of the life of their fellow men."[11]

For Quakers and Mennonites, attributing social evils such as an increased incidence of crime to the Civil War proved relatively simple. It became more difficult, however, to more precisely pinpoint causation. Nonresistant periodicals struggled with whether war-created problems were the product of "a system which saps the foundations of morality" or the individual actions of the educated "votaries" themselves. As described earlier (see p. 43), peace churches hypothesized that participation in the wartime acts of killing and looting both deadened one's moral conscience and awakened dangerous passions in the years following military service. From this perspective, it was but a short step to constructing an image of the Civil War veteran as a morally damaged creature to be feared. In 1893, *The Friend* reported the results of a study examining the case histories of over 15,000 convicts in the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania over a period of sixty years. According to the findings, the incidence of second-degree murders during the years 1860 to 1869 was seven times greater than in the first ten years of the study. The article concluded that this statistical spike was no mere coincidence: "… (the study) suggests that the disregard for life, born of the soldiers' experience on the battlefield, had much to do with this increase." In 1878, *The Friends' Intelligencer* commented, "The effect of any great breach of the law of order, such as that which occurs when a war rages or any sensational crime has been committed, is to disturb the minds of all who come within its influence." Those with "a latent tendency to violence or vice," however, ran a greater risk of experiencing a war-caused psychological disturbance. The Civil War thus functioned as a school

[11] *The Friend* 49:14, 20 November 1875, 111; *Herald of Truth* 26:17, 1 September 1889, 262; *The Friend* 40:24, 9 February 1867, 191.

teaching the morally deficient how to act weaker: "…our civil war has educated thousands whose moral principles were undefined and of little restraining force, to judge of deeds of violence and of plunder, not by any fixed rule of right and wrong, but by the circumstances attending them, and the success or failure with which they may be accomplished." The "school of war" was in session for only four years, but its star students carried the lessons learned well past the cessation of fighting: "Is it any wonder that many of the most apt scholars are bent on continuing in private life, the course their country took so much pains to educate them to carry on towards their fellow countrymen arrayed against them." The implication by Quakers that the experience of war only provoked those with already-lowered moral standards into further degeneracy, whether intentional or not, cast ex-Civil War soldiers as an unpredictable and unrighteous "other," distinguished "scholars" who had not forgotten their education in the arts of war.[12]

Soon after Appomattox, a multitude of soldiers who had recently marched, in Josiah Leeds' words, to "the fierce blare of the trumpet, the shrill notes of the fife, and the unintermitted rolling of the drum " arrived home from the Civil War seeking smooth reintegration back into American life. As James Marten points out in his recent incisive monograph *Sing Not War*, however, postwar political issues such as soldiers' homes and veterans' pensions placed the Civil War veteran at the center of a heated national debate. Many believed that the nation owed its veterans tangible forms of gratitude for their military service, yet such unprecedented examples of state-sponsored benevolence appeared to contradict American ideals such as self-sufficiency and *laissez faire* economics. The fundamental tension of this Gilded Age-era debate, thus

[12] *The Friend* 66:24, 7 January 1893, 190; *Friends' Intelligencer* 35:17, 15 June 1878, 261-62; *The Friend* 49:14, 20 November 1875, 112; *The Friend* 44:37, 6 May 1871, 295.

according to Marten, was the personal accountability of the veteran versus communal responsibility based in patriotism and administered by the government. Quakers expressed their own ambivalence regarding the status of the Civil War veteran. In the editorials of their publications, Friends alternately characterized ex-soldiers as victims of the war experience deserving mercy, and dangerous rogues capable of draining national economic resources and lowering the national moral standard. The two conflicting portrayals can be seen in an 1888 article in *The Friend*. Without substantiating documentation, the editorial stated that soldiers were more likely to commit suicide than civilians. In defense of this stance, *The Friend* pointed to two factors related to military service during wartime: "… (soldiers) have a ready and effective means of destruction constantly at hand (and)… they are taught to underestimate the value of life, the crime of homicide, and accountability to God." Other reasons for an "excessively high" suicide rate, however, could manifest themselves years after the act of soldiering: "…the despondency which follows drunkenness and accompanies idleness (and)… the reaction after the excitements of battle and the toil of marching." From the perspective of this editorial, the ex-soldier carried suicidal tendencies created by the ravages of war, yet also possessed homicidal propensities rooted in his past experience of wartime killing. Was the reader to lament the high number of soldier suicides or was she to fear the hard-drinking veteran who owned a firearm? The article appeared to answer both questions in the affirmative.[13]

Quakers frequently noted the link between the Civil War and increased intemperance. In early 1867, *The Friend* sought to establish the causal relationship between the war and drunkenness: "In common with many other immoralities, (intemperance) has been greatly

[13] *The Friend* 75:16, 2 November 1901, 124; James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 17, 25, 219; *The Friend* 61:43, 26 May 1888, 343.

increased by the late war, so that although the legislature of the United States has taxed all spirituous liquors so heavily, that it was supposed the increased price would diminish their use, there is almost universal testimony that drunkenness was never so prevalent before, nor its deplorable consequences more destructive of the comfort of families or peace of society." That same year, *The Friends' Intelligencer* concurred, referring again to the ever-present "war spirit" which produced "fruit after its kind," the fruit in this case being alcoholism: "Intemperance, the habit of which, if not formed upon the battle-field, is greatly strengthened by its depressing influences, perhaps is the most prolific source of evil." The war thus stood responsible for creating a large class of individuals requiring rehabilitation: "The greater majority of those who are now committed to the penitentiaries are returned soldiers. What a comment upon the system which leads to such fearful results!" Here again, the extent of veteran moral agency and accountability remained vague. The *Intelligencer* was unclear as to whether the hard-drinking veteran was to be pitied for his subjection to "depressing influences" or condemned for dragging a socially harmful vice from military into civilian life.[14]

Friends placed themselves within a contentious dispute involving ex-soldiers and alcohol consumption occurring within government-administered veterans' shelters. As early as the 1870s, branches of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) began establishing beer canteens on their grounds. Two reasons explain why a government agency entered the imbibing business. First, National Home officials considered drinking to be what sociologist Erving Goffman termed a "removal activity," defined as "voluntary unserious pursuits which are sufficiently engrossing and exciting to lift the participant out of himself, making him oblivious for the time being to his actual situation [confinement in a 'total

[14] *The Friend* 40:29, 16 March 1867, 231; *Friends' Intelligencer* 24:2, 16 March 1867, 24-25.

institution']." Home officials assumed residents would consume alcohol and believed that, in moderation, drinking constituted a reasonable social activity to accompany the bowling, card games, and glee clubs found within the Homes. Secondly, the canteens provided a way for Home personnel to monitor resident behavior. Where the NHDVS built new branches, dubious entrepreneurs soon followed and erected saloons and brothels in close proximity. At the Central Branch in Dayton, Ohio, for example, reports surfaced of two residents killed by "Soldiers' Home Whiskey," a potable with traces of poison served at a local saloon. By maintaining their own beer canteens, National Home administrators could both ensure the health and safety of their residents and protect them from the seedier elements of nearby society. In his history of the NHDVS, Patrick Kelly cites an 1886 newspaper report stating that saloon arrests outside the Dayton Central Branch dropped thirty percent after the Home opened its own canteen. Kelly further writes, however, that Soldiers' Home canteens fell victim to the temperance movement, as Congress prohibited such watering holes in the twentieth century's first decade.[15]

In 1899, Joshua Bailey, a correspondent for the *American Friend*, visited "The Southern," the National Home branch located near Hampton, Virginia. Referring to residents as "inmates," Bailey spoke of the "home" as if he expected an asylum where dangerous men could find rehabilitation: "One would have a right to expect, where such advantageous conditions prevailed, that the inmates would avail themselves of the opportunity for self-improvement and the maintenance of respectable characteristics, but I noticed with regret that a very large proportion of the men had a very sottish and degraded appearance." Resident idleness concerned the Quaker correspondent: "Very few of the men appeared to have any occupation, but were sitting

[15] Patrick J. Kelly, *Creating a National Home: Building the Veterans' Welfare State, 1860-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 164-66, 176-77; Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, N.J.: Anchor Books, 1961), 68-69; quoted in Kelly, *National Home,* 158.

by the roadsides or lying under the trees, sleeping or smoking, seeming to have no other object in life but to pass away the time with the least possible exertion." More mortification ensued when Bailey discovered the ex-soldiers frequenting a canteen: "Men in line not only fronting the bar, but extending outside the door and standing close together for a distance of at least 150 feet, were waiting their turn to be waited upon…There were about two hundred men in line at the time of my visit. I noticed that many of them, after passing out, joined the line again to go in for a further supply, and I learned that it was possible for a man to get as many as three mugs of beer in the course of an hour." In Bailey's estimation, the government only abetted such vice, both at the state-sanctioned canteen and elsewhere in the town: "I also learned that these men were allowed to have pass-books, so that when they were out of money, whatever indebtedness they incurred either in the saloons or in the adjoining apartments ["places of the grossest immoral resort," Bailey added], was placed to their account, and they were expected to come and settle the score on the payment of their pensions, and that it not unfrequently happened that the score that was cast up against them exceeded the amount of their pensions." Bailey concluded that "the Government in maintaining the canteen inside the grounds of the Home, is responsible for the mischievous results" and that concerned citizens should "continually and energetically" petition Congress and the President "until the whole canteen system is abolished, not only at the Soldiers' Home, but throughout the army." While the article thus uncovered state complicity in promoting intemperance, it also suggested that the government was only aiding a preexisting moral degeneracy (i.e., idleness, propensity to drink, loose sexual morals) present within the ex-soldier.[16]

[16] *American Friend* 6:3, 19 January 1899, 53-54; Kelly, *National Home,* 89-92.

If the public morality of veterans required constant monitoring, their private activities proved equally as dangerous. All three peace churches held longstanding objections to secret societies such as the Masons and Know-Nothings. Secret oaths, a commitment to fellow members "right or wrong," and an insidious influence in politics all confirmed the "rejection of or antagonism to Christ" present in lodges: "A bad cause is always helped by sworn secrecy but a good cause is always hindered…God is a great revealer of the truth, the devil is a mystifier." For the Quakers, there was no greater postwar example of sworn secrecy helping a bad cause than the Grand Army of the Republic, a secret society restricting membership to Union veterans. Originally founded in 1866, the GAR flourished in the 1880s and reached a peak membership of 400,000 in 1890. The organization strengthened fraternal bonds among ex-soldiers, served as a political lobby group pushing for increased pensions, and promoted military drill, "patriotic" school textbooks, and flag flying over schoolhouses as a means of communicating its characterization of the Civil War as "a one-time-only drama of national salvation" and Northern soldiers as "saviors." GAR mythology of the Civil War as a saving and "upbuilding" event thus clashed with the Quaker narrative of national war-related moral demise. Quakers reasoned that the GAR possessed both the motivation and power necessary to sustain the "war spirit." *The Friend* linked the GAR to war glorification and war preparation in 1891: "Believing as I do, that all wars are intrinsically wrong, and that all ceremonies and organizations that tend to glorify war are injurious to Christianity and inimical to the public welfare, I cannot but regret that the many excellent citizens connected with the (GAR) should continue in that relation…to promote the war spirit and to add to the vast network of secret societies that honey comb every department of civil society." Josiah Leeds distrusted the GAR for the significant authority it wielded over political representatives: "(A) secret organization, which bodes no good to the country, is that

one of a military character known as the Grand Army of the Republic. Not to incur the displeasure and lose the votes of this great order has influenced a great deal of unwise legislation in Congress and the State Legislatures."[17]

As an example of political power held by the GAR, Leeds pointed to the volatile issue of Civil War veterans' pensions. In January 1887, the House passed a bill granting pension pay of $12 per month to those veterans whose physical or mental maladies prevented them from earning an income. The bill made no distinction between injuries sustained during the war or those suffered afterwards, and critics of the measure charged Congress with moving towards a "service" pension which would compensate all former soldiers regardless of physical or economic condition. In February, President Grover Cleveland vetoed the bill, and the Illinois GAR immediately challenged the executive denial: "Resolved, that this Encampment, directly representing 26,000 veteran soldiers of Illinois, demand that Congress pass the so-called Disability Pension bill, the veto of the President notwithstanding, as an act vital to the interests and honor of the country." Leeds rose to Cleveland's defense by writing, "Perhaps no veto by any President ever met with the more cordial approval of people of all parties than did that of the late wholesale pensioning bill." The Quaker author may have overestimated the level of enthusiasm for Cleveland's veto, but he did acknowledge one of the great battles of Gilded Age politics. The issue of veterans' pensions pitted the "bloody shirt" rhetoric of the Republicans

[17] Josiah W. Leeds, *Secret Societies: An Inquiry Into Their Character and Tendencies* (Philadelphia: Published for the Author: 1888), 7, 18, 21, 37; *Friends' Review* 40:18, 2 December 1886, 276-77; *The Friend* 65:14, 31 October 1891, 106;Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xiv, 126, 167, 206, 224-32.

versus the Democratic fear of large government, and in this battle, Quakers sided with the Democrats, ostensibly on the grounds of perceived economic consequences. [18]

In 1900, *The Friends' Intelligencer and Journal* calculated the total cost for pensions paid out to American veterans to have been ninety million dollars between 1789 and 1861, but that figure rose to the then-incomprehensible amount of two and a half billion dollars between 1861 and 1899. The author attributed the meteoric increase in this "burden to the public load" to "liberal laws" enacted beginning in the 1870s and saw the escalation ending no time soon: "We have barely ceased to pay pensions to widows of those who fought in the War of the Revolution [a curious comment to make in 1900], and we shall long continue, of course, to pay the survivors, and their widows, connected with the Civil War. If we shall continue the wars we are now waging in Asia, and begin the new ones which Militarism wishes to undertake, the pension outlay must exceed all previous experience, and outrun all calculations with which we have been familiar." Though shifting their basis of concern from moral losses to economic, Quakers once again appeared uncertain whether to fault "the war system" or the war participant for the strain on the national economy. The same contributor to the *Intelligencer* continued, "These expenditures (for pensions) are enormous… (Other nations) pay no pensions to the common soldiers, whatever they may do for officers. The cost to us, under the system we have adopted… will be prodigiously increased by the demand of the men who serve in them for what is practically a 'service pension.'" The demands made by "common soldiers" would most likely drain the national coffers of an additional two billion dollars over the next twenty years. This

[18] Leeds, *Secret Societies,* 37. For a full discussion of the pensions debates of the 1880s and 1890s, see chapter 5, "Pensions and Preference," in Marten, *Sing Not War;* McConnell, *Glorious Contentment,* 149-53, and H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), 254-58, 331-32.

amount, a "burden upon succeeding generations," could find better uses elsewhere if "used for construction, for conservation, (or) for beneficial works." Friends saw no such grand transformation forthcoming, however, with increasing numbers of ex-soldiers and their family members living off a government dole. In his report of beer-guzzling residents at the National Home in Virginia, Joshua Bailey observed, "I should not fail to add that, beside being clothed and fed at public expense, a very large proportion of the inmates of the Home are enjoying pensions from the United States Government—pensions varying from $12 to $27.50 per month." Perhaps the long-term fiscal health of the nation concerned Quakers, but they also may have sensed that the government was drifting towards recognition of what Patrick Kelly calls "martial citizenship," a privileged status including the conferral of pensions, soldiers' homes, and preference in government hiring based on past military service. [19]

Quakers viewed the GAR as a key cog in the "war system" which sustained the ongoing American "war spirit." The terms "war system" and "military system" appeared interchangeably in Quaker editorials describing an unholy consolidation "connected with the political, commercial and industrial interests of society," in effect a nineteenth-century military-industrial complex. Such a comprehensive system, by its very nature, stood responsible for unleashing untold devastation and suffering: "Has not the war system been in operation a sufficient length of time to require attention? And if not, when will it have been? ...To say nothing of morals, the destruction of life and property by the institution is beyond estimate. Witness the results of the late Civil War in these United States." The perpetrators of the "war system," however, were not content to confine their devious activities to the late war, according to Quakers; militarists also

[19] *Friends' Intelligencer and Journal* 57:45, 10 November 1900, 822; *American Friend* 6:3, 19 January 1899, 54; Kelly, *National Home,* 2.

sought to woo the younger generation into an embrace of martial values. *The Friends' Intelligencer* in 1869 exclaimed, "Is it not shocking to contemplate that, in this professedly Christian country, a military school should be set up to instruct young men in the art of murdering their fellow-men according to law, and that they should be trained to believe the occupation praiseworthy and honorable? Do not these things call upon us, making the profession we do, for something more than silence?" The presence of military academies was troubling enough for nonresistants. More appalling, however, was the campaign to introduce compulsory drill into the nation's public schools. [20]

In the early 1890s, military drill in secondary schools enjoyed a short-lived national popularity. Several factors explained the appeal of this "daily practice of gymnastics and the regular drill of the infantry soldier." Along with the excellent physical exercise it provided, advocates of compulsory drill highlighted the "subordination," "obedience," and "proper respect for authority" such maneuvers instilled, an important consideration in the context of the economic depression and labor unrest found in Grover Cleveland's second Presidential term. A main figure in the creation and rise to power of the Grand Army of the Republic, however, championed military drill as a means of preserving a certain form of Civil War memory. In a lengthy tome published in 1887 tellingly entitled *The Volunteer Soldier of America*, General John A. Logan wrote, "To constitute a small body of men the sole military experts of the nation is to invest them with a tremendous power for evil, should they, in the course of human weakness, ever see fit to use it." Logan viewed in-school military training as a means of resuscitating the older militia system and the volunteer soldiers it produced, in distinction to a military run by professional "West Pointers." In his history of the GAR, historian Stuart

[20] *Friends' Intelligencer* 28:32, 7 October 1871, 506; *FI* 26:28, 11 September 1869, 436.

McConnell estimates that anywhere between eighty and ninety-seven percent of GAR members belonged to volunteer regiments during the war. When students participated in drill, McConnell argues, they were thus paying homage to the core constituency of the GAR, a group of voluntary "heroes" who saw the Civil War "…not as a social and political earthquake [as the peace churches did] but as the preserver of a timeless Republic." [21]

Military drill and its presumed perpetuation of the "war spirit" elicited heated rhetoric in the pages of Quaker periodicals. In an 1884 article appearing within the *Friends' Review*, S.C. Armstrong, principal of a Southern secondary school, credited "the conditions of military life, which, under good officers, not only develops manly qualities, but applies a discipline that is most wholesome to a people unused to self-control" with improving the lives of two hundred thousand black Union soldiers, and he in turn hoped to infuse that same discipline into his African-American and Native American students. The *Review* strenuously objected to such an approach: "Can (discipline) be obtained upon a basis of peace, a 'peace system,' not looking towards war even as a last resort?" Quakers certainly did not reject the value of discipline, only the means of acquiring it as practiced by militarists: "Is it not…altogether possible for (discipline) to be had in perfection without rifles, cannon, swords and bayonets? The essence of it is voluntary order and obedience to recognized authority. For these results, there need be no reduction of men to the condition of fighting machines." Into the twentieth century, the debate over military training in public schools continued to flame Quaker passions. A 1912 article in *The American Friend* summarized the position of the "disciples of Mars" thusly: "See what fine exercise the drill is! Do you not like an erect carriage, a well-developed chest, square shoulders

[21] John A. Logan, *The Volunteer Soldier of America* (New York and Chicago: R.S. Peale and Co., 1887), 424, 598-607; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment,* 199-200, 202, 230-32. McConnell suggests that the Spanish-American War squelched much of the enthusiasm for martial drill in schools, but offers no reasons why.

and a manly stride? Is it not well to train boys to habits of obedience? Is not discipline wholesome which makes young men supple and alert?" Quakers countered with the claim that numerous other edifying methods of physical education existed, and, furthermore, military drill represented a less desirable form of exercise because of its moral corrosiveness: "(Drill) takes the edge off the conscience. It lowers the sense of the dignity of human life. It has a tendency to coarsen the spirit." This, however, did not stop the advocates of compulsory drill from cloaking their sinister objectives with the American flag: "The militarists have two tricks: One is to ask for battleships for peace; the other is to ask for military drill for the purpose of developing patriotism." So the fight continued against "war advocates" who, in Quaker eyes, whipped young Americans into a martial frenzy, promoted an unhealthy understanding of manly patriotic commitment, and preserved a "heroic" militaristic interpretation of the Civil War. [22]

While the war made continued veneration of military soldiers and officers possible, it also generated a new and intense love of money. In Catholic parlance, greed had long been considered a deadly sin, but Friends recast the old vice in a late-nineteenth century light by connecting it to political and corporate crime. The "acquisitive spirit" unleashed by the war found its way into state and federal legislative bodies. "The Capitol of our 'boasted land of liberty' is said to be filled with vice and immorality," the *Friends' Intelligencer* stated emphatically in 1866. The article then proceeded to name bribery perpetrated by "individuals who have suddenly amassed wealth during the fearful national struggle" as the prime source of corruption in Washington: "In the days of purer legislation a receiver of bribes would have been branded with ignominy and shame; but now we are told it is almost useless to attempt the

[22] *Friends' Review* 37:25, 26 January 1884, 393; *FR* 41:4, 25 August 1887, 56; *American Friend* 19:33, 15 August 1912, 521-22.

passage of any bill, however useful its purpose, without becoming a party to this crime." Nearly a decade later, in 1875, as economic depression continued and scandal tarnished the administration of Ulysses S. Grant (a key figure in the "war system"), *The Friend* asked, "Is it any wonder that confidence has been destroyed throughout the community, that the sense of integrity and trust on which trade and commerce rest, have been paralyzed, that stagnation and discredit have choked the channels of commerce." Those "captains of industry" who built their fortunes through wartime wheeling-and-dealing came under as much condemnation for acquisitiveness as greasy-palmed Washington statesmen. *The Friend* did not name names in the following excerpt, but it is difficult to read these lines without invoking the memory of Morgan, Rockefeller, and Carnegie:

> …it is well known that during the fratricidal conflict very many grew suddenly rich by their contracts for the army; and as what is easily obtained is generally lightly held, habits of luxury were soon acquired and spread among classes most easily demoralized by them. The close of the war did not terminate the evil it had thus engendered; and the love of gold where the coveted treasure is spent in gratification of animal appetites or ostentatious modes of living, gives added stimulus to the corrupted thirst for its acquisition, and more urgent desire to increase or prolong the debasing enjoyment it can command.[23]

The quest for quick riches, as exemplified by those financiers and industrialists benefiting from the war, led to "perilous speculation" and "gambling" in stocks and securities, and Quakers categorized such economic activity as a form of socially-accepted theft: "…many have adopted the opinion that there is no way of growing rich so easy and so safe, as by making use of the trust reposed in them, to defraud the public; because if detected and exposed, they are less liable to be brought to the punishment they deserve, than if convicted of private robbery." An individual could risk other people's assets to enhance his own and fail miserably, yet the bankruptcy laws would protect this individual and encourage further "mercantile gambling" without causing

[23] *The Friend* 49:14, 20 November 1875, 111-12.

significant social stigma: "…such is the prevailing state of moral feeling, that the perpetrator of this swindling insolvency is rarely expelled from what is called good society, and still more seldom do we see him living and striving as though he felt the obligation to pay his just debts." For this author, robbery, an evil byproduct of the recent war, achieved widespread respectability under the corporate guise of securities trading.[24]

In Washington, the "party spirit" thrived along with the "acquisitive spirit." Quakers held the Civil War responsible for inaugurating a new era of political factionalism and, to their way of thinking, the "party spirit" originating out of the "war spirit" raged throughout the legislative and executive halls of power. Instead of following the scriptural injunction "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," politicians pursued party interests with reckless abandon. During the summer of 1866, as President Andrew Johnson wrangled with congressional Republicans over the proposed Fourteenth Amendment, *The Friend* urged Quakers "to be especially careful so to speak and to act, as in no wise to add or to countenance the bitterness of party spirit which unhappily is now exciting and dividing the people, and seriously threatening the peace and stability of the government." The article found legislators in both parties guilty of exploiting wartime divisions and warned that the battles over Reconstruction threatened to turn the still-smoldering embers of the nation into another massive conflagration of conflict: "It is very evident that the malignant passions so deeply stirred by the recent civil war, are far from being allayed, but are being fanned by designing men, and inciting many on both sides of the present political contest to use language, and to advocate measures which the true Christian cannot approve or sanction." The "overruling Providence" who had already rescued the nation from the grip of war and saved the Union would have to intervene again if "feelings of hatred and

[24] Ibid., *The Friend* 44:37, 6 May 1871, 295-96.

revenge" plunged America into "fearful anarchy" and "another bloody strife." For Friends, the immense destruction of the war prompted an urgent reconsideration of the way Americans conducted politics. The same sectionalism which caused the war continued after the war, creating what appeared to be permanent division.[25]

Thirty years later, Friends still found war-influenced "political cliques" conquering by dividing. In analyzing the presidential campaign of 1896, *The American Friend* noted that while the issues had changed, the underlying geographic antagonism remained: "We have already proved in this country by one of the cruelest wars of history how dangerous a thing is sectionalism, and any man who again fans such a spirit is an enemy to the country." The author charged the long-disputed "money question" with renewing conflict: "It must be a cause of deep regret that in the great political struggle which has already begun… between the advocates of free silver coinage and the advocates of a gold basis, it should so often be represented as a contest between the sections of the country." The labels "Republican," "Democrat," "Populist," "Northerner," and "Southerner" all needed to be subjugated to the designation "American": "Our interests are one, our destiny is one. As the untwisting of the fibres into separate strands ruins the rope, so drawing lines of cleavage through this land and putting section against section means not simply the weakening of one part, but a weakening of the whole." For the Quakers, the 1896 election results confirmed the fears of an ever-present sectionalism. Union states in the Northeast and Midwest voted overwhelmingly in favor of William McKinley, while the states of the former Confederacy threw their support behind William Jennings Bryan. The old divisions produced a failure to reach compromise and consensus, and threatened new war. As will be further discussed in the following chapter, however, moves towards sectional reconciliation boxed the peace

[25] *The Friend* 39:23, 3 February 1866, 183; *The Friend* 39:52, 25 August 1866, 415.

churches into a rhetorical corner in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. If the peace churches despised the sectional division caused by the Civil War, they also abhorred the means by which reconciliation was often accomplished: the mutual recognition of military prowess.[26]

Regrettably, for Friends, alleged followers of Christ clung to this same divisive spirit. Reviewing the year 1865, *The Friend* found denominational division based on sectional antagonisms to be the predominant trend of American wartime religion: "(religious denominations) fully committed themselves in support of the course pursued by the belligerent whose cause they espoused, and the pulpit as well as the supreme ecclesiastical councils, respectively denounced those members who stood opposed to them." Along with war-scarred veterans, "robber barons," and crooked politicians, the major American religious denominations stood accused of maintaining the same "spirit of enmity and denunciation" evidenced during the war. Before and during the war, however, Quakers remained largely alone in conscientiously avoiding issues, namely "the contamination of slavery," which fanned the flames of armed conflict. Quakers living in the South refused to participate in the "violence and crime" associated with rebellion, while Friends in the "loyal states" refrained from participating in "the warlike measures by which the Government visited upon the South such a dreadful retribution for the calamity brought upon the country." Now that the war had concluded, the "peaceable principles and precepts" maintained by the Quakers ensured that, within the fellowship, there were no feelings of estrangement based on geographic location. At the war's end, Friends simply "waited but for the military cordon to be removed, to mingle again in heartfelt brotherhood, and strengthen affection by deeds of kindness." In an era when the rhetoric of Union and Confederate

[26] *American Friend* 3:31, 30 July 1896, 736. The one exception to McKinley-Bryan results reflecting Union-Confederacy cleavage in the 1896 Presidential election was Missouri, which gave its 17 electoral votes to William Jennings Bryan.

nationalism filled the pulpits of the American "popular churches," the Quakers refused to succumb to the temptations of sectional antagonism. The same religious group providing a model for sectional harmony was best qualified to provide America with a standard for moral regeneration, so Quakers believed.[27]

According to David Gregg, the aforementioned doctor who pronounced the Quakers "makers of America" (see pp. 39), the historical genius of the Quakers laid in their ability to "(utter) an emphatic protest against all destructive evils" and "(keep) before one's country uplifting and inspiring ideas." As documented in this chapter, Quakers excelled in uttering protests, yet providing feasible alternatives to the "war spirit" proved more difficult. The lack of schisms occurring between Northern and Southern Quakers looked impressive in a Civil War religious context, but this was more an example of preserving unity within the ranks than a counterattack mounted. Some Friends apparently argued that in order to counter the diabolical intent of the GAR, the Quakers should organize their own secret societies espousing the cause of peace. The *Friends' Review* ridiculed such a notion when it envisioned "peace advocates donning little aprons, whispering passwords through key-holes, racking their brains to commit to memory a stale ritual, going through a gymnastic practice to make signs, winking and blinking with their eyes, bowing and scraping before lodge altars with wooden Bibles on them." A more substantive response appearing in the same publication in 1879 listed four viable mechanisms for avoiding warfare: "There are four substitutes for war—negotiation, arbitration, mediation and a congress of nations…substitutes which men of sense must admit to be infinitely better than an appeal to the savage arbitration of lead and steel—substitutes which recognize right instead of might, reason in the place of brute force as the arbiter of national disputes." Nagging questions

[27] *The Friend* 39:18, 30 December 1865, 142.

persisted, however. Even if the peace churches possessed the necessary legitimacy to protest the destructive evils unleashed by the war, was anybody listening? If nonresistants were indeed fighting the war spirit, how was the battle progressing? [28]

Some insight into these crucial questions appears in the annual Secretary's reports of the Peace Association of Friends in America. Founded in 1867, the Association intended to deliver the Quaker message of peace to non-Quakers through its paper *The Messenger of Peace,* lecture tours, and publications with titles such as *Churches of Christendom Responsible for the Continuance of War*, *A Bloody Record*, and *Can Christians Fight with Carnal Weapons?* The 1875 report included a succinct *raison d'etre* for the organization: "At the close of the American civil war and when its discordant sounds had died away, many thinking Friends became solemnly impressed with the fact developed by that fearful struggle, that the masses, including professing Christians, and indeed many of our own members, needed to be indoctrinated in peace principles; and to be shown that war under any circumstances is unlawful for Christians." The great struggle for the Association became moving the masses from an appreciation of hypothetical peace principles to practical action: "We take it for granted that the public mind must be so educated on (peace) that they will not only believe that war is a great evil (which nearly all enlightened people now admit) but that it is an evil which *can* and *must* be removed." [29]

[28] Gregg, *Quakers as Makers,* 15; *Friends' Review* 40:18, 2 December 1886, 276-77; *FR* 33:17, 6 December 1879, 264.

[29] For more information on the history of the Peace Association of Friends in America, see Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 871-76. 1875 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 8, 1875 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes. North Carolina Friends Yearly Meeting Minutes, 1862-1887. Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College. Greensboro, North Carolina.

At times, the Association accomplished its noble objectives. The 1876 yearly report contained a letter written by an ex-soldier, one Thomas Price of Jefferson City, as evidence of *The Messenger of Peace's* efficacy. Fighting for the Union, Price prayed to God five minutes before the battle of Stone River and promised to become a Christian if his life was spared in the upcoming fighting. Price admitted, however, that his understanding of "Christian" was perverted as compared to nonresistant standards: "I also prayed to be supported in the battle to do my duty—that is, to do what I then thought to be the duty of a Christian, viz: to kill as many of the enemy as possible." *The Messenger of Peace* awakened Price to the true meaning of the Christian faith, and the one-time Northern soldier expressed his confidence that the paper would work many more "peace conversions": "Although I thought I lived a good Christian life in the army, I have been led to see by the Word of God and the little Messenger how far I was from the Scriptural teachings of Him who spake as never man spake. That you are engaged in a noble work, and that you and all who participate will succeed I am confident." The testimonial of Thomas Price notwithstanding, the anticipated dissemination of peace principles progressed at an inconsistent pace, according to the following secretarial reports:

> 1880: Great indifference prevails in this country both among Christians and others on this great question. Many of our own members are partaking of this apathy…We are still reaping the bitter fruits of the late fearful war in this country, and the end is not yet. The friends of peace have great need to be active and vigilant in spreading a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, so that public opinion may be so strongly set against war that statesmen will resort to other means than the sword for settling difficulties.
>
> 1881: Almost everywhere the church is silent in regard to the great crime of war, or if it speak at all it is to bolster up or apologize for war. Friends stand almost alone as a Christian denomination in their efforts to propagate a gospel of peace. Hence the greater necessity for us to be earnest in this work.
>
> 1885: While progress seems to us slow, there is I believe very marked evidence of progress. Bold and able advocates of peace are now to be found in every civilized nation on the globe, and in several of the nations they are numerous and influential.

This "three steps forward, two steps back" analysis of effectiveness in combatting the war spirit underscored both the traumatic impact of the Civil War as historical event and the ongoing need for Quaker distinctiveness. While many professing Christians of other denominations had grown callous to the aftereffects of war, nonresistant periodicals and organizations such as the Peace Association of Friends in America continued to expose the ongoing demoralization caused by the war and often actuated by its military participants. Whether promoting peace, reducing crime, or curbing intemperance, righting the wrongs unleashed by the war would prove no easy task, yet the Quakers still retained a hopeful optimism. As expressed by the Peace Association Secretary in 1875, "We have a great work in hand. The progress is slow, but we believe, sure."[30]

For Friends and Mennonites, the reconceptualization of the Civil War was not only a moral enterprise, but also an academic exercise. Reconstituting the notion of American Christian heroism required both an understanding of the lingering moral residue of the war and a proper historical interpretation of the war. Peace churches thus sought to fashion a demilitarized narrative of the Civil War, an examination of the conflict shorn of glorification of military figures and battles. This fight for historical supremacy acquired new urgency in the years after 1880, as Americans increasingly looked to Civil War veterans as "the pillars of American democracy" and the cultural authorities on "heroism, honor, and…commitment to noble ideals."[31]

[30] 1876 PAFA Secretary's Report, pp. 11 & 8, 1876 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes; 1880 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 16, 1880 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes; 1881 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 9, 1881 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes; 1882 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 6, 1882 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes; 1885 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 13, 1885 North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes; 1875 PAFA Secretary's Report, p. 10, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Minutes.

[31] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 48.

Chapter Two, Promoting Demilitarization: The Nonresistant as Historian

One hundred fifty years after its unprecedented violence, the Civil War battle of Antietam continues to grip American consciousness and confound American comprehension. The casualty list alone remains staggering: 2,000 Confederate soldiers dead or missing 2,300 Union soldiers killed, and over 17,000 of both sides wounded, according to reliable estimates. The political and social ramifications of the fight also make Antietam an event worth remembering. Historian James McPherson, in arguing for Antietam as "the preeminent turning point of the war," writes, "Union victory at Antietam, limited though it was, arrested Southern military momentum, forestalled foreign recognition of the Confederacy, reversed a disastrous decline in the morale of Northern soldiers and civilians, and offered Lincoln the opportunity to issue a proclamation of emancipation." For the Brethren, Antietam figured prominently in their own historical memory, even though they did not directly participate in "the bloodiest day of American history." The Mumma meetinghouse, located in the midst of the fighting of 17 September 1862, became both a unique marker of Brethren distinctiveness and, according to the official website of the Antietam National Battlefield, "one of the most famous churches in American military history," a statement with more than a hint of irony. [1]

Known informally as the "Antietam Dunker Church" or the "Little White Brick Church," the Mumma meetinghouse (named for the farmer on whose land the church sat) first gained national exposure through the photographs of Alexander Gardner, protégé of famed New York photographer Matthew Brady. One of Gardner's most iconic images, taken two days after the

[1] James M. McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), n56, p. 177 and p. xvi; "The Dunker Church" page of the Antietam National Battlefield website administered by the National Park Service can be found at http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/dunkerchurch.htm.

battle, shows the meetinghouse sitting at the background of a row of unburied Confederate soldiers. While hundreds lay dead or dying in its immediate proximity, the church itself also sustained considerable damage during the fighting. A contributor to an 1886 notice in the Brethren periodical *The Gospel Messenger* remembered, "We saw the house a few days after the battle and it was pretty well riddled with bullets." Although "partly demolished by the batteries of both armies," the Dunker church served as a hospital for Northern and Southern soldiers alike, according to the 1898 *Brethren Family Almanac.* Some of the Civil War's most important figures became subsequently acquainted with the little white brick church. E. Russell Hicks, local historian for Washington County in Maryland, claimed that, on 1 October 1862, President Abraham Lincoln "rode out to the little Dunker church in an open coach (where) he addressed a number of civilians and reviewed the badly shot up army." Wartime exigencies turned the Sharpsburg area home of George and Mary Yourtee, a devout Brethren couple, into temporary living quarters for military staff members including General George McClellan, along with his wife Ellen. One Brethren history recounted how the Yourtees impressed McClellan with their deep piety and daily observance of "family worship," adding, "…the army officers, with their wives, entered into the spirit of the occasion with deep reverence and respect." For their part, the Yourtees found the officer dubbed "The Young Napoleon" to be "courteous and sympathetic," and a story circulated which found McClellan encouraging the Yourtees' son Eli to enter the ministry.[2]

Fascinating as such anecdotes may appear, it is entirely possible that, for Brethren, the symbolic significance of the Mumma meetinghouse equaled, if not exceeded, its historical

[2] *The Gospel Messenger* 24 (Old Series): 30, 3 August 1886, 472; *The Brethrens' Family Almanac,* 1898, 19; Freeman Ankrum, *Sidelights on Brethren History* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1962), 105; J. Maurice Henry, *History of the Church of the Brethren in Maryland* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1936), 336-37.

importance. This humble physical structure upheld the Brethren ideal of peace in a bleak, war-ravaged environment. S.F. Sanger, contributor to the *Brethren Family Almanac*, referred to the meetinghouse as "a silent witness of human carnage and inhuman warfare," yet while the church witnessed battlefield atrocities, it also offered its own unique wartime testimony. Sanger reported that the War Department wished to purchase the meetinghouse and "preserve it as a relic of this bloody event," but Brethren preferred to maintain it as "a place in which to worship the Prince of Peace and teach the doctrine of *love* and *good will.*" A plate placed on the church sometime after the battle confirmed that this objective came to fruition: "The Dunkard Church--Erected A.D. 1853…The Church Was Seriously Injured by the Fire of the Union Batteries on September 17, 1862. The Building Was Repaired and Divine Worship Was Resumed During the Summer of 1864." Just as substantial artillery damage proved that the Mumma meetinghouse was *in* the Civil War but ultimately not *of* it, Brethren fashioned an image of themselves as surviving heroes, a people scarred by the ravages of war but emerging with their principles and witness of peace intact. S.F. Sanger and other Brethren of his generation would no doubt have been heartened to see the description "a house of worship associated with peace and love," as currently used by the National Park Service, applied to the Mumma church.[3]

To the naked eye, a plain bullet-ridden meetinghouse looks incongruous with the Hellenic majesty of the Lincoln Memorial or the stately shadows cast by the statues of Lee, Jackson, Davis and Stuart overlooking Richmond's Monument Avenue. All of these structures,

[3] *The Brethrens' Family Almanac,* 1898, 19; *The Brethren Evangelist,* 9 March 1957, 5 (photo); http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/dunkerchurch.htm. In the early 1920s, a strong storm caused the walls of the original meetinghouse to collapse. The church was subsequently restored in 1962 for the Civil War Centennial, and is administered today by the National Park Service. For further historical details concerning the meetinghouse, see the Antietam National Battlefield website and Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1997), 287-90.

however, share the commonality of communicating a particular interpretation of Civil War history. The building (or, in the case of the Brethren meetinghouse, preservation) of each of these memorials involved identifying those political, military, and cultural elements of the wartime experience deserving primary veneration. Who were the heroes worth remembering? What were the norms and values held during the war that were considered beneficial for future generations? Whites and African-Americans often disputed the answers to these questions, as did former Unionists with ex-Confederates. In the half-century following the Civil War, the peace churches exercised their own historical selectivity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Quakers and Mennonites faulted a lingering "war spirit" for the perceived moral, political and economic iniquities of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. While postwar nonresistants examined the present through the lens of the war, they also actively sought to refashion the past by promoting a Civil War narrative which minimized military actions and achievements. An 1883 editorial in *The Friends' Review,* wrestling with the issue of participation in national holidays such as the Fourth of July, looked to the "early Friends" for inspiration: "But, as followers of Him whose kingdom is 'not of this world,' they kept themselves aloof not only from war, but also from the glorification of war and its triumphs." Postbellum nonresistants pursued this same line of thinking. After four years of refusing military service during the war, romanticizing military activities and personnel after the fact would appear grossly inconsistent. Firmly committed to historical "demilitarization," Quakers and Mennonites thus contested textbooks used, holidays celebrated, reunions staged, and monuments erected. For the peace churches, this reworked Civil War history and its subsequent defense became another means of establishing an alternative definition of American heroism. Beyond spiritual and moral concerns, proper conceptions of worthy American ideals and respectable American citizenship were at stake. As expressed by

Quaker Josiah Leeds (himself the author of history textbooks to be discussed later in this chapter) , "the present almost universal pollution of school-books and popular histories with the war spirit and eulogies of the battle-field" necessitated "a change in the usual harmful way of presenting patriotism."[4]

The Quakers established several criteria for historical interpretation. First, renderings of history needed to be grounded in Christian thought and sentiment, particularly those teachings of Christ pertaining to peace. In 1867, an organization known as the Text Book Association of Philadelphia placed an advertisement in the *Friends' Review* offering a $1,000 prize to the author of a contest-winning history textbook for ages ten to fifteen. The ad laid out the following pacifist specifications: "It should in all things recognize the overruling power of Providence, the benignant character of Christianity, and the essentially pacific nature of our own institution, designed to secure a more perfect Union." For the Friends, the assumed synonymy of Christianity and nonresistance required a history stripped of military glorification. In its appeal for new and inventive peace-centered histories, the Association wrote, "In teaching history, it has doubtless often pained the conscientious teacher to find the books at hand so largely made up of *mere records of wars and battles*, while so little space is given to revolutions in political sentiment, progress in the arts, growth of benevolent enterprises, and many other vital elements of national life." While the Text Book Association cast its focus on children, another organization named the Society for Home Culture sought the educational enrichment of those Friends over sixteen years of age. In a circular distributed in the early 1880s, the Society spoke in an advisory capacity for those adults seeking an ongoing "cultivation of the mind": "By

[4] *Friends' Review* 36:29, 24 February 1883, 456; Josiah W. Leeds, *Against the Teaching of War in History Text-Books* (Philadelphia: Author, c. 1897), 6.

recommending only books of solid value, we desire to discourage the introduction of useless or hurtful literature." How exactly did these arbiters of good history define "hurtful"? In a publication entitled "Directions to Students of History," the Society advised, "Bear in mind that the details of military manoeuvres, though they occupy a large portion of many histories, do not constitute the material which it is well to linger over. The student may become as infatuated with the true story of battles, as may the novel reader with the imaginary adventures of his heroes, with nearly as little profit, and with the result of blunting his tenderness and feeling." While these instructions may sound pedantic to the twenty-first century ear, the Society also anticipated at least one scholarly trend in the field of history years before it reached academia. In deflecting attention away from the intricacies of military history, the Society urged its members, "Study rather the causes and effects of wars, considering carefully the social and political evils from which they spring, and how these may best be overcome." Today, scholars studying the causes and consequences of the Civil War do not necessarily assume they can, or should try to, prevent future wars. In 2001's *Race and Reunion,* however, historian David Blight uttered a statement with which the Society of Home Culture would have certainly concurred: "… serving as a mother lode of nostalgia for antimodernists and military history buffs, the Civil War remains very difficult to shuck from its shell of sentimentalism. Over time, Americans have needed deflections from the deeper meanings of the Civil War." To an American culture which has frequently scrutinized *how* individuals fought the Civil War at the expense of asking *why* they fought or *what* transpired after the fighting, the observations of the Society for Home Culture still ring as revelatory.[5]

[5] *Friends' Review* 20:20, 12 January 1867, 313-15; Society for Home Culture circular, 1880-81. Box 2, Folder 1: Miscellaneous. William H.S. Wood Collection. MS Collection 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford

Quakers considered both candor and conciliation to be two crucial elements of historical inquiry. The Text Book Association of Philadelphia called for a "warts-and-all" approach to American history: "The false maxim 'our country right or wrong' must in no case be upheld, but the wrongs done by her, especially to the Indian and African races, must be fearlessly but calmly condemned." As one example of brutal historical honesty, Josiah Leeds felt compelled to issue a "fair statement upon the Indian question," referring to Native Americans as "a people who, as has been abundantly proved, have been in almost every case of overt war the ones wronged, and not the aggressors." Historical candor also involved challenging the characterizations of presumed "great men." Sharing his thoughts on peace and war in an 1885 column of the *Herald of Truth,* Mennonite Daniel Shenk questioned the compatibility of martial heroes with spiritual exemplars: "It is a fact to be deplored that some of our greatest military heroes are now held up before the people as model Christians. Such men as Peter the Great, George Washington, Stonewall Jackson and others. It is true, they should be regarded with all due respect for whatever virtues they may have possessed, but why are they called consistent Christians?" Shenk then took aim at that greatest of American icons, George Washington: "The conduct of Washington has been referred to as an argument in favor of war. If such a good man as Washington engaged in war, it must be right, say they." The Mennonite author concluded by contrasting the Prince of Peace with the First President: "…a greater than Washington is here,

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College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; Society for Home Culture circular "Directions to Students of History," found in Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907. MS Collection 1102. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4.

whose precepts are as contrary to the spirit of war as light is contrary to darkness, or love to hatred." [6]

Well aware that differing historical stances could arouse violent passions, Quakers also endeavored to strike a conciliatory tone when writing history. A vivid illustration of emotion tarnishing history could be found in textbook accounts of the American Revolution, according to the *Friends' Intelligencer*: "How much of the present feeling between the United States and England is the result of the long line of school books which speak of the Boston massacre as a thing which happened last week." In a short pamphlet written to discourage the exaltation of military virtues in textbooks, Josiah Leeds quoted the words of an Episcopalian rector to further his own attempt to curb Anglophobia: "Our children are nurtured on stories of British cruelty in the Revolutionary war; the devil, to them, has a red coat, and carries a Queen Anne musket…My own children are growing up to dislike England because of that old war as told in their school books. It is time to stop it. Patriotism is the noblest virtue, but it must not be nourished in hate."[7]

Would-be Quaker historians often failed to realize, however, that candor and conciliation could be contradictory elements of historical interpretation. Geographical and chronological distance may have made the American Revolution an appropriate event to study in a forthright yet forgiving manner, but the Civil War presented unique obstacles. As pointed out by scholar Michael Kammen, Quakers confronted the same two problems challenging all who sought to write post-1789 American history in the late-nineteenth century: "…it was potentially divisive, both morally and politically, and it verged upon the present, more current events." In the first decades following the Civil War when old sectional loyalties died hard, Quaker history had to

[6] *Friends' Review* 20:20, 12 January 1867, 314-15; Josiah W. Leeds, *A Smaller History of the United States* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1882), 4; *Herald of Truth* 22:6, 15 March 1885, 81.
[7] *Friends' Intelligencer* 35:14, 25 May 1878, 222; Leeds, *Against the Teaching of War*, 4.

not only confront the maxim "My country right or wrong," but also the axiom "My ex-Confederacy right or wrong." Any attempt at speaking candidly of the war's causes and effects ran the risk of aggravating old wounds. The difficulties of promoting an "honest" history shorn of negative passions can be demonstrated in an article entitled "The Study of History" found in an 1878 issue of the *Friends' Intelligencer.* At first, it appeared that the author succeeded in keeping historical candor and conciliation in equilibrium: "Our study of history ought not to be merely a study of facts, nor imaginative study of the period, but we need to carry into it a spirit of candor, such a judicial spirit that we shall know both sides and can cherish a spirit of forgiveness, kindness, and sympathy instead of turning history into an inheritance of hatred." The article seemingly pointed the finger of blame at educators in all regions of the nation for fostering historical hatreds: "History is studied, not in a judicial, but in an angry spirit. Is it not possible now for teachers to discriminate? to trace out for their scholars the true elements of history?" In closing, however, the author singled out the South for both causing the war and its dedication to hot-headed history: "How much of our civil war was due to false education in State rights? How much was slavery the cause, and how much was pure cussedness?" The article ended by abandoning conciliation with the South in favor of condemnation of the region: "Something like justice may now be meted out to the deluded, but self-devoted, ten thousand who sleep in unnamed graves around the stately obelisk in the Richmond graveyard." [8]

Two prominent Quakers, Josiah Leeds and Allen Thomas, tried their hand at crafting peace-based American history textbooks. Both individuals diminished the attention and adulation paid to military subjects, but Leeds wrote a "niche history" emphasizing candor at the risk of

[8] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 161; *Friends' Intelligencer* 35:14, 25 May 1878, 222.

offending sectional sensibilities, while Thomas created a "mass market" history making subtle compromises with historical transparency in order to arrive at a conciliatory narrative. In his helpful study *Schoolbook Nation*, Joseph Moreau points to the 1870s as a crucial decade in the production of and controversy surrounding American history textbooks. The Reconstruction-era growth of public education in the South coincided with the prolific postwar establishment of Catholic schools, and both occurrences spurred intense competition among textbook publishers to capture previously untapped markets. The potential for increased profits, however, raised new dilemmas for publishers: Should a publishing firm go the more cost-prohibitive route and create separate histories for Southern and parochial schools, or should it attempt to distribute watered-down, "fact-based compilation" texts to a national audience, knowing that powerful lobbies such as the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans objected to such "worthless school histories" for refusing to advocate their own sectional preferences? The Quaker authors under consideration faced this same marketing challenge.[9]

Perhaps the most conspicuous example of alternative Quaker history belonged to Josiah W. Leeds (1841-1908), a Philadelphia-area Friend who rarely declined participation in a good moral crusade. In 1877, Leeds first released his history of the United States "designed for general reading and for academies," followed five years later by a smaller history, described by Leeds as "a book of a more elementary character than that, which should be suitable for intermediate schools and for home students." As would be expected, both editions downplayed the role of military strategy and confrontation in the larger American narrative. Expressing his educational intent in the introduction of the larger 1877 history, Leeds wrote, "It will, therefore, be the

[9] Joseph Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 60-61, 71-72, 92-95.

purpose of the following pages, not so much to seek the entertainment of the student by minutely-detailed narratives of military campaigns, as, while treating those subjects at sufficient length, to endeavor to derive some positive benefit from the observation of their causes and effects." Well-written military histories no doubt thrilled students and general readers alike, yet such narratives ignored what Leeds called the "loss" or "expensiveness" of warfare: "That historical treatise accomplishes little or no good for humanity which delights mainly in military manoeuvres, moving its kings and captains in the sight of the student like the unfeeling puppet figures of a chess-board, and, while vainly ministering amusement, suppresses the sad tale of utter devastation and woe that ever attend the track of the worldly conqueror." In his *Smaller History,* Leeds admitted the difficulty of minimizing the military component of history without disparaging the "sincerity of purpose" or "spirit of self-sacrifice" exhibited by the American soldier. Ultimately, however, the times demanded "a consideration of that 'more excellent way' of settling disputes which does not involve the dread appeal to arms" and the needs of the younger generation trumped the motivations (even if noble) of past military personnel. [10]

In a letter written to *The Friend* in 1890, a correspondent with "some experience in the training of children" expressed dismay at "the amount and character of war teaching" in the public schools of Boston and Chicago. As evidence of the "poison" circulated in the nation's classrooms, the author noted the following: "In one school I saw 2000 war pictures hanging on the wall; and nearly everywhere pupils can give the details of campaigns, the character of generals, and the supposed national advantages of wars, with an enthusiasm that speaks plainly for the effect of this teaching upon their feelings." While the number of war pictures on display

[10] Josiah W. Leeds, *A History of the United States of America, Including Some Important Facts Mostly Omitted in the Smaller Histories*, Third Edition (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1881), 9, 12; Leeds, *Smaller History, 3.*

may have been an exaggeration, the editorial left no doubt that illustrations depicting "the movements of great bodies of men," "the fierce courage and tumult of the battlefield," and "the skill and sagacity of the (military) leaders" contributed to "a love of war" and "an excitement…which drowns the remembrance of our Saviour's injunctions to love our enemies, and do good to those that hate us." In 1902, *The American Friend* called for history texts which replaced injurious military illustrations with more wholesome representations, including that (naturally) of William Penn: "…make Florence Nightingale, Clara Barton, Grace Darling, John Howard or Livingstone the central thought for illustration, or give a picture of that great and godly man as he sailed up the Delaware Bay, and for the first time stepped on the American soil with his heart beating immortal with its pulsations of love for man and God." The article positioned the Pennsylvania proprietor who "planted the seed of a mighty nation on the shores of the Delaware, and never wronged the Indian" against Napoleon, Wellington, Ulysses Grant, and their fighting armies.[11]

Josiah Leeds certainly appreciated the legacy of William Penn, but there was nary a picture of Penn, Barton, or Nightingale to be found in his histories. When it came to the use of battle pictures in his *Smaller History*, Leeds acted as an unabashed iconoclast: "Assured, also, that the pictorial representations of scenes of violence with which the 'boy's papers' of the day are filled, have been influential in developing a habit of ready resort to the pistol and other weapons, the writer has carefully avoided the introduction of any illustrations which might tend to foster a propensity so subversive of social order and good morals." It could be argued that the inclusion of photographs taken by Matthew Brady and his associates would have furthered Leeds' aims by communicating the carnage of war and perhaps serving as a deterrent to future

[11] *The Friend* 64:20, 13 December 1890, 159; *American Friend* 9:3, 16 January 1902, 54.

violence. Leeds, however, contented himself with straight text punctuated only by the occasional map or table. In an 1881 letter, Leeds told an associate that his approach in authoring *A Smaller History of the United States* may have cost him potential readership yet reinforced his commitment to peace principles: "…the several reasons which might operate against its (*Smaller History*) popularity, might, to that extent, make it desirable for the purposes of Friends… its curtailment of the particulars of battles; non-laudation of military heroes…and the stipulation that there should be no illustrations of battle or military heroes."[12]

With an underlying commitment to military "curtailment" and "non-laudation," Leeds thus set out to write the great peace church narrative of the Civil War. In his *Smaller History,* Leeds began with both the "incidental occasions" (the assault on Senator Charles Sumner, Dred Scott, John Brown's Raid, and the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln) and the more ultimate causes of secession, including "state sovereignty," "loss of power in the territories," and slavery, of which Leeds wrote, "Herein was their (Confederates') chief grievance." As Leeds moved into the crucial events of 1861, he did not entirely omit battles from the narrative, but his descriptions amounted to little more than scorekeeping, as shown in this description of the first battle of Bull Run: "…the main army of volunteers, commanded by General McDowell, met the Confederates under General Beauregard, at Bull Run, a few miles south-west of Washington, 7th month (July) 21st. A panic seized the Union troops, who fled in disorder toward the capital, leaving a great quantity of artillery and stores on the field. About 3500 of their number were killed, wounded or missing." Leeds inserted the peace churches themselves into his Civil War account in a section under "Events of 1863" entitled "The Draft": "Volunteers not offering themselves in sufficient

[12] Leeds, *Smaller History,* 3; Letter from Josiah Leeds to George Scattergood, 1881. Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907.

numbers during the year, President Lincoln ordered that a compulsory draft be made…Some were unwilling, upon conscientious grounds, either to serve in the army or to provide substitutes. These were usually exempted." [13]

Civil War conscientious objectors were not the only marginalized group to garner sympathy from Leeds. The Quaker historian offered a unique perspective on General William Sherman's occupation of the South: "Great devastation was wrought in the march to (Atlanta) through the section formerly called 'Cherokee Georgia.' The great wrong of which the Indians had been the victims, was thus visited in return upon the generation succeeding those who did the deed." If Sherman's march was justifiable retribution, however, Leeds shared less enthusiasm for General Philip Sheridan's path of devastation through the Shenandoah Valley: "In retaliation for the burning of Chambersburg, a large number of fine barns in the Valley were wantonly burnt, crops were destroyed, and cattle were driven off." Eventually, in Leeds' bare-bones style, the war ended: "On the 3d day of the 4th month the Union troops entered the late capital of the Confederacy. On the 9th instant, Lee, after further futile endeavors to escape, surrendered the shattered remnant of his army to General Grant. Two weeks later, Johnston surrendered to Sherman, and the rebellion came to an end." [14]

In his zeal to construct a concise Civil War narrative incapable of arousing harmful passions, Josiah Leeds missed a precious opportunity to advance historical scholarship. At the end of his larger 1877 history, Leeds acknowledged, "No more than a mere outline of the War of the Rebellion has been given. There were numerous cavalry raids, hundreds of battles and skirmishes, and many encounters upon the rivers and ocean, of which no mention can here be

[13] Leeds, *Smaller History,* 184-86, 196; Leeds, *History of the United States,* 417.
[14] Leeds, *Smaller History,* 197-98; Leeds, *History of the United States,* 430.

made." One might expect these lines, given Leeds' well-documented aversion to violent history. Then, however, came this statement: "Neither has anything been said of the work of the Sanitary Commission; of the employment of colored soldiers in the army; of the conscription, and the disturbances in Northern cities in opposition to it; of the great riot in New York and the massacre of negroes; of the terrible privations and sufferings of the Union prisoners confined in the warehouses and prison-pens of the South, and, in a less degree, of the sufferings of Confederates at the North, together with a hundred other dire consequences of the war." In this sentence, Leeds stood at the shoreline of social history and dipped his toe in the current without wading out further. A twenty-first century scholar could easily chide Leeds for failing to elaborate on these themes, but the evidence indicates that Leeds saw himself first and foremost as a moralist, not a historian. Rather than delve into the wartime experiences of ignored or marginalized groups, Leeds used his Civil War narrative as a means of moral didacticism and a vehicle to get to what mattered most to him, the consequences of war.[15]

In her recent influential study *This Republic of Suffering,* Drew Gilpin Faust devotes a chapter to the postwar act of "numbering," the attempt to find cathartic meaning in war-related devastation through the quantification of wartime casualties. Faust writes, "In face of the inadequacy of words, counting seemed a way to grasp the magnitude of sorrow, to transcend individual bereavement in order to grapple with the larger meaning of loss for society and nation." The peace churches engaged in "numbering" themselves and this effort, true to Faust's description, attempted to measure societal loss and sorrow emanating from the war. For nonresistants, however, such counting appeared less about seeking consolation than proving the magnitude of destruction of the late war. In both of his histories, Josiah Leeds quantified

[15] Ibid., 430-31.

wartime losses demographically, economically and morally. After noting that either death or disability claimed one million American men, Leeds illuminated the monetary cost of the war through theoretical examples: "A moiety of the debt incurred for, and the loss sustained by, the war, would have paid for all the slaves; would have provided all the illiterate whites and blacks of the South with the requisite facilities for obtaining an education; would have built half-a-dozen railways from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and would have paid for the completion of as many water-ways connecting the streams of the Mississippi valley with those of the Atlantic slope and the Great Lakes." Concerning moral losses, Leeds wrote in 1882, "The moral loss by the war was indeed great, yet it was perhaps not so apparent at first as it was somewhat later. After the lapse of ten or fifteen years, the evil consequences could be much more readily measured." Leeds then took a moral inventory of the nation as it stood in the midst of the Chester Arthur administration, launching into a familiar litany of contemporary evils generated by the war: speculation and business "defalcations," intemperance, "the free use of deadly weapons," "trashy papers which are filled with tales of violence," and the "party spirit" present in Washington. Leeds realized that his presentation differed from that of the "usual harmful" textbook patriotism which told its young readers "…our republic is glorious beyond all other republics or empires, and that we are altogether on the high road to prosperity." Literary conventions of the era, however, dictated that history text authors close with "a salutary assessment of present-day America and hopeful predictions for the future," and Josiah Leeds was no exception. The textbook ended by exhorting boys and girls to be soldiers of peace and join other American moral warriors concerned with overcoming the legacy of the Civil War: "…many thousands of faithful men and women throughout the land, are prayerfully working to overcome every one of these evils, which threaten the purity and happiness of the people. All of

every age, therefore, are called to *this* warfare: first, to overcome the rising evil in their own hearts, and then, to combat the evils which afflict society and their country."[16]

Leeds' histories drew favorable response in certain quarters. In a letter addressed to Leeds in 1879, Martha Schofield expressed her appreciation for a history text which reinforced her parental commitment to peace: "Of course I saw at once that battles and all that is *not worth* knowing about the killed and wounded was left out, which gratified me very much…Our children are taught that fighting is wrong, and that it is not right, even to look at wrong, consequently (they) are punished if they look at, or urge on a fight." If an advertisement from J.B. Lippincott (Leeds' publisher) is authentic, several periodicals also endorsed the work of Leeds. To no one's surprise, *The Friend* contributed a positive review: "It is unlike any historical compend that has yet been published, for it is a survey of the whole field of our annals from the standpoint of Christian doctrines, which inculcates 'peace on earth and good-will to men.'" *The Christian Reformer* (a publication of which the authorship and affiliation are unclear) welcomed Leeds' refusal to let nationalism overwhelm the narrative: "The true historian must be more jealous for the truth, and for the honor of the God of nations, than for his country's unsmirched honor, maintained at the cost of much sacrifice of truth or hiding of very important, and even characteristic, parts of its history. This jealousy for and faithfulness to the truth the author of this history has fully evinced." If the *Reformer* concurred with Leeds' candor, *The Nashville Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper located in the former Confederacy, praised Leeds in "high

[16]Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 250 (The full discussion appears in chapter 8, "Numbering," pp. 250-265); Leeds, *History of the United States,* 432; Leeds, *Smaller History,* 201-02, 261-63; Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation,* 56.

terms of commendation" for his impartiality: "The work is not sectional…An air of calmness and candor pervades the book." [17]

While some congratulated Leeds for authoring a history free of sectional bias, however, Texas state officials charged the Friend with igniting a firestorm of controversy. At issue was Leeds' treatment (in the *Smaller History)* of wartime events at Fort Pillow. On 12 April 1864, in the process of capturing the Union fort located on the Mississippi River in Tennessee, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest's men allegedly shot both black and white soldiers who had surrendered. Some in the South chose to refer to this event as "the battle of Fort Pillow"; Leeds thought otherwise. Under the heading "Fort Pillow Massacre," Leeds wrote, "Its capture was marked by signal atrocity, as no quarter was given to the garrison, half of whom were colored troops. Men, women, and children were butchered indiscriminately." Texas Governor John Ireland, also serving as Chairman of the State Board of Education, attacked Leeds' characterization in 1886 as "partial and sectional in tone" and went so far as to issue a statement declaring that "the study of history was one that was not necessary to be pursued in the public schools of the State." *The Friends' Review,* however, reprinted the words of one of the preeminent historians of the day, Benson John Lossing, as proof of the validity of Leeds' conclusions: "I think there is no fact in history more unquestionable, if human testimony may be relied upon, than the inhuman and inexcusable massacre of Fort Pillow… It is the height of unwisdom for a man like the Governor of Texas, at this day, to deny the perpetration of the act or

[17] Letter from Martha Schofield to Josiah Leeds, 1879. Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907; Advertisement for Leeds' *History of the United States,* date unknown. Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907.

even to attempt to palliate it." The Texas controversy thus revealed Leeds' history to be a niche text created for a narrow market segment.[18]

Circulated in the 1880s, when countless specialized history textbooks surfaced in hopes of challenging the sales dominance of broadly written fact-based histories, Leeds' *Smaller History* falls into the former category. Without sales figures provided by publishers, one must rely on sources such as *The Friends' Review* and its claim that one Southern firm ordered six hundred copies of Leeds' book. If true, this is certainly an aberration. The stark recounting of Fort Pillow and the effort to minimize military laudation flew in the face of the narrative of brave, chivalric Southern soldiery expected from Lost Cause partisans. With a larger peace church population, the North promised more sales. Northern reliance on local school boards over state education boards (as found in the South) regarding textbook purchases also made it easier for individual "peace-friendly" school districts to incorporate Leeds' text into their curriculum. Leeds' histories, however, ignored a substantial segment of the population that believed military maneuvers mattered in the saga of Union preservation and valued what one Grand Army of the Republic committee called "the fidelity, courage, and patriotic work performed by the soldiers of the Union armies." The histories of Josiah Leeds documented the challenge of upholding candor, be it candor about Confederate brutality or candor about the inhumanity and demoralization of war, as an ideal of historical inquiry in post-Civil War America. While it sounded noble in the realm of the theoretical, historical "honesty," from Josiah Leeds' perspective, both presupposed a

[18] Leeds, *Smaller History*, 196; *Friends' Review* 40:22, 30 December 1886, 350. Scholarship has confirmed Leeds' claims concerning Fort Pillow. James McPherson writes, "Although formerly disputed by southerners, the truth of a massacre of several dozen black prisoners and some whites, along with their commander Major William F. Bradford, who was captured and subsequently shot 'while attempting to escape,' is now well established and generally accepted." See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry for Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 748, n48.

singular historical "Truth" and ignored the lingering depth of sectional antagonism in the decades immediately following the war.[19]

In 1900, Allen C. Thomas, a professor at Haverford College (a Quaker institution located just outside Philadelphia), also took on the task of writing an American history. *An Elementary History of the United States* took a much different route to military minimization than Josiah Leeds. Rather than listing events by year or presidential administration as Leeds did, Thomas employed the "great man" approach to history. In the introduction to this work geared towards "pupils of the earlier grammar grades," Thomas defended his methodology of "history through biography": "Personal incident is more attractive to every one, and especially to children, than any narrative of events can possibly be." Describing his personal selection process for biographical inclusion, Thomas highlighted those individuals best exemplifying "important phases of national growth." These phases included "the difficulties and dangers of exploration," "the risks and hardships of settlement," "the independence and patriotism of the colonists," and "the progress of invention and its effect upon national development." If Thomas gave explorers, settlers, and inventors top billing over generals and rear admirals, military officials still made their presence known throughout the text. Thomas' history contained illustrations of Ulysses Grant (in civilian clothes), David Farragut (standing in a ship's rigging), Robert E. Lee (in side view), and the Monitor and Merrimac in close proximity. Weighed against the earlier concerns expressed by *The Friend* (see p. 79), the pictures in *An Elementary History* show "no movements of great bodies of men" nor is the "fierce courage and tumult of the battlefield" visually evident.

[19] *Friends' Review* 40:22, 30 December 1886, 350; Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation,* 21-23, 83-84; Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 225.

The inclusion of Grant, Lee and Farragut, however, suggests that these men possessed at least some level of "skill and sagacity" in Thomas' eyes. [20]

Confirming this notion is Thomas' textual treatment of wartime fighting. Where Josiah Leeds covered the individual major battles in terse terms of winners, losers, and numbers dead or injured, Thomas condensed four years of military action into two paragraphs:

> The terrible conflict thus begun lasted four years. The armies on each side fought bravely. The people, both North and South, taxed themselves heavily to carry on the war, and bore the burden ungrudgingly. There was great suffering on the battle-fields, in the hospitals, and, saddest of all, in the military prisons. Great battles were fought, and there were many notable exploits on sea and land. There were able generals in the Union army, such as Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Philip H. Sheridan, and George H. Thomas. In the navy such men as David G. Farragut, Andrew H. Foote, and others, more than sustained the reputation of the American naval officer. In the Confederate army there were able generals as well: Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, Thomas J. Jackson, commonly known as "Stonewall" Jackson, and J.E.B. Stuart.

Like Leeds, Thomas did not stress battle particulars and his characterizations of "able" officers and brave fighters seem too cursory to be considered truly laudatory (see Leeds' concerns on p. 81). Thomas and Leeds dramatically differed, however, on the aftereffects of the war. The histories of Josiah Leeds envisioned the Civil War as a Pandora's Box which, once opened, released irretrievable contaminants into the American moral atmosphere. Thomas, however, found more reason for optimism in the American present, and in so doing, betrayed a racial exceptionalism common to the first decade of the twentieth century: " The wonderful prosperity and development of the great republic have been due in part to great natural advantages, but these alone would not have brought success. Without the earnestness, the frugality, the

[20] Allen C. Thomas, *An Elementary History of the United States* (Boston, D.C. Heath, 1900), iii, 322-27. The complete list of individuals profiled by Thomas included Christopher Columbus, John and Sebastian Cabot, Hernando De Soto, Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, John Smith, Henry Hudson, Lord Baltimore, Peter Stuyvesant, Father Marquette & LaSalle, Nathaniel Bacon, William Penn, James Oglethorpe, George Washington, Daniel Boone, Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Zebulon Pike, Inventors (John Fitch, Robert Fulton, Eli Whitney), Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln.

independent, self-reliant spirit, and the love of conquering difficulties, all of which are characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race, the natural advantages would have amounted to little."[21]

Although still relatively restrained in his praise of military virtues, Thomas made more concessions to reconciliationism than Josiah Leeds. Thomas himself offered no clear evidence for why this occurred. Perhaps he simply reflected the push towards the sentimental yet racialized sectional reconciliation present in the era of the Spanish-American War, an impulse less tangible in the late 1870s when Leeds wrote his histories. Market considerations, however, must also be considered. By the mid-1890s, the intensity of battles over Civil War memory had subsided, and the "telegraphic" style of history textbook predominated once again. For his history reader to sell nationally, Thomas had to placate three distinct audiences: a) a "peace audience" demanding the minimization of military glorification, b) Northern readers (influenced by members of patriotic organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic) remembering the war as nothing less than treasonous rebellion perpetrated on an inviolable Union and c) a Southern readership continuing to recognize their principles and their fight in support of those principles as valid. As an example of his appeasing style, Thomas offered no value judgments on the sticky subjects of slavery or abolitionism, but simply credited those of both sides who adhered to their chosen principles: "This war put an end to slavery in the United States, and now there is probably no one who would really wish it back. The war made the people of the North and South respect each other. It showed that the American people are just as brave, just as patriotic, just as self-sacrificing, as they ever were." [22]

[21] Ibid., 322-23, 334.
[22] Ibid., 324-27. For a discussion of the Grand Army of the Republic's efforts to monitor history textbooks, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment,* 224-26.

With *An Elementary History* located further towards the conciliatory end of the candor-conciliation continuum than Leeds, this both helps and hurts the work of Allen Thomas. Thomas emerges with a history less stridently preachy than Josiah Leeds, but this benefit glosses over causes and consequences. Thomas faults the "want of knowledge" on both sides for igniting the war, and several factors contributed to these misunderstandings: a) "the main lines of travel in the United States have always been east and west…rather than north and south" b) "there were few railroads in the South" c)"the warm climate of the South was not attractive to the men of the Middle and Northern states" and, finally, just before lapsing into complete geographic determinism, d) "The Southern people generally believed that slavery was right; very many of the Northern people, on the contrary, thought that it was wrong." If Leeds lingered too long on the moral expense of the war, Thomas virtually overlooked the losses of the war, be they demographic, economic, or lost opportunities for racial equality. Even in the pedagogical context of an elementary school primer, by previous Quaker standards, this historical analysis (The South liked slavery, most of the North didn't, both sides fought bravely under able generals, America became a better nation as a result) seems oversimplified. In the final analysis, Josiah Leeds authored a text so forthright in its historical interpretation that it risked offending readers in both North and South. The history of Allen Thomas, on the other hand, extended so much conciliatory sentiment that it lost a distinctive Quaker prophetic sense. The Quaker quest for a history both candid and conciliatory, as exemplified by the textbooks written by Josiah Leeds and Allen Thomas, proved illusory. [23]

Textbooks, however, were not the only forum of historical contestation. The peace churches also objected to the post-Civil War militarization of American holidays. Quakers,

[23] Ibid., 318, 326-27.

Mennonites, and Brethren all shared a commitment to sobriety which explained some of this opposition and caused the churches to make some unintentionally humorous pronouncements about the pageantry associated with national holidays. In the days immediately preceding the Fourth of July, 1904, the Mennonite publication *The Herald of Truth* anticipated "some real heartfelt thanksgiving and joy (to be) expressed for both the national and religious liberty enjoyed in America," yet bemoaned "the foolish, destructive, ungodly effects of its celebration (which) always eclipse the good that is developed by this memorial day." In describing the physical dangers present in celebrating the Fourth with firecracker, percussion cane, or "the dangerous toy pistol," the *Herald* resorted to maudlin melodrama: "If this year's record does not fall far short of that of previous years, millions of dollars worth of property will be burned up, many homes saddened because mother's darling boy is a suffering, maimed cripple for life, and the grave will have claimed its share of victims, all because of a warlike celebration of what is termed Christian liberty." In a 1900 editorial, *The American Friend* challenged the nation's infatuation with Independence Day pyrotechnics and libation: "Blaze and noise are the two main things sought after by the patriotic, and something to drink is the end and aim of another great class of celebrators. For a hundred and twenty-four years we have contented ourselves with making a 'racket' on this so-called 'glorious' day of ours… We began with little powder crackers and guns, and we have come to dynamite and cannon." *The Friends' Review* in 1883 appreciated the need for a Fourth of July in theory, but deplored its practice by American followers of Christ: "… the acquisition of rightful independence by a nation, the emancipation of an enslaved race, or any other great national event, may well be remembered gladly and with thankfulness by every Christian. But the glittering pageantry and noisy demonstrations with

which such occasions are apt to be celebrated are 'of the earth'…and not congenial to the minds of those whose affections are set upon 'things above.'"[24]

Of course, more was at issue here than blaze, noise and glitter. The crux of the matter, as far as the peace churches were concerned, remained the exaltation of military ideals and the synonymous promotion of a false and dangerous patriotism. As late as 1911, some Mennonites advocated participating in Fourth of July remembrances in order to "show our patriotism" and "spend the day in memory of the freedom of our country." Writing in the *Gospel Herald* that year, however, C. Neuhauser argued that patriotism as displayed on the Fourth contradicted both Scripture and basic Mennonite doctrine: "Patriotism as understood at the present time includes a readiness to grasp carnal weapons in defense of our country. The speakers laud as heroes the men who win glory on the field of battle… Where does that place Christ's death, who died for His enemies that they might live?" As evidence of the strong and deadly lure of patriotism, Neuhauser offered the following illustration from his own Mennonite experience: "In 1861 I was acquainted with a young brother who afterward enlisted in the army. He was excommunicated from the church…He died on the battle-field fighting for his country. He died as a patriot, which from the standpoint of the world is the noblest death a man can die, even though an excommunicated member—excommunicated because he was disobedient to the teachings of the Son of God." *The American Friend,* in 1900, also protested the heavy-handed rhetoric heard at Independence Day gatherings: "Fortunately, we have in a measure outgrown the old-time Fourth of July 'oratory,' which was much worse than the powder explosives… Our recent war and our new imperialism have somewhat brought back that old lurid spread-eagleism, but whenever it

[24] *Herald of Truth* 41:28, 7 July 1904, 217; *American Friend* 7:28, 12 July 1900, 659; *Friends' Review* 36:29, 24 February 1883, 456.

comes and wherever it prevails, it destroys a true and noble patriotism which feeds not on froth, but on the intrinsic greatness and goodness of the country." The author here made no further attempt to define "true and noble patriotism," but certainly regarded recognition of military heroes as ceremonial "froth": "There can be no possible doubt that our present method of celebrating does foster the martial spirit; it does feed the taste for spectacular glory, and it does draw out the lower kind of sentimental patriotism—which, unfortunately, is the most familiar kind."[25]

The holiday most explicitly tied to the late war, however, was Decoration Day, an observance which "shaped Civil War memory as much as any other cultural ritual," according to historian David Blight. Originally celebrated on 1 May 1865 by black South Carolinians and abolitionist supporters in Charleston, Decoration Day soon became appropriated by white Northerners and Southerners alike as a means of paying homage to fallen soldiers. In *Race and Reunion,* Blight describes the Northern remembrance of Memorial Day (the successor of Decoration Day) as a ritual celebrating religion, nationalism, and masculinity: ""In the cult of the fallen soldier, a nineteenth-century manly ideal of heroism was redefined for coming generations." In terms which can easily be transferred to Southern veterans in the celebration of Confederate Memorial Day, Nina Silber sees Memorial Day as "a day that was crucial for preserving the Union veteran's sense of identity and for establishing his image of manly heroism in the broader community." Whether the intent was to revere the fallen or the living ex-Civil War soldier, the peace churches charged Decoration Day with praising the wrong people, upholding offensive principles, and transmitting a dangerous history. *The Friends' Review*, in 1879, wrote scathing words about the day's recipients of honor, fallen soldiers: "We teach our children to

[25] *Gospel Herald* 4:7, 18 May 1911, 107; *American Friend* 7:28, 12 July 1900, 659.

abhor an assassin, but fill their hands with flowers to lay on the graves of those who have passed on to the judgment throne with the blood of many on their souls, in direct violation of Christ's command, 'love your enemies.'" Two years later, *The Friend* expressed its concern regarding the effect of Decoration Day ceremonies on young, impressionable minds: "The fascinating influences that are spread around the dreadful carnage of war makes 'its honors and its glories,' inhuman as they are, to be coveted by the youthful aspirant, and when such see the formal display of 'Decoration Day,' and read in the papers the laudatory accounts thereof, it will make the Christian lesson much more difficult to learn." The article further cited the opposition of true Christianity to military imperatives and, in so doing, made unflattering implications about Civil War soldiers: "…there can hardly be any thing more antagonistic (to the gospel of Christ) than the fiendish spirit of murder; be it wholesale as in the onslaught of legalized battles, or in the single attack by the assassin's deadly weapon."[26]

As the peace churches lumped soldiers together with assassins and deplored the violence recounted during Decoration Day ceremonies, they also scoffed at the definition of honor constructed by those with military sympathies. In 1874, *The Friend* reacted unfavorably to news of the legal adoption of Decoration Day in Pennsylvania and raised specific objections to the moral laxity and economic irresponsibility such a day would bring: "They ("legal holidays") encourage persons of all descriptions to break off from the various employments by which they obtain the means necessary for the subsistence of themselves and families, and they add greatly to the frequency and power of the temptation to waste their time, their health and their money in

[26] Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 65, 72; Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 58; *Friends' Review* 32:44, 14 June 1879, 691; *The Friend* 54:44, 11 June 1881, 348. For a full discussion of the disputation of Decoration Day on racial, sectional, and political grounds, see Ch. 3, "Decoration Days," in Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 64-97.

idleness or degrading conviviality." Of more crucial importance, however, was the characterization of patriotism being advanced on Decoration Day: "It is a saddening reflection that at this late period in the nineteenth century of the Christian dispensation…and in a community professing to believe in the religion of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the representatives of the people should…cherish and propagate the spirit of war, by perpetuating *the ascription of such an honor, as it is called,--childish though it really is*—to the memory of those who died while engaged in actions springing from the lusts that war in our members, and which are always opposed to the benign spirit and precepts of the Saviour of men." In 1881, *The Friend* responded to this line in an unnamed newspaper: "In the strewing of the silent green mounds with fair and fragrant blossoms by the infant hands of the pupils of the different schools, the horrors of war and its rancorous asperities have no place." The editorial contributor to *The Friend*, however, found nothing but militaristic glorification in "the gaudy procession, the military display, the martial music, and other accoutrements of battles and war; and all this *in honor, as it is termed,* of 'the illustrious dead,' who fought, perhaps who killed, or who, at least, have been killed on the sanguinary field of horrid warfare." [27]

Neither the 1874 nor the 1881 article elaborated on why the wider culture's perceptions of honor appeared faulty to the Friends. Did Quakers believe honor to mean moral integrity while those in the surrounding culture still clung to a more nineteenth century understanding of honor as rooted in community reputation? Was the honor conferred at public remembrances of Decoration Day indeed "childish" and silly or more capable of harm? Friends failed to answer these questions, but in his publication *The Herald of Truth* in 1886, Mennonite John F. Funk likened the Decoration Day bestowal of honor to "the idolatry of image worship": "It is

[27] *The Friend* 47:42, 6 June 1874, 335-36, emphasis mine; *The Friend* 54:44, 11 June 1881, 348, emphasis mine.

seemingly a very beautiful custom to go out to the cemeteries, where sleep our beloved dead, and strew flowers, bright fresh flowers, upon their graves, but hidden there beneath this seeming act of love is this same idol of war and heathenism that perpetuates in the hearts and minds of men a spirit that glories in the honors of the battlefield, and takes delight in awakening enmity and destroying human life." This statement certainly rings as unfair. Funk assumed that observers attended Decoration Day ceremonies in order to glorify a bloody past, but this day was largely about finding spiritual meaning in the present. In a funeral sermon delivered in 1864, Tennessee pastor Joseph Cross counseled the assembled, "Grief must have vent, or it will break the heart." The minister classified those expressions of grief that did not lead to despair as perfectly natural and acceptable: "It is cruel to deny one the relief of mourning when mourning is so often its own relief." Decoration Day remembrances helped to assuage individual and (especially in the Confederacy) collective grief. Where John Funk saw a life-destroying pagan rite, others found a life-affirming experience, a day promoting psychological healing as much as (if not more than) a militaristic interpretation of Civil War memory. [28]

In spite of the glowing accolades they received on occasions such as Memorial Day, some Civil War veterans carried unbearable mental burdens inherited from the wartime past. In 1901, *The Friend* juxtaposed the pomp and pageantry of Decoration Day ceremonies with the brutal realities of war's aftereffects in an article entitled "Insanity from War." A correspondent for the paper traveled to St. Elizabeth's, a "government asylum for the insane" located within the

[28] Because of their self-characterization as religious outsiders, all three peace churches would have rejected a reputation-centered meaning of honor as defined by Bertram Wyatt-Brown: "the inner conviction of self-worth," "the claim of that self-assessment before the public," and "the assessment of the claim by the public." See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 14. *Herald of Truth* 23:11, 1 June 1886, 162; Joseph Cross, *Camp and Field: Papers from the Portfolio of an Army Chaplain* (Columbia, S.C.: Evans and Cogswell, 1864), 68-71; quoted in Faust, *Republic of Suffering,* 165-66.

boundaries of the District of Columbia, and witnessed another fruit of the harvest of war, "…the large number of once promising young men made hopelessly crazy by (war), who are now worse than drivelling idiots compelled to spend the remainder of their ruined lives in close confinement." The reporter arrived at St. Elizabeth's just in time to observe Decoration Day festivities, and even though flowers graced numerous soldiers' graves close to the facility, the author reflected that "if tears were shed, heaven knows they were not for the poor fellows at rest beneath the sod, but for their infinitely less fortunate comrades, whose living tragedies are hidden within the gloomy walls of the asylum." Amidst colorful bunting and the flags of Cuba and the Philippines, institution officials attempted to pull off a patriotic spectacle including some of the more docile inmates: "About four hundred of the less dangerous soldier patients took part in the proceedings with veterans from the Washington Grand Army of the Republic post named 'John A. Logan.'" Musical military marches, often condemned by Quakers as stirring violent passions, in this setting sounded and looked purely pathetic: "There was a choir composed of employees of the institution and inmates who have their 'lucid intervals,' besides the St. Elizabeth's home band of fifteen pieces, which may generally be depended upon to do excellent work, though now and then some daft performer forgets his score, and goes off on a rag-time air of his own." A choir with "many excellent voices" soothed the "mentally unbalanced" for a few moments, but the musical paeans praising comrades and country could not completely eliminate the cloud of pathos hanging over the dingy asylum: "Meanwhile at barred windows pallid faces overlooked the scene with gibbering lips and eyes that had 'no speculation' in them. Wild yells were occasionally heard, subdued by the thick walls of padded cells, and the keepers watched with the eyes of hawks every movement of those at temporary liberty. It seemed like a horrible

travesty when the speaker thanked the Lord that so few had been removed by death, and the band played 'He Giveth His Beloved Sleep.'"[29]

Thus the same publication which two decades earlier spoke ill of the military dead and their participation in the "fiendish spirit of murder" (see p. 95) now sounded a note of sympathy for their pitiable living counterparts: "There is no doubt that everything possible is being done to relieve the condition of the wretched wearers of Uncle Samuel's army and navy uniforms who are imprisoned in the various government asylums, but their grim walls conceal horrors of which the world knows absolutely nothing, and besides which Dante's hypochondriacal visions of Inferno fade to insignificance." The corporeal presence of several thousand former members of the armed forces "forgotten while yet in the land of the living" appeared, to the author, incongruous with a day devoted to honoring military exploits.[30]

If Decoration Day was an affront to peace sensibilities, what were the alternatives? In a 1910 issue of the *Friends' Messenger,* a periodical written for North Carolina Friends, F.S. Blair proposed counteracting Civil War remembrance with memory (selective as it was) of the first American President: "Let us begin on Second month 22nd hereafter to celebrate more fittingly the birthday of 'The Father of his country,' who has been declared 'first in peace.'" Two months later in the same publication, Blair championed another anniversary which Carolina Quakers could appropriate as their own Decoration Day: "Fifth month 18th is to be observed the world around in memory of the First Hague Conference. I desire to urge all Friends to remember the occasion with appropriate exercises, etc. I call the matter especially to the attention of Friends in North Carolina, in the perilous time of the cruel war of '61 to '65, and especially to the younger

[29] *The Friend* 75:2, 27 July 1901, 9-10.
[30] Ibid., 10.

people who have read and heard the traditions of Friends in the dark days of 'the war,' but most especially to the few yet remaining who had experiences in the things that tried the souls of men and women." In 1906, a Mennonite contributor to the *Herald of Truth* recited a familiar diatribe against Decoration Day and the memory of conflict and violence which it implicitly perpetuated: "What was the Civil War but a huge, bloody family quarrel? And if so, why appoint a day to celebrate as anniversary of this sad quarrel? Would it not be just as fitting for a family or a church to appoint a memorial day by which to commemorate family or church difficulties, or to venerate the shrines of those who took the most active part in them?" The author recommended the following remedy: "Rather have a day of exercises that are calculated to obliterate rather than perpetuate the sectionalism known as 'North' and 'South.'" This particular writer, however, failed to notice the sizable obliteration of sectional antagonism that had taken place by the first decade of the twentieth century.[31]

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the increased incidence of Blue-Gray veterans' reunions and the growing sentimental appeal of the Lost Cause interpretation of the war signaled a move towards sectional reconciliation. Such easing of old wartime antagonisms placed the peace churches in a precarious rhetorical position. On the one hand, the newfound fraternity displayed by onetime enemies surely meant the principles of peace were making headway into American culture. In 1911, as the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil War commenced, the *American Friend* predicted what the following four years of remembrance of the "terrible conflict" would bring: "Veterans from the North and South will meet on a number of the old battlefields to live over again the scenes now happily buried under half a century of peace." Rather than resort to

[31] *Friends' Messenger* 13:2, March 1910; *Friends' Messenger* 13:4, May 1910; *Herald of Truth* 43:23, 7 June 1906, 201.

disdain, however, the author appeared to welcome the upcoming festivities as vindication of the peace cause in America: "They are probably the last great reunions of Civil War veterans that will ever meet on this continent. General enthusiasm comes only with quarter-century anniversaries, and the third quarter will be beyond the life span of practically all the old soldiers. Comradeship born of carnage is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, and in its stead we are having the brotherhood of man." [32]

Later that year, the *American Friend* reprinted an article offering an eyewitness account of the fiftieth-anniversary celebration of the first battle of Bull Run held July 21, 1911 at Manassas, Virginia. The author certainly trod into the field of hyperbole when commenting, "At the Manassas jubilee war received but scant notice; peace and the spirit out of which peace springs was the commanding note of the day." What actions prompted such an ebullient statement? "Hundreds of the old soldiers, both of the North and the South, who had taken part in that first bloody battle of the Civil War fifty years ago, met on the battlefield, fraternized in the most friendly way, formed in two lines facing each other, the Blue looking south and the Gray looking north, and then with outstretched hands advanced to meet each other, and clasping hands stood for five minutes pledging, with all sincerity we doubt not, eternal friendship." Obviously caught up in the spirit of the day, the writer proceeded to make bold pronouncements based on the symbolism of reunion present in Manassas: "The whole spirit and temper of our time in regard to war is fast changing. Its 'glory' is departing. It is the marvelous transformation in the opinions and feelings of men going on everywhere these last days of which the Manassas Jubilee was, in its own peculiar way, the expression and the interpretation." This apparent triumph of

[32] Historian Gaines Foster sees an impulse towards sectional reconciliation present as early as the late 1870s. See Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 63-75; *American Friend* 18:16, 20 April 1911, 244.

peace applied to the international arena as well as the domestic. Audience members responded jubilantly to the words of the ceremony's guest speaker, President William Taft: "When (Taft) announced that that very day a treaty of unlimited arbitration with France, similar to the Anglo-American treaty, had been completed, which might be ratified within ten days, Northerners and Southerners alike arose from their seats with one impulse, and with a storm of cheers, the Rebel yell and the Yankee war cry mingling together, acclaimed the announcement." On a day set aside to remember a battle, peace secured a victory at Manassas, and participants from both North and South emerged as victors.[33]

Other Quaker commentators, however, took a more jaundiced view of veterans' reunions. *The Friends' Review* mentioned a gathering commemorating the twenty-fourth anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg where "Pickett's men of Virginia" shook hands with "the Philadelphia brigade" in the field where they had once engaged in ferocious combat. The article offered a few words in recognition of the surviving soldiers but, for the author, such celebrations only masked the true history of the Civil War: "Patriotism and self-sacrifice for a noble cause are real virtues; and bravery, in itself, is admirable. But, the slaughter! What can any one say in praise of that? Which was nobler, more human: fighting till the ground was strown with dead, or the cordial fraternity of the present year?" Ultimately the consequences of the war outweighed any good achieved by reconciliation: "We do not believe there ever was a war the total results of which were not worse than might have been attained by the belligerents through reason and justice, without the appeal to arms."[34]

[33] *American Friend* 18:35, 31 August 1911, 559.
[34] *Friends' Review* 40:51, 21 December 1887, 810.

For historian David Blight, the Lost Cause myth functioned in the hands of Southerners not only as a psychological panacea for defeat, but also as a tool for reconciliation, a means of establishing the proper terms for national unification. Blight highlights the racial ramifications of this aim ("white supremacy as both means and ends"), but such a strategy also carried militaristic implications. One of the central building blocks of the Lost Cause faith was the military courage exhibited by Confederate soldiers and their noble defense of the homeland, marred only by the superior manpower of the North. If Southerners had any say in prescribing terms of reconciliation, then recognition of Confederate military valor was a certain prerequisite. Having acquired such respect, Southerners would then reciprocate the affirmation to their Union military counterparts. The notion of national harmony accomplished through mutual recognition of military greatness thus rested on a paradoxical historical assumption: it took the Civil War to bring about sectional reconciliation. Such logic clearly incensed the Quakers, as it invalidated their claim that cooler heads promoting an agenda of peace would have prevented a bloody, prolonged struggle. *The American Friend* addressed this concern in 1908: "We are sometimes reminded that (war) stimulates thought, but who ever heard of a war waged for intellectual improvement. Then again we are told how it fosters courage, but we look in vain for national carnage with this as the avowed purpose. Of late we hear much of another virtue—it makes men forget sectional feeling—but the army is yet to be enlisted for the sole purpose of allaying differences among the people from which it comes." [35]

Here, as was the case with textbooks, Friends undoubtedly wanted candor along with the conciliation expressed at Civil War remembrances. Quakers sought an admission that, the role of the soldiers aside, a "blundering generation" led the nation into a slaughter, leaving a long-

[35] Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 258-59, 273-74; *American Friend* 15:22, 28 May 1908, 340.

lasting moral and economic residue. In its recap of the 1887 soldier's reunion at Gettysburg, the *Friends' Review* thundered, "If those who, as political leaders, brought on the war, could have foreseen its cost, in agonies of the battlefield, desolation of families, ruin and destruction,--what sacrifice of pride or of property would it not have been worth, to accomplish the inevitable result by means of peaceful settlement?" If nonresistants expected the language of sackcloth and ashes at such observances, however, they experienced sore disappointment. The road to national reunion, whether the peace churches concurred or not, traveled through mutual military admiration.[36]

Along with textbooks, Decoration Day, and veterans' reunions, military monuments became a key locus of memory contestation for the peace churches. In *Mystic Chords of Memory,* scholar Michael Kammen classifies the four decades between 1870 and 1910 as "the most notable period in all of American history for erecting monuments in honor of mighty warriors, groups of unsung heroes, and great deeds." Civil War officers and soldiers constituted a significant portion of those memorialized in marble during this time, and Quakers could not help but notice this trend. In an 1886 column, *The Friend* confirmed Kammen's observation that the frenzy of monument-building had "only fairly begun in this country," while maintaining that terms such as "unsung heroes" and "great deeds" were open to dispute: "… in the expense involved, in the exhaltation of the military profession, in the imperfect ideal set before their people for their honor and reverence, there is discovered another of the baneful results of the late war, not at all considered when it was entered upon." That same year, relying on travel accounts, *The Friend* documented the presence of "the ubiquitous soldier" throughout Europe, referring to both living, breathing soldiers and their bronze or graphite manifestations. The editorialist

[36] *Friends' Review* 40:51, 21 December 1887, 810.

expressed the fear that, through the means of the ubiquitous Civil War monument, America would soon lapse into a similar environment of martial omnipresence: "Is it wise in us to imitate that example by ranging around our most conspicuous buildings the statues of men (however worthy) who are chiefly known to us as military heroes?" [37]

Frequently, the peace churches cloaked their opposition to military monuments in theological language, namely the prohibition of idolatry found in the Decalogue. Negative references to "image worship," "deification," and "apotheosis" abounded whenever peace periodicals discussed monument building. A proposal in the early 1880s by Philadelphia-area Episcopalians to erect a church in honor of General George Meade (an Episcopalian himself) at Gettysburg aroused the ire of the ever-opinionated Josiah Leeds: "…Mars, Mammon, Bacchus and Astarte, have now their millions of votaries as truly as they ever had when their sculptured idols were outwardly worshipped, and hence, that the deification and the offering of sacrifices to the memory of military heroes may even now find expression in ways supremely hateful to the Most High God." *The Friends' Review* cast Quakers in the role of Old Testament prophets denouncing the idol worship sure to occur at the "Meade Memorial Church": "It seems strange, in this Christian age, that there should be any approach to a return to that hero-worship which formerly found expression in a Pantheon, and the mythical peopling of a Valhalla. Yet, not less strange must the relapses of Judah and Israel, into rank idolatry, have appeared to the seers and other faithful ones of the land given to God's peculiar people."[38]

It was one thing for those with no knowledge of the Prince of Peace to engage in the exaltation of war heroes; what truly disconcerted the peace churches, however, was the number

[37] Kammen, *Mystic Chords,* 115; *The Friend* 59:49, 10 July 1886, 389-90; *The Friend* 59:45, 12 June 1886, 359-60.
[38] "Monthly Olive Branch," *The Christian Index,* 8 December 1881. Scrapbook 1, Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, 1872-1907; *The Friend* 59:45, 12 June 1886, 359-60.

of professing Christians bowing at the golden calf of military honor. A disgusted Mennonite wrote *The Herald of Truth,* telling of his personal encounter with an alleged Christian who performed military service in the past and welcomed battle-hero memorialization in the present. While present at a meeting discussing the erection of "military statues" at a new City Hall, the Mennonite correspondent listened as a "Rev. and Dr." declared, "…the Civil War was no war at all…he and thousands that went with him were no warriors, but only citizens and policemen putting down a riot or rebellion; and further, it behooved them rightly to honor the foremost of these men by erecting statues to their memory." This "Rev. and Dr." voiced the opinions of countless former soldiers who saw themselves more as good patriots than eager belligerents. In a statement issued in 1897, a committee of the GAR argued against the designation of "warrior-heroes": "…the war was more than a mere bloody contest to gratify selfish ambition or to test the military strength of the two sections of our country…it was a war between the government of the United States, and a part of its citizens in revolt against it." Veterans from both sections could argue that the prospect of bloodshed did not compel men on their side to fight, but principles did, whether those be protecting the nation from rebellion or blocking the intrusions of an overreaching federal government. Ex-soldiers may have been uncomfortable with the term "warriors," but Northern veterans faced the temptation of thinking of themselves as "saviors," those whose sacrifice preserved the integrity of the Union. Mennonites such as the one attending the City Hall meeting, however, recognized one Savior who died for peace as opposed to self-professed saviors who fought with carnal earthly weapons. *The Herald* accused leaders of the larger Christian denominations of failing to learn spiritual or moral lessons from the war and encouraging the wave of monument building (and, by extension, idolatry): "It is a sad consideration, that the ministers and clergy whose countenance of the war above made it

possible, should have so little repented of their part in the strife, that they must aid in getting the people to idolize the soldier-leaders in that unhappy strife." [39]

Not all peace church arguments against military monuments stemmed from the Ten Commandments, however. Some opposition was strictly provincial. *The Friend* objected to the placement of statues of military personnel around Philadelphia's City Hall. Such monuments, the argument went, cheapened the Quaker heritage of the city: "If there is any place in America where there would seem to be a special fitness in not making prominent the associations of war, it would appear to be in that city, which, widely known as the City of Brotherly Love, was founded in deeds of peace." In the mid-1880s, the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends repeated the oft-heard Quaker concern about the lasting imprint such monuments (lacking the element of historical candor) would leave on young, impressionable minds, and asked for alternatives: "While not a monument in the world, perhaps, suggests to mankind the grandeur and beneficence attendant upon peace, the statues of heroes and emblems of war, teach their lesson of military glory, unsullied by destruction or misery, in the squares and gardens of great cities, and the public places of the earth." This sounded all well and good, but how exactly was one to construct a peace monument? Rhetorical consistency required the Friends and Mennonites to disapprove all graven images, even those of peace heroes. Concerning the statue of William Penn scheduled to be placed atop the Philadelphia Public Buildings, *The Friend* commented, "While it is a sorrow to Friends that the statues of military men should be placed around the new City Hall, it on the other hand affords no gratification that a stone or metal effigy of the benevolent and unassuming founder of the Quaker City should be elevated to a place five

[39] *Herald of Truth* 23:11, 1 June 1886, 162; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment,* 182, 226; Blight, *Race and Reunion,* 72.

hundred feet above the pavement. It is the sterling principles valued by Penn that sorely need to be upheld in this community; the cold, unimpassioned marble will do us no good." Statues and markers shrank in importance compared to those flesh-and-blood individuals presently charged with preserving peace. [40]

For the peace churches, women played a crucial part in the retelling of Civil War history and therefore upholding the principle of nonresistance. *The Herald of Truth* printed in full an essay entitled "Woman and Peace" delivered by one Josie Parker before the Peace Conference at Carthage, Indiana around 1889. The article made no mention as to whether Parker herself was a Mennonite, but there was no questioning her commitment to the cause of peace, a crusade triggered (and seemingly validating Josiah Leeds' bias against illustrations) by viewing a graphic portrait of Civil War combat at "the battle of Atlanta": "…as I stood not long ago looking at the painting of one of the terrible battles of our late civil contest, my very soul sank within me as I thought, 'This is war'… and I came from that building a more whole-souled advocate of Peace than I ever was before." The sight of "mangled and torn and struggling and dying and dead" soldiers and horses moved Parker to a new parental concern for the presentation of history: "A child needs be but a few months old before it shows interest in looking at pictures, and even then it will understand a difference the mother may make in pictures by the tone in which she calls one a nice picture and the another *(sic)* a bad picture as the child looks at them. As it grows older teach it little by little the fuller meaning of war pictures, and bring out in strong contrast views of peaceful scenes." Of course, Parker continued, the female influence in regard to peace could be

[40] *The Friend* 59:45, 12 June 1886, 359; New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, *War: An Unnecessary Evil—Forbidden by Scripture, A Document by the Representative Meeting of the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England for 1886-1887* (Providence, RI: Rhode Island Printing Co., c. 1886), 14-15; *The Friend* 59:49, 10 July 1886, 389-90.

sexual as well as maternal: "Scarcely does a soldier in uniform enter a drawing-room but that he is surrounded by a crowd of admiring women. This is not because woman wants to encourage war, but simply from the natural admiration she has for the man with the high carriage, dignity, ease, and grace that comes from military drill." In conclusion, Parker exhorted her spiritual sisters, "Let the women of our country fall in line, take up the threads that have been lying loose in our hands, and help to weave over our land a web of Peace, so strong and close that no sword shall be found sharp enough to pierce it through, no cannon large enough to rend it, no nation powerful enough to induce us to abandon it."[41]

The designation of women as peace educators offered some degree of moral empowerment but also placed a weighty burden on females. In this regard, the view of the Mennonites paralleled that of the traditional Victorian understanding of domestic life. Women assumed the obligations of moral and spiritual nurture for their children, and therefore (for the Mennonites) bore the responsibility for distinguishing the peace-oriented right from the military wrong. In 1871, an editorial in the *Herald of Truth* discussed the accountability of women concerning war. The article began by entrusting women with transmitting one of the most sacred principles of the faith, the commitment to a life of peace: "Women can prevent war, if they will… We *must* win the young to peace, for their character is moulded almost entirely by female hands. As mothers and teachers, they are the chief educators of mankind." While the article praised female moral influence, it also reprimanded women for perpetuating harmful war memory by exposing children to "toys of war," "pictures of war and warriors," "songs of war," and books containing "tales, real or fictitious, of war and warriors." Even "pious mothers" bought their sons "feathered caps, tin swords, and wooden guns," thus encouraging "little

[41] *Herald of Truth* 26:10, 15 May 1889, 154-56.

companies of juvenile volunteers to prepare in beardless boyhood for the trade of human butchery." Unless godly women amended their ways, the younger generation would grow up to remember "men of blood" as the exemplary Civil War heroes.[42]

In favoring the power of nurture over nature, the *Herald* indicted women for the perpetuation of warfare: "How came Alexander and Napoleon to be such bloody butchers as they were? Were they *born* monsters? No more than ourselves. They were *educated* to do as they did." The author chose Alexander and Napoleon as examples over Grant and Lee, but the message remained the same: the "chief educators of mankind" had instructed their pupils in the way of militarism, and now America reaped the consequences. Such criticism proved patently unfair because no conceivable maternal effort could remove the postbellum permeation of the Civil War from American life and culture. In countless ways and in numerous locales, Americans commemorated the war primarily through memories of military glory. Peace churches labored in earnest to minimize the martial element present in Civil War remembrance, but their work was largely in vain. Quakers and Mennonites simply could not break the link between military service and American heroism which existed in the public mind. *The Christian Index* spoke on behalf of the peace churches to textbook authors, Decoration Day observers, Blue-Gray reunion organizers, and monument builders when it wrote, "Looking at the long roll of men, in all ages, who have desecrated their lives to so ignoble a purpose (the pursuit of war), we have been astonished at the conduct of historians who have selected them above all others as the heroes whose characters and conduct most deserve to be recorded." For Friends and Mennonites, historical demilitarization consisted of relegating "military desperadoes" to "that

[42] *Herald of Truth* 8:2, February 1871, 21-22.

obscurity which they merited" and recounting in their place "the noble deeds of worthy heroes," the exploits of those who refused to define wartime bravery by military standards.[43]

While attempting to diminish the role of officers and soldiers in the Civil War, the peace churches recognized Abraham Lincoln as a "worthy hero." Before bringing his Civil War chapter to a complete conclusion, Josiah Leeds engaged in Lincoln adulation: "At the news of the tragedy (Lincoln's assassination) a thrill of grief and horror ran through the nation; for, however people may have differed as to the right or propriety of the war, all admitted the openness of character and sterling honesty of the late President." Allen Thomas shared the same sentiments in his history text: "The whole country had come to regard Abraham Lincoln as worthy of the highest confidence; he had inspired such admiration and affection as had been given to no one except Washington. His loss was mourned over the whole world as that of a devoted patriot, and a good and great man." In the immediate wake of April 14, 1865, Friends and Brethren wrote stirring memorials about the goodness of Lincoln, and throughout the next half-century peace churches remembered him fondly as a "good and great man." According to the stories told, Lincoln befriended the peace churches, sympathized with their cause, and even aspired to be one of them. Nonresistants effectually adopted the individual with ultimate responsibility for Union military operations as one of their own.[44]

[43] Ibid., 22; *Friends' Review* 35:25, 28 January 1882, 389-90.
[44] Leeds, *Smaller History,* 201; Thomas, *Elementary History,* 327.

Chapter Three, 'Our Late Beloved President': Nonresistants Remember Abraham Lincoln

In its issue dated 29 April 1865, the *Friends' Review* echoed the grief shared by many Americans in the days immediately following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, referring to the deed as "… the horrible crime by which our country was deprived of its Chief Magistrate—a man beloved and honored more sincerely and universally, perhaps, than any other ruler of modern times." This editorial expressed the conviction that Lincoln would be remembered in the annals of history as not only a wise political sage, but also an exemplary Christian: "While we unite with those who describe him as one who was seeking to maintain and perpetuate equal government for all …emphatically an *honest man*, we may go further, and express our conviction that he had become a *pious man*." As anecdotal evidence of Lincoln's spiritual transformation, the periodical offered the following account: "It was publicly stated not long since that a visitor to the President asked him if he loved Jesus. He buried his face in his handkerchief and wept. He then said: 'When I left home to take this chair of State, I was not a Christian; when my son died, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and looked upon the graves of those who had fallen in defense of their country, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. *I do love Jesus.***"** A purported Christian conversion occurring on a Civil War battlefield could be interpreted two ways by Quaker readers: either the self-sacrificial deaths of Union soldiers pointed Lincoln towards the atoning death of Christ, or this turn towards Jesus could be seen as an act of contrition for the sins of the nation, particularly the grievous offense of internal warfare. In line with its commitment to peace, *The Friends' Review* chose to accept the

latter reading: "Every class mourns his untimely death, but none have greater reason than FRIENDS to deeply feel their loss, and to hold him in loving and grateful remembrance." Throughout subsequent decades of wartime memory, Friends continued to acknowledge a unique bond between themselves and the sixteenth American President.[1]

It is no surprise to find a eulogy to Abraham Lincoln located in a religious periodical in the wake of his assassination. Martyrdom, by its very definition, requires a substantial degree of personal faith, and if, as many believed at the time, Lincoln's death constituted the sacrifice necessary to sanctify the nation, it only made sense that the former president be remembered as a man of great personal piety. "Lincoln caught in the act of prayer" stories and "Lincoln caught reading the Bible" stories flowed from the nation's religious printing presses in the days and months following the presidential murder. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, spiritualists, and even religious skeptics all praised Lincoln for his devotion to their respective beliefs. The historic peace churches (particularly the Quakers and Brethren) staked their own claim to Lincoln, even though such a relationship could be construed as problematic. As President, after all, Lincoln took unprecedented actions in the areas of conscription and military mobilization, and eventually endorsed the military strategy of total (or hard) war. After his death, however, the nonresistants wrote memorials in the weeks after Good Friday, 1865 and told stories throughout the following half-century which canonized Lincoln as a political patron saint of the peace cause. The numerous "Lincoln encounter" anecdotes in circulation served the dual purposes of adopting Lincoln as a "peace hero" and magnifying the heroism of those peace church members who contacted and ultimately influenced Lincoln. On the surface, these sentiments and stories sounded like sincere encomiums dedicated to the memory of Lincoln, but

[1] *Friends' Review* 18:35, 29 April 1865, 553.

they also spoke to the cultural position occupied by the peace churches in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American culture. In reaching back to their Lincoln-era past, these groups reaffirmed their status in the present, loyal Americans standing at odds with the national martial culture.[2]

The week after the President's death, *The Friend's Intelligencer* followed the lead of the *Friends' Review* in remembering Lincoln's greatness. The eulogy in the *Intelligencer* classified the assassination as a work of inconceivable evil, a "national calamity": "The wise ruler, the good man has fallen, a victim to that malignant spirit which his forbearance would have pardoned. We can scarcely conceive the vindictiveness that could plan and execute a deed of such atrocity." The purposes of Lincoln and the Friends occasionally clashed, but this did not diminish Quaker respect: "While the oath required of our Chief Magistrate in assuming the duties of his office and his exercise of military power, are both at variance with our testimonies, we admire the wise statesmanship and the constant reference to a sense of duty which marked the decisions of our late President." In a testimony drafted in May 1865, the Green Street Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of Friends repeated these themes: "The sad event of the death of the worthy Chief Magistrate of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, who fell by the hand of an assassin…has filled our hearts with sorrow; and we feel it right, in a Society capacity, to express our appreciation of the many virtues which shone conspicuously on his character." The Philadelphia Friends most appreciated the respect Lincoln showed for the nonresistance cause: "We hold in grateful remembrance the consideration with which he regarded our conscientious

[2] For more on the disputes over Lincoln's religious preferences, see Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 217-32. For more on the historiographical debate between "total war" and "hard war," see Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

scruples in relation to military exactions, and believe he did for us, in this respect, all that his position allowed." Lincoln's "integrity of purpose, Christian kindness, and acknowledgment of the immediate direction of the Divine Spirit" were also considered worthy of mention.[3]

The Quaker periodical providing the most comprehensive paean to Lincoln, however, was *The Friend.* In April, in the midst of great celebration over the end of the war, came "the atrocious murder of the President; at first striking the nation dumb with horror and amazement, and then calling forth a loud wail of grief and indignation, that one so loved and honored, should, in the hour of triumph over the gigantic resistance to his authority, be ruthlessly shot down by a profligate assassin." Looking back, the article singled out emancipation as the defining accomplishment of the Lincoln Presidency: "Slavery, which had been so foul a stain on the national escutcheon, was wiped away, and in the memorable proclamation, by which he struck the fetters from four millions of his fellow men, they fondly identified him with this emancipation and the removal of this prolific source of shame and woe." Lincoln, the editorial continued, endured "…the most eventful and oppressive term of service that has passed since the adoption of the Constitution," yet maintained "…a devoted attachment to the principles of justice and freedom on which that Constitution is based." For this author, Lincoln was not only the "Great Emancipator"; had he lived, he also would have gained the title of Great Re-Unifier. As Lincoln wrestled with what to do with the "authors and abettors" of the rebellion, "the contemplation of their helpless and wretched condition, notwithstanding the bitterness with which they had defamed him, so operated on his placable and benevolent disposition, as to induce him to express publicly the necessity for forgiveness and forgetfulness of past misdeeds."

[3] *Friends' Intelligencer* 22:7, 22 April 1865, 104; *A Testimony to the Worth of Abraham Lincoln, Adopted and Recorded by the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia, held at Green Street, 5-25-1865,* reprinted in *Friends' Intelligencer* 22:13, 3 June 1865, 203-04.

The tragic irony remained that the "authors of rebellion" lost "their best friend" in a murder fueled by rebellious passions.[4]

Making mention of the same "overruling Providence" found in Lincoln's own Second Inaugural Address, *The Friend* referred to the timing of Lincoln's death as "among the mysteries of His inscrutable wisdom which we may not pretend to fathom." Divine prerogative, however, received assistance from wicked human agency in the person of John Wilkes Booth. The editorial cited the immoral theatrical "character and associations" of Booth as crucial in perpetrating the murder of a President: "…we can yet understand how one…brought up amid the immoralities of a theatre, its shams and its unprincipled actors, and trained in all the vicious art of the stage… may have been led to imagine that the fell deed he was schooling himself to commit, would be no more nor no worse, than similar acts he had affected to perform before admiring crowds, and for which he had received the commendations and the plaudits of his audience." If Booth's occupation as actor predisposed him to acts of violence, Lincoln also shared a certain degree of blame for stepping foot inside Ford's Theatre, a veritable lair of iniquity: "…thousands of Christians of all denominations, who honored our late President, and sincerely mourn his death, have an added sorrow in the thought, that the fatal shot that sent him to the bar of divine justice and mercy, was received while countenancing by his presence, these schools of vice." Thus, while mourning Lincoln and noting his achievements in office, the article closed with the following moral: "It is time, high time that those who occupy high stations in this republic, should show by their conduct that they feel the obligation to conform to the strict and

[4] *The Friend* 38:37, 13 May 1865, 295.

self-denying principles of the gospel to rest upon them." Peace church adulation of Lincoln was not without its limits. [5]

In his scholarly study *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory,* Barry Schwartz reminds twenty-first century readers to separate the "ritual conduct" attending Lincoln's death (i.e., Lincoln's celebrity) from what people actually *believed* about Lincoln after his death (Lincoln's reputation). Even though his death came suddenly and produced a tremendous outpouring of grief, Lincoln remained, in death as in life, a controversial figure. As Schwartz writes about Lincoln's funerary rites, "Amid the most positive statements on Lincoln are hints about the darker side of his public image, clues to continuing differences of opinion about him as a man and a president." Peace church memorials bear out this observation. Nonresistant reverence for Lincoln often encountered disputation, but such opposition to Lincoln glorification came primarily on theological, rather than political, grounds. Henry R. Holsinger, Brethren pastor and publisher, reprinted his diary entry for Saturday, April 15, 1865 in the pages of his Tyrone, Pennsylvania-based periodical *The Christian Family Companion*: "Abraham Lincoln died. How the news did shock me! And now, while the slow tolling of the bells is sounding in my ears, how serious, how painfully solemn my thoughts. And is it true? Is he who at the setting of the sun was the greatest man in the country—if not in the world,--in the full vigor of health, of mind and body—is now a lifeless corpse! Alas it is true! …The day has now passed away, and it is the first in three months that I did no work." Holsinger contrasted the effervescence of local celebrations on Friday, April 14 ("Flags were proudly and triumphantly floating in the air and every heart seemed joyous") with the communal gloom of Saturday, the 15th ("Today the flags are draped in mourning, and the nation weeps"). These seemingly

[5] Ibid.

innocuous words provoked one reader to write and chide Holsinger for excessive mourning of Lincoln on the very weekend set aside for solemn memory of the death of Christ: "It seems that the death of the Chief Magistrate of our country moved your feelings so much that you were not able to work that day. I think if we are subjects of Christ's kingdom the loss of a great man that is out of our kingdom, ought not affect our feelings so much that we are not able to work." This letter-writer found one reason and one reason only to suspend work: "…deep feelings and sympathies for a bleeding and dying Savior, the anniversary of whose death, according to Chronology, was just the day before."[6]

Holsinger gave the correspondent the following backhanded rebuttal: "That state of mind which is of so firm and cheerful a disposition as not to be touched by so great a calamity, is to be admired for its adaptation to human wants, more than as an indication of deep, and prayerful religious investigation." Brethren writer Christian H. Balsbaugh offered a more theologically-rooted defense of Lincoln (and Holsinger) in the pages of the *Companion* in July 1865. Taking as his starting point the admonition of Romans 13 to be subject to the "higher powers" of government, Balsbaugh reasoned that God ordained Lincoln as a ruler; dishonoring Lincoln (or, in this case, Lincoln's memory), therefore, was dishonoring God. Of course, this assertion easily applied to John Wilkes Booth: "It requires a character of consummate wickedness to destroy the life of a man whom the people have designated as their national head, and who is invested by God with authority for his office as executor of the divine will to the world at large." Balsbaugh extended his chastisement, however, to those Brethren members who would "contemplate in complacency" the murder of Lincoln. In Balsbaugh's estimation, individuals like the *Companion*

[6] Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 43-44, 74; *Christian Family Companion* 1:16, 18 April 1865, 128; *CFC* 1:18, 2 May 1865.

reader who reprimanded Henry Holsinger stood guilty of glorying in the death of Abraham Lincoln, and divine retribution awaited such souls: : "Would to God that such members might be made to feel that it cannot be other than downright wickedness to *take pleasure* in the murderer's bloody work. Down upon your knees, and implore earnestly the Divine forgiveness for your sin…His minister in the kingdom of the world has been murdered, and you rejoice in it." In defending Lincoln, Balsbaugh said nothing about the merits of emancipation, nothing about Lincoln's skill in preserving the Union, and nothing about Lincoln's personal character. For Christian Balsbaugh, Abraham Lincoln was God's Appointed One, and that was enough to warrant mourning for Lincoln and silence from (or judgment upon) his detractors: "Although Abraham Lincoln was a man of the world, he was the head of the government, and his blood cries to Heaven and in due time will be revenged." Balsbaugh's comment revealed the tension present between two New Testament teachings: the honor due to civil authorities (Romans 13:1-7) versus the principle of nonresistance (Matthew 5:38-39). If God chose Lincoln as his designated servant, the murder of Lincoln in turn appeared to necessitate divine justice. This belief, however, had to square with another Biblical teaching prohibiting evil committed in return for evil. By calling for Lincoln's blood to be revenged, Balsbaugh stood as guilty of the sin of rejoicing in murder as his opponents. Clearly, appropriate retribution for the death of Lincoln and "turning the other cheek" were not easily reconcilable. [7]

Of all the three peace churches, the Mennonites offered the most subdued memorials of Lincoln. *The Herald of Truth*, while acknowledging a climate of national loss ("The sad event has caused mourning all over the land"), devoted more space to indicting Booth than adoring Lincoln: "It is sad indeed to contemplate the thought that there are men who have sunk so deep

[7] *Christian Family Companion* 1:18, 2 May 1865; *CFC* 1:26, 4 July 1865, 201.

in vice and crime and wickedness that neither the government nor the rulers of our land, are secure against their wicked deeds." For the Mennonite periodical, eternal truths overshadowed temporal political transitions, even those of a tragic nature: "Oh, how should Christians labor and pray that the gospel might be more extensively spread among all classes of men, so that knowledge of the Lord might cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea and that the reign of the Prince of peace might have dominion over all men—so that acts of violence and bloodshed might cease and that universal love might be the ruling principle in every heart." In the same issue of the *Herald,* an item entitled "All Must Die" drove home the point more directly. All humans faced the reality of death, regardless of title or status: "The high and the low, the rich and the poor, are alike subject to (death's) unrelenting demands. Princes and rulers are not exempt. He who a few weeks ago sat at the head of a great nation, today, lies cold in death. He has gone to his reward." Again, Lincoln appeared to be less a hero to be mourned than a moral to be learned: "This should again teach us the lesson that it matters not who we are, nor what our position in life may be, our end is sure." Even though God ordained higher powers in the political sphere, he was no respecter of persons in the spiritual sphere, and this prevented the Mennonites from engaging in full-blown Lincoln acclaim.[8]

As the years progressed after 1865, elegiac remembrance of Lincoln (however qualified) gave way to closer identification with Lincoln. Quakers attributed both the greatness of the Lincoln administration and its sympathy towards conscientious objectors to "hereditary fondness." Lincoln himself helped to establish this connection. In a short autobiographical sketch written for Pennsylvania's *Chester County Times* in December 1859, Lincoln claimed that ancestors of his grandfather, also named Abraham Lincoln, belonged to the Society of Friends

[8] *Herald of Truth* 2:5, May 1865, 38.

while residing in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Well after the war, Friends continued to vouch for the authenticity of "Quaker blood" in the Lincoln Presidency. In an 1881 letter, a Friend from Union Springs, New York who paid Lincoln a wartime visit noted the strong influence of Quaker genetics throughout Lincoln's cabinet: "This kindness to Friends, as well as the course of the Government in never resorting to retaliation for the tens of thousands of northern citizens starved to death (purposely) in southern prisons, may have been partly owing to the fact that President Lincoln's grandfather, Secretary [Secretary of War Edwin] Stanton's mother, and Secretary [Attorney General Edward] Bates' cousins, were all Friends." Charles F. Coffin, another Quaker visitor to Washington, fondly recalled "the openness and kindness of Secretary Stanton who said to us (in substance) 'my mother was a Friend, and I assure you that no member of that Society who has conscientious scruples about fighting shall be required to violate them. If such case occurs within your knowledge inform me of the fact and they should be released."[9]

At times, peace churches sought to extend their connection with Lincoln beyond the biological to the philosophical and spiritual. For decades, some with privileged access to Lincoln had proposed that, late in his relatively brief life, Lincoln's spiritual pilgrimage ultimately led to Jesus Christ. Francis Carpenter, artist and author of 1866's *Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln*, referred to Lincoln as a "sincere Christian" and spoke of the President's "well-authenticated admission of a change of heart, and of his intention at some suitable

[9] Lincoln Autobiographical Sketch, *Chester County Times,* 20 December 1859, recovered at www.explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-3C; *The Friend* 89:16, 14 October 1915, 184; Letter from J.J. Thomas to William H.S. Wood, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3 (Letters to William H.S. Wood). William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; Letter from C.F. Coffin to William H.S. Wood, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania. According to the standard scholarly biography of Edwin Stanton, Stanton's *paternal* grandparents were Quakers and his father was expelled from a Quaker meeting over differences of theological opinion. See Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 5-6.

opportunity to make a profession of religion." Into the twentieth century, biographers such as Ida Tarbell perpetuated this characterization of Lincoln as a late-blooming Christian: "There is ample evidence that in this crushing grief [the 1862 death of son Willie] the President sought earnestly to find what consolation the Christian religion might have for him…From this time on he was seen often with the Bible in his hand, and he is known to have prayed frequently." In 1908, *The Friend* reprinted excerpts from a recent work by H.B. Binns, a writer convinced that Lincoln served as a model of Quaker mysticism. If Lincoln indeed experienced a spiritual crisis while in office, Binns harbored no doubts that the ensuing conversion was explicitly Quaker in nature: "I think there is a clear evidence…that, one after another, the intellectual difficulties which had hindered the free play of his spiritual faculties were removed, and that, in his last two years he came very near to what may best be described as the Quaker position in religious matters." Binns further sought to convince readers that, in good Quaker fashion, Lincoln looked to his own "Inner Light" for inspiration and illumination: "There is no question that, whatever (Lincoln's) theology, he practiced the mystical duty of prayer by which the active, conscious life is fed from the transcendent or subconscious." Even though *The Friend* devoted a column's worth of publishing space to Binns' views, its editors admitted, "How important such an influence was [the influence of Lincoln's Quaker ancestry on his inner religious life] must be entirely problematical, and most observers would be inclined to think it very slight indeed." The notion of Lincoln, pragmatic politician and rational thinker, as fervent Quaker mystic was less than plausible.[10]

[10] *Scribner's Monthly* 6:3, July 1873, 340; Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln, Part Two* (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1900), 89-92; *The Friend* 81:44, 9 May 1908, 349.

Throughout the postbellum era, some Brethren advanced the theory of a secret Lincoln Dunker baptism. According to this story, Isaac Billheimer, a Brethren elder residing in Heath in southern Indiana, either baptized Lincoln or knew the identity of the minister who performed the ceremony. The alleged immersion occurred late at night in Springfield sometime after the 1860 Presidential election but before Lincoln left for the inaugural in Washington. Anna Wagner, a Brethren sister familiar with the story, remarked in 1936, "Lincoln promised that after his term of office expired he would conform to the church." Presumably, in 1860, the nation was not yet ready for a Dunker President, so Lincoln's Brethren affiliation went into hiding for the remainder of his life. One visible clue that Lincoln held deep Brethren sympathies, however, eventually emerged---on his face. Lincoln's beard, according to Brethren, emulated the nonresistant, nonconformist denomination he respected and (perhaps) joined. The legend of the Lincoln baptism passed from Brethren generation to generation until as late as the early 1960's, even though some claims for the story's veracity, such as the following from a Brethren member from Peoria, appeared shaky in their reliability: "I am acquainted with, and personally know, a man by the name of Theodore Swanson, an honest, truthful man who has read a number of historical books about Lincoln. He told me that he read of the incidents of his baptism in one of the histories." When denominational scholars released *The Brethren Encyclopedia* in the early 1980s, they backpedalled from the legend of the secret baptism: "Though Lincoln probably had contact with Brethren in Illinois, the accounts of his Brethren baptism are apocryphal."[11]

[11] Freeman Ankrum, *Sidelights on Brethren History* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1962), 140-41; *The Brethren Encyclopedia, Volume 2* (Philadelphia: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983), 743. Brethren pastor and author Frank Ramirez also dismisses the "Lincoln Dunker baptism" tale, yet includes the story in his book *Brethren Brush with Greatness* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 2008), 24-27.

Most of the stories involving Lincoln and the peace churches, however, lacked reference to actual hereditary or spiritual affiliations with Lincoln, focusing instead on the respect the late President showed for the conscientious cause. Such narratives generally took place within the context of a face-to-face visit with the President and tapped into streams of Lincoln recollection already present in the wider American culture. The Progressive Era in particular witnessed a full outpouring of Lincoln tales and legends. Barry Schwartz attributes this to the coinciding of the 1909 Lincoln Centennial (and its "ritual acts of national affirmation") with the emphases of Progressivism, particularly its attention to the rights and welfare of "ordinary people." While the peace churches made their own unique contributions to the expanding collection of Lincoln lore, their "Lincoln encounter" stories as a rule contained varying amounts of three standard motifs of Lincoln memory: a) "*the accessible Lincoln,"* a President who frequently set aside the demands of the war to welcome interaction with "the people" and listened intently to petitions brought by the public, b) *"the compassionate Lincoln,"* a Chief Executive who showed tenderhearted kindness to animals, children, soldiers, and widows, and was not afraid to exercise clemency even if it meant compassion overruling justice, and c) *"the Christian Lincoln,"* the President who underwent a spiritual transformation in the midst of profound despair over the Civil War and the 1862 death of his eleven year-old son Willie. Lincoln stories told by the Quakers and Brethren seldom strayed far from one or a combination of these three basic depictions, yet invested each motif with a special emphasis on the cause of peace. The same Lincoln whose kindness and identification with common folk made him irresistible to the Progressives also became a compelling cultural symbol for nonresistants of the early-twentieth century.[12]

[12] Schwartz, *Lincoln and the Forge of Memory,* 116, 125. For more on the "accessible Lincoln," see Ibid., 167-70. For more on the "compassionate Lincoln," see Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory,* 103-09, and Schwartz, *Lincoln*

In a recent biography of Lincoln, historian Richard Carwardine remarks, "…the most remarkable feature of Lincoln's tenure of office were the throngs of ordinary citizens who came to the capital to pour through the White House doors, intent on a private interview on one of the president's regular public days." Carwardine suggests that, for Lincoln, such personal visits provided a vital means of gauging public opinion regarding his programs and policies. Peace churches, on the other hand, recognized that an audience with the President offered an important forum for airing pacifist principles and seeking ongoing exemption from military service. In the memory of the peace churches, "the accessible Lincoln" not only took the time to meet with nonresistant representatives, but also extended them special recognition. According to an oft-repeated story within Quaker circles, for example, Lincoln once quipped that he was always ready to receive a Quaker because he knew they were not seeking an office. Friends and Brethren thus differentiated themselves from what Lincoln himself termed the "Beggar's Opera," the steady stream of office-seekers and patronage-grabbers flocking to the doors of the executive mansion. Having been granted access to the President, the peace churches then appealed to "the compassionate Lincoln," the leader who hated to see innocent people suffer on behalf of their convictions. "The Christian Lincoln" understood the theological plight of the nonresistants and appreciated (notwithstanding the demands of his job) the unique strain of the Christian faith devoted to beating swords into plowshares. According to the stories, within the confines of the office of the Chief Magistrate, Lincoln expressed his admiration for the peace churches and they in turn offered support and, in their eyes, helpful counsel.[13]

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and the Forge of Memory, 174-80. For more on "the Christian Lincoln," see "The Later Life and Religious Sentiments of Abraham Lincoln" in *Scribner's Monthly* 6:3, July 1873, 333-43 and Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory,* 217-26.

[13] Richard J. Carwardine, *Lincoln* (London: Pearson Longman, 2003), 197; *The Friend* 89:16, 14 October 1915, 184.

A January 1908 issue of *The Friend* contained a representative "Lincoln encounter" story entitled "A Visit of Friends to Heads of Government." In July 1863, three members of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends sought the release of five North Carolina Quakers forced into the Confederate army and, after the battle of Gettysburg, captured as prisoners of war by the Union army. Samuel Hilles, James Greaves, and Thomas Evans traveled from Philadelphia to Washington with the primary purpose of speaking to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, but also wished to pay their respects to the President. As the article describes it, the committee of three "hesitated about calling again on the President, fearing it would trespass too much upon his time, which was just then very closely occupied," but to the delight of the three Philadelphia Friends, Lincoln agreed to meet with them. Once in the executive office, Hilles began by alluding to "our peaceable principles and that, although conscientiously restrained from taking up arms in any case, we were loyal in our feelings towards the government, and felt much for the President and other officers in the very trying position in which they were placed." Evans became the next member of the delegation to speak, and while reaffirming the loyalty of Friends to the Union, also assured Lincoln that he had that very day raised an "earnest prayer" that God would support the President and guide him with divine wisdom so that "his labors might tend to promote righteousness and peace in our land, the real welfare and prosperity of the people." Lincoln sat silently, "his hands covering his eyes," as Hilles and Evans spoke. When the two Friends finished, Lincoln withdrew his hands revealing "eyes suffused with tears," and gave the committee members the following response:

> Gentlemen, I am truly glad and thankful for this opportunity, it is a comfort to me. I understand very well the position of your Society and do not at all doubt your loyalty. You cannot fight for the government, because your religious principles forbid it, but you can *pray* for it. I am thankful in believing that I have your prayers, the prayers of your religious Society, and the prayers of the God-fearing people throughout the land…If the

> Almighty be with us, we shall succeed, if He is against us, no human power can save us; but I cannot believe that He will suffer the enemies of our country to triumph, and the great Christian principles we are contending for, to fall to the ground and be trampled under foot. These principles are as dear to you as they are to us, though we differ as to the mode of supporting and asserting them.

Lincoln concluded the interview by bidding the Friends a fond farewell and thanking the three for providing him comfort.[14]

This story includes several fundamental elements contained in most "Lincoln encounters the peace people" narratives. The representatives of the peace churches reiterate their commitment to nonresistance but also insist that they are deeply concerned with the welfare of the nation and that they comprise some of the Union's most loyal citizens. Lincoln in turn, often with eyes full of tears, thanks the peace ambassadors for their support and tells them how crucial they are to the country's well-being. The preceding story also shows the three Lincoln motifs working in concert for the benefit of the peace churches. Because Lincoln is accessible, the three Quakers from Philadelphia find an audience with the President when they feared he would be too consumed with other presidential activities. Because Lincoln is compassionate, he empathizes with the Friends through the shedding of tears and refuses to question the authenticity of their "American-ness." Because Lincoln is Christian, he invokes the Almighty as the ultimate source of Union victory and implores the Quakers to continue their support of him through prayer.

In a letter written in 1881, New York Quaker John Thomas repeated some of these same sentiments. Thomas visited Lincoln in late 1863 and expressed his sincere gratitude to Lincoln for the kindness shown to conscientious objectors, to which Lincoln raised his hand and replied, "I believe I have done all I could for you." Thomas recalled that Lincoln perfectly understood the "embarrassing position" in which the war had placed Friends: "…you are opposed to war and

[14] *The Friend* 81:29, 25 January 1908, 230.

have always been strong opponents to slavery; and here the war is destroying slavery before your eyes." The New York Quaker reassured the President that while Friends refused to go to war, they maintained "full respect and entire allegiance to the government" and extended their "strong sympathy" to the President for the difficulties he had encountered and the dangers he had escaped. On hearing this, Lincoln "showed much emotion, his eyes filled with tears," and said, "Were it not for the consciousness I have felt of a superintending Providence, I could not have been sustained in what I have passed through; on five or six occasions, the way seemed impossible." Quickly regaining his composure, Lincoln offered up one of his trademark folksy maxims: "I have sometimes had to compare myself to a young horse which has had to cross a rickety bridge; it looked bad enough beforehand, but only after going over and looking back, its full danger was seen." Almost twenty years after the visit, Thomas carried vivid memories of Lincoln's physical ("I stood and looked nearly upwards to his face, and I am not very short of stature") and moral greatness, noting particularly Lincoln's "absence of all assumption" and his "sincerity and transparency of character."[15]

Elizabeth L. Comstock emigrated from England to Canada in the 1850s and eventually married a fellow Quaker from Michigan. According to those who knew her best, Comstock possessed "a valuable gift in the ministry of the Word," traveled tirelessly visiting prisons, military hospitals and asylums, and even assisted in the occasional fugitive slave escape. Comstock's ministry travels also brought her to Washington where she met with Lincoln on October 30, 1864. As recorded in Comstock's *Life and Letters*, published in 1895, the Quaker pastor made a sincere effort not to wear out her presidential welcome: "I was careful not to

[15] Letter from J. Thomas to William H.S. Wood, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

occupy much of his time, only twenty minutes from the time he entered until we left the room." Twenty minutes was enough time, however, to deliver a short discourse on Isaiah 41:9-10 ("Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee; fear thou not for I am with thee"), a reiteration of Quaker integrity ("I referred to the earnest loyalty and loving sympathy of a people [Society of Friends] in whose hearts he was enshrined, our testimony against war, yet our loyalty, the universality of our devotion to the government, etc."), and a few words of sympathy ("Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee"). After this exchange of spiritual insight, all present in the office engaged in "a season of prayer," an experience which profoundly moved Comstock: "The chief magistrate of this vast Republic was on his knees beside us, bowed before 'the King eternal, immortal, invisible.' I felt that very near access unto the mercy-seat was our blessed privilege." At the meeting's conclusion, Lincoln shook Comstock's hand, thanked her for the visit, and spoke candidly of his "sense of the over-ruling power and supremacy" of God: "Perhaps there is no position like mine, and no man living better able than myself to recognize the necessity of Divine guidance, Divine grace, or to see the hand of the Lord in the great events that are now transpiring."[16]

While Comstock's account disclosed details of a meeting within the presidential office, it also peered into the presidential waiting area and, in so doing, shed further light on the accessible Lincoln and how peace churches made their own use of this popular image of the late President. The day before Comstock's visit with Lincoln, Joseph Grinnell, one of Comstock's companions, met with Lincoln to schedule a time for the October 30 interview. While waiting to see Lincoln, Grinnell joined forty to fifty other people seeking an audience with the President. Comstock

[16] *Life and Letters of Elizabeth L. Comstock. Compiled by her Sister, C. Hare* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1895), 60-61, 179-81.

recounted Grinnell's observations involving the "*special* cases…some of them of a sad, some of an amusing character" of those desperate to speak with the President. Lincoln gently but firmly denied the request of two weeping women to provide pardon for a deserter (contradicting at least once the image of "the compassionate Lincoln"). Other cases were more frivolous. Two women only wanted Lincoln's autograph. A "great rough man" simply passed along his personal approval of Lincoln: "He did not vote for him, he had been a democrat, but now had changed his politics, was much pleased with what the President had done, and meant to vote for him in future." Of course, the notorious office-seekers were out in full force: "These pressed around him and teazed him until he looked weary and almost worn out. Just imagine the Queen of England so beset!" The most amusing individual, in both Grinnell and Comstock's recollection, was a "stout lady" who had showed up the previous day (not a reception day) and refused to leave until she spoke to the President. After being alerted to the situation, Lincoln, meeting with his cabinet at the time, sensed that the woman had urgent business and invited her into the room. The woman then bowled her way up to Lincoln ("without the least deference or any sense of being in an august presence," according to Comstock) and, extending her hand, stated the reason for her persistence: "Well now, I've got what I have so long been desiring, a chance to shake hands with you. I should have been quite ashamed to go home to my nine sons, and tell them that I had been to Washington, and had not seen old Uncle Abe." Lincoln let out an exuberant laugh, gave the woman her desired handshake, and sent her back home to Ohio, where she no doubt enthralled all nine sons with her story. In this story, then, Comstock reinforces the popular image of Lincoln's approachability to all people, but also suggests that the Quakers enjoyed an honored accessibility. Comstock juxtaposes the urgency and solemnity of her twenty minutes of scriptural counsel and prayer with the President with the often ridiculous demands of the others clamoring

to spend time with Lincoln. The inference, then, is that the time spent with a peace ambassador such as Comstock was more beneficial to Lincoln himself than moments wasted with office seekers, autograph hounds, and Buckeye hand-shakers. [17]

Brethren publications also depicted Lincoln as showering the peace churches with preferential treatment. A Brethren almanac published in the first decade of the twentieth century tells the tale of a petition circulated among a few hundred ministers of "popular churches." This petition urged Lincoln to force Quakers, Brethren, and Mennonites into military service in defense of the Union. When a group of ministers finally submitted the request to Lincoln in person, the President could not contain his fury: "I consider the Quakers, Mennonites and Dunker Brethren the salt of the nation. And when once this nation becomes so corrupt that it compels these people to fight against their own conscientious scruples, I will wash my hands and have nothing to do with the nation." In another Brethren almanac entry from the same decade, several leading Ohio Brethren elders travelled to Washington to pay their respects to the President. They encountered a lobby packed with potential Presidential visitors, but "on learning that a committee of *Brethren* desired to see him (Lincoln) immediately arranged to have them come before him. On meeting them in his private room Lincoln took the right hand of the leader in both of his, and with great tears streaming down his cheeks he said: 'My brother, how is it with you and your brethren in these sad times?'" In this particular visit, Lincoln spoke highly of the Brethren and "the stand (they) had taken against slavery. They had paid their taxes and always remained quiet, and had prayed for the nation and its officers. Lincoln assured them they

[17] Ibid., 176-79.

would not be compelled to take up arms if he could prevent it." From the Brethren perspective, Lincoln recognized the "Dunkers" as reliable Americans and exemplary Christians.[18]

D.P. Sayler figured prominently in Brethren memory of Abraham Lincoln. Sayler wielded a great deal of authority in both his congregation in Frederick County, Maryland and the denomination at large. Brethren associates remembered Sayler as physically strong with "a commanding presence, a fine, well-modulated voice, the subtle, indefinable influence, sometimes called magnetism, and the power of eloquence" which made him a natural born leader and minister. If Brethren narratives are to be trusted, Sayler recognized the greatness of Lincoln before he ascended to the Presidential office. A contributor to a 1906 article in the *Brethren's Missionary Visitor* recalled sitting in a store with Sayler several weeks before the 1860 election while a number of men discussed "the burning questions of the day." Debate raged over who would make the best candidate: Lincoln, Stephen Douglas, Southern Democrat John Breckenridge, or John Bell of the Constitutional Union party. The Brethren elder Sayler watched the proceedings in silence until asked his opinion: "His reply came quickly and forcibly: 'Gentlemen, on election day you are going to hear the voice of God Almighty saying Abraham! Abraham! And then you will hear an answer from Abraham saying 'Here am I!' That ended the discussion, but it showed how Brother Sayler could look into the future and forecast the outcome of an election that proved the turning point in the history of the American continent."[19]

After Lincoln took office, Sayler paid Lincoln numerous visits, and the two spent countless hours discussing "the cruel war and the terrible sacrifice of life at the front." One

[18] "Lincoln and the Brethren," typewritten manuscript, stamped 29 October 1906 (emphasis mine). D.P. Sayler Biographical File. Brethren Historical Library and Archives. Elgin, Illinois.
[19] D.L. Miller and Galen B. Royer, *Some Who Led, Or Fathers in the Church of the Brethren Who Have Passed Over* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1912), 84; *Brethren's Missionary Visitor* 8:4, April 1906, 201-02.

source referred to the President and the Brethren elder as "warm friends" and recollected how Lincoln talked to Sayler "like a father, and would always salute him when they parted." Sayler himself spoke of Lincoln as "the most tender-hearted man he ever talked with and that he never talked with him but the tears would roll down over his face." 1908's edition of *The Brethren Family Almanac* claimed that Lincoln once remarked that if Bishop Sayler had not been converted he would have made a fine general: "In the management of men he would have been a regular Stonewall Jackson." Brethren tradition even asserted that Sayler and Henry Ward Beecher were the only ministers to receive an invitation to pray with the President during the war. In perhaps the most famous Sayler and Lincoln anecdote, Sayler told Lincoln that his friends encouraged him to accept some civil office position so that the public would reap the benefits of his exemplary leadership abilities, but he declined. Lincoln's response, as recorded in the *Almanac:* " The President told him that he considered him capable of filling any office to which he might be called; then, addressing him earnestly, he said: 'But, Brother Sayler, I ordain you a Dunker preacher forever.'" The remarks of Lincoln trespassed beyond church-state boundaries but established Sayler as a bona fide spiritual hero.[20]

In November 1963, famed editorial cartoonist Bill Mauldin drew a distraught Abraham Lincoln leaning forward in his seat atop the Lincoln Memorial and crying into his hands as he learned the news of the John F. Kennedy assassination. As documented previously, the peace churches tapped into the representation of a "weeping Lincoln" decades before Mauldin's iconic image ever made it to print. How should the "lachrymose Lincoln" be explained? Perhaps this was simply the compassionate Lincoln in its fullest manifestation. A more gendered rationale

[20] *Brethren Family Almanac,* 1908, 29; "Lincoln and the Brethren," D.P. Sayler Biographical File; "Daniel P. Sayler," undated manuscript by E. Moyer. D.P. Sayler Biographical File. Brethren Historical Library and Archives. Elgin, Illinois.

could also be considered. In a culture where notions of manliness were tightly tied to military service, it is the self-professed peace people who cause the nation's leading military figure to break down in tears when in their presence. A more plausible explanation, however, can be found in the language of evangelicalism. A systematic search of Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher's compilation *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln*, the most comprehensive collection of recollective Lincoln quotations, reveals three instances of a crying Lincoln. Phineas Gurley, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church frequented by President and First Lady Lincoln, verified a late-life Christian conversion for Lincoln complete with gushing tears: "…in the latter days of his chastened and weary life, after the death of his son Willie, and his visit to the battle-field of Gettysburg, he said, with tears in his eyes, that he had lost confidence in everything but God, and that he now believed his heart was changed, and that he loved the Saviour, and if he was not deceived in himself, it was his intention soon to make a profession of religion." Newton Bateman, a Lincoln acquaintance from Illinois, allegedly heard Lincoln utter the following words with cheeks "wet with tears": "I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think he has—I believe I am ready." On February 20 1862, the day young Willie Lincoln passed away, Lincoln walked into the office of presidential secretary John G. Nicolay and said, "'Well, Nicolay, my boy is gone—he is actually gone.' Then he burst into tears and left." In these recollected memories, Lincoln cries when speaking of God or speaking of the death of Willie, an event which witnesses such as Phineas Gurley claim drove Lincoln towards God. The stories seek to establish memory of Lincoln as possessing an intense emotional attachment to his faith (i.e., an evangelical faith). Peace churches appropriated yet tweaked this representation. In the nonresistant rendering, Lincoln's highly emotional spirituality

responds tearfully to the cause of conscientious objection rather than the mystery of the Atonement or the will of God for his life.[21]

A compassionate, tear-shedding Lincoln could easily be refashioned into an anti-war Lincoln. In September 1900, *The Friends' Intelligencer* reprinted a "gentle Lincoln" story originally found in Josiah Holland's 1866 biography of Lincoln. According to the account, Lincoln confronted a general who objected to Lincoln's pardon of twenty-four deserters, all of whom were scheduled to be executed. A visibly distressed Lincoln told the officer, "Mr. General, there are already far too many weeping widows in the United States. For God's sake, do not ask me to add to the number, for I won't do it." The article concluded by revising this decades-old "compassionate Lincoln" tale into a brief commentary on the then-current debate regarding the merits of American imperialism: "What would Lincoln have said to the policy which would fill the land with mothers and widows weeping for sons and husbands, not killed in defending the nation's life, but in expeditions to distant lands, in war upon those who have done us no injury?" The same emotionally demonstrative Lincoln who lamented the loss of life on American soil would presumably do the same when it came to Cuba and the Philippines.[22]

It took more than the shedding of tears, however, to make Lincoln compassionate. When members of the peace churches visited Lincoln to air their concerns, the President responded by fulfilling Quaker or Brethren objectives. Petition stories can thus be considered a subcategory of

[21] Don E. and Virginia Fehrenbacher, eds., *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 25; James A. Reed, "The Later Life and Religious Sentiments of Abraham Lincoln," *Scribner's Monthly*, July 1873, 339, quoted in Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words*, 191; Nicolay memorandum in notebook for February-March 1862, John G. Nicolay Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, quoted in Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words,* 345. Mark Noll contrasts the "personal, inward, and heartfelt religion" of evangelicalism with "formal, outward, and established religion." See Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans: 2002), 51.

[22] *Friends' Intelligencer* 57:38, 22 September 1900, 719; Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory,* 104-05.

both the accessible and compassionate Lincoln motifs. Because Lincoln was accessible, he listened with full attention to peace entreaties; because he was compassionate, he actually acted upon them. According to a reputable source, when once confronted by a man intent on evading conscription, Lincoln sighed, "I don't know why it is that I am troubled with these cases, but if I were, by interfering, to make a hole through which a kitten might pass, it would soon be large enough for the old cat to get through also." Peace church remembrances, however, often contradicted this stance of Lincoln. In 1905, *The Friend* shared the tale of a young Friend referred to only as "the Lake Champlain Quaker." Drafted and detained in 1861, the Quaker steadfastly refused to take part in military service: "I shall never fight. My mother taught me it is a sin. It is her religion and my father's and their fathers'. I shall never raise my hand to kill anyone." The exasperated colonel of the regiment visited Lincoln ("who was great because he knew the hearts of men") and notified the President of "the mutinous Quaker who talked of his religion, the soldier who refused to fight, who defied pain and laughed at the fear of death." Lincoln's response, if accurate, no doubt surprised the colonel: "There is only one thing to do. Trump up some excuse and send him home. You can't kill a boy like that, you know. The country needs brave men wherever they are. Send him home." In a twist on the typical clemency narrative where Lincoln pardons military deserters out of the goodness of his heart, here Lincoln grants both a stay of execution and further exemption from military service on the basis of the draftee's bravery (in not fighting). Without a direct petition from the "Lake Champlain Quaker" himself, Lincoln recognizes the validity of the conscientious cause, rewards one of its advocates, and proposes an alternative reading of American heroism all in one compact quotation.[23]

[23] *The Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser,* 23 March 1865, quoted in Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words,* 17 (The Fehrenbachers classify the "kitten/old cat" quote as contemporaneous, recorded within a few days

Other presidential reprieves required significantly more effort. Rhode Island Quaker Ethan Foster presented an example of a successful presidential petition in his short 1883 work, *The Conscript Quakers.* In the summer of 1863, Foster and a companion trekked to Washington seeking the relief of four young New England conscientious objectors drafted against their will. When Foster asked the President for exemption from military service for the four, a visibly beleaguered Lincoln proved less than committal:

> (Lincoln) said that if he began, there would be no stopping place; spoke of the difficulties with which he was beset on every hand;…said he had not time to give attention and thought to these matters; that before one thing was duly considered and digested, another of a totally different character was presented and pressed upon his attention; that anything he might do or say to-day would be in the public papers to-morrow, and be heralded from Maine to Georgia.

Lincoln, showing his propensity for gentle compassion, did acknowledge that he "should be very unwilling for any truly conscientious person to be made to suffer," then hastily added, "but even this must not be repeated."[24]

When Foster asked Lincoln to release the four on parole, the President replied that he would be making a "special exception" for Friends and ignoring other Union residents with a conscientious opposition to war. Foster praised Lincoln for his impartiality, but then reminded the President that early on (around 1780) American Quakers barred the institution of slavery from their society, and if all religious denominations had followed the Quaker lead, there would be no Civil War. According to Foster's narrative, Lincoln conceded, "You never said a truer thing than that." The four nonresistants remained in military camp several weeks until an order arrived from Washington requiring their release "until they are called for," a clause Foster interpreted as meaning "they will never be called for." A heroic stand and persuasive argument

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after the actual words were spoken); *The Friend* 78:39, 8 April 1905, 306.

[24] Ethan Foster, *The Conscript Quakers, Being a Narrative of the Distress and Relief of Four Young Men from the Draft for the War in 1863* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1883), 5-10.

thus won over the already tender-hearted Lincoln. At the time of Foster's conscript-freeing efforts, policy dictated that conscientious objectors furnish a substitute or pay a commutation fee in lieu of military service. Lincoln, however, grants unconditional exemption, an act of Presidential grace in its theological sense. Foster's story thus furthers the heroic conception of both Lincoln and nonresistant. Lincoln emerges as a compassionate, Christian President bestowing unmerited favor on conscientious objectors, and Ethan Foster succeeds in creating a kitten-sized hole without letting the "old cat" through.[25]

In at least one instance in these petition narratives, conscientious objectors helped Lincoln alter the course of American history. The story of Isaac Harvey first found a national audience in *Harpers'* in 1874 and in 1912 was recast into the short booklet *Friends with Lincoln in the White House*. Harvey lived in Clinton County, Ohio (roughly fifty miles northeast of Cincinnati) where neighbors reputedly referred to him as "the crazy Quaker" for his periodic visions and mystical insight. Throughout the summer of 1862, both the antagonism between North and South and the plight of the "poor crushed negroes" troubled Harvey, until one day while plowing his field a great voice (either within or outside of Harvey) spoke to the Quaker, "Go thou and see the President," to which Harvey replied, "Yea, Lord, thy servant heareth." Harvey and his wife Sarah then hurried to Washington where Harvey happened to ask "a noble-looking man" how to gain access to Lincoln. The man took the Ohio Friends to a nearby hotel, made sure they were fed, and later that evening presented the couple with a pass enabling them to speak with the President at 9:30 the next morning. When the day of the visit, September 19, 1862, arrived, the stranger escorted the Harveys to Lincoln's office, but warned, "You must make your talk with him brief. A big battle has just been fought at Antietam. The North is

[25] Ibid., 10-12, 25.

victorious, but at least 12,000 men have been killed or wounded, and the President, like the rest of us, is in great trouble." The mysterious figure arranging this momentous visit turned out to be Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, prompting the author of the original *Harper's* article to exult, "Truly God exalteth the lowly, and they who trust in Him shall never be confounded." Once in the executive office, the mere sight of Lincoln mesmerized Harvey: "It seemed so wonderful that, for a moment I could not realize it. To think that such humble people as we were should be there in the actual presence of the greatest and best man in the world, and to be received by him as kindly as if he was our own son, made me feel very strange…Oh, how I honored the good man!" During the course of the half-hour visit, Harvey shared with Lincoln what his own Inner Light had spoken to him. Harvey's remedy for the ills of the nation and the special revelation which prompted the trip from Ohio to Washington was compensated emancipation, paying each slave owner $300 for each slave in captivity. [26]

This certainly was no new idea. Lincoln himself had been pitching the notion of gradual compensated emancipation to representatives of border slave states for some time. This, however, did not deter Henry Wilbur, the author of *Friends with Lincoln*, from stressing the historical import of the meeting between Harvey and Lincoln. Harvey visited Lincoln on Friday, September 19 while three days later, September 22nd, Lincoln first released the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Wilbur stopped short of establishing formal causality between these two events, but noted the interaction of Wilbur's persuasive Quaker petition with Lincoln's innate humanitarian concern: "Remembering how responsive Lincoln was to the finer and deeper motives and emotions of the human heart, it is not hard to believe that the visit of Isaac and

[26] Henry W. Wilbur, *Friends with Lincoln in the White House, Adapted from Nellie Blessing-Eyster's Story* (Philadelphia: Author, 1912), 3, 12-21, 25, 28.

Sarah Harvey came to the Great President as a sort of spiritual revelation, confirming the external events and internal leadings which caused President Lincoln to make the final decision in the case as he did and when he did." A "crazy Quaker" therefore helped nudge Lincoln into one of the notable achievements of his Presidency by appealing to his compassionate nature and, to members of the Society of Friends, appearing as a confirmation of divine will.[27]

Perhaps the best-documented example of an encounter between Lincoln and a representative of the peace churches involves the Presidential visit and subsequent written correspondence of Eliza P. Gurney, the widow of prominent Quaker leader Joseph John Gurney and a gifted minister in her own right. For the first eighteen months of the war, Gurney followed the proceedings of the conflict intently while, according to one biographer, "…her heart was drawn forth in a sympathy not easy to be described towards the distinguished man then at the head of the American Government." Finally, in October 1862, Gurney, accompanied by three fellow Quakers, ventured to Washington to speak with Lincoln. The small delegation overcame numerous obstacles in scheduling an interview with Lincoln, waiting patiently for over two days until, in Gurney's words, "The great iron door seemed to open of itself." Once inside the Presidential office, the Friends gazed upon the "deep thoughtfulness and intense anxiety" which marked Lincoln's countenance. During the course of a forty-five minute visit, Gurney sympathized with the heavy weight of responsibility resting upon Lincoln and assured him that not only members of the Society of Friends, but also every "true-hearted citizen" of the United

[27] Ibid., 25, 31-32. Historical documentation complicates the Isaac Harvey story. White House records show "Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Harvey from Ohio" calling upon Lincoln on September 6, 1861, over a year earlier than the date found in Henry Wilbur's account. Harvey may still have conveyed his enthusiasm for compensated emancipation at this earlier date, but the story proves less compelling than if Harvey shared his divine revelation with Lincoln mere days before the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. See Earl Schenck Miers and C. Percy Powell, eds., *Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology, 1809-1865,* Volume III: 1861-1865 (Washington: Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, 1960), 64-65.

States supported him. After ensuring Lincoln that God was his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, Gurney concluded by offering up an impassioned prayer for both the President and the nation. As Gurney sent her supplication heavenward, Lincoln bowed his head with the others and "evinced deep feeling." One member of Gurney's party recounted the meeting: "…the deep solemnity, the almost awful silence that reigned within that room formed… a striking contrast to the fearful scene of strife and carnage that was enacted, almost within sight, just on the other bank of the Potomac. And then to see the tears run down the cheeks of our honored President as E.P Gurney solemnly addressed him! I cannot possibly describe the impressive scene." [28]

The October 1862 visit by Gurney and companions appeared to leave a lasting impression on Lincoln. Nearly a year later, Isaac Newton, United States Commissioner of Agriculture and mutual acquaintance of both Lincoln and Gurney, informed Gurney that Lincoln had requested a letter from her. Gurney obliged in a letter dated August 18, 1863 in which she repeated many of the sentiments expressed in her first visit with Lincoln: "I feel inclined to give thee the assurance of my continued hearty sympathy in all thy heavy burdens and responsibilities, and to express not only my own earnest prayer, but, I believe, the prayer of many thousands whose hearts thou hast gladdened by thy praiseworthy and successful efforts to burst the bands of wickedness and let the oppressed go free." Lincoln acknowledged Gurney's note with a letter of his own dated September 4, 1864. The letter began with Lincoln showing fond gratitude for both Gurney's original visit to the executive mansion and her warm, caring correspondence from the previous year. At the conclusion of the letter, Lincoln displayed

[28] *Friends' Review* 36:36, 14 April 1883, 565; Richard F. Mott, editor, *Memoir and Correspondence of Eliza P. Gurney* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1884), 307-12.

empathy for Quakers and the cause of peace they espoused: "Your people, the Friends, have had and are having a very great trial…In this hard dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law."[29]

It is the middle section of this letter from Abraham Lincoln to Eliza Gurney, however, that has garnered the most attention from Lincoln historians and biographers. Four sentences into the letter, Lincoln turned abruptly from personal well-wishes to philosophical speculation: "The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light He gives us, trusting that so working conduces to the great ends He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay." Here Lincoln used language similar in both style and substance to his Second Inaugural Address, a remarkable speech where Lincoln pondered the meaning of the war theologically as well as politically.[30]

Religious historian Mark Noll considers "the great theological puzzle of the Civil War" to be that Lincoln, with no formal church membership or theological training, so richly explored the mystery of divine inscrutability as it pertained to the course of the Civil War within his Second Inaugural Address. It is entirely plausible to suggest that Lincoln felt secure enough in his relationship with Gurney to both divulge some of his developing inner thoughts regarding the

[29] Ibid., 313-17.
[30] Ibid., 316-17.

workings of Providence and offer a preview of what would become one of his signature speeches when delivered six months later. In the narrative of the ongoing Gurney-Lincoln communication, Gurney emerges as a spiritual confidante, an acquaintance who at the least served as a sounding board for Lincoln's speculations on the mind of God or perhaps the individual who led the President into full Christian faith. Even the seemingly incontrovertible story of the Gurney-Lincoln association, however, was not immune to the temptations of embellishment. Upon Lincoln's death, word spread throughout Quaker circles (and evidence suggests that Gurney herself believed) that Lincoln carried Gurney's August 1863 letter with him in the breast-pocket of his coat the night he was assassinated. A historical sleuth writing in *The Friends' Journal* in 1987 tracked down the Gurney letter at the Library of Congress, discovered that the letter was in the White House office and not on Lincoln's person when the President was murdered, and concluded that this particular Gurney anecdote was strictly legend. [31]

Another Quaker woman felt compelled to minister to the Presidential widow in the dark days after Friday, April 15th. Sybil Jones, along with her husband Eli, maintained the traditional peace testimony of the Friends but also backed their son, James Parnel Jones, when he volunteered for military service. Young James explained his rationale for fighting in a letter written to his parents: "Did I not think this war would loose the slaves' chains I would break my sword and go home." After the young Jones died in battle, his mother Sybil undertook a special

[31]Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 134; Mott, *Memoir of Gurney,* 322; Daniel Bassuk, "The Case of the Missing Quaker Letter," *Friends Journal,* 1 February 1987, 15-17; Dan Bassuk, "Quaker Letter Found," *Friends Journal,* 1/15 May 1987, 18. For more on the theological significance of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, see Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 414-20 and Noll, *America's God,* 425-35. For a detailed analysis of both the content of the inaugural address and its historical context, see Ronald C. White, Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), especially pp. 141-43 for a specific discussion of the Lincoln-Gurney relationship.

mission of comforting wounded and dying soldiers. Biographical accounts boasted that Sybil Jones preached and talked to thirty-thousand soldiers, and received a pass from the Surgeon General giving the Quaker woman access to every military hospital in the United States. After the Lincoln assassination, when Jones arrived in Washington to visit Mary Lincoln, she found the wife of the president confined to bed and psychologically comatose. Jones later said of the visit, "All crushed and broken under the heavy stroke, I spoke to her of the heavenly Chastener's love and care, and said that He could bind up the broken heart and give peace. She cordially invited us to come again." During a second visit by Jones, Mary Lincoln remained bedridden yet showed signs of receptivity to Jones' pastoral care. A Quaker biographer later described the encounter: "The desolate lady (Mary Lincoln) gave them a sweet welcome, and told them some cheering incidents of her husband's last days… (Abraham Lincoln) seemed to feel that the great work was done, and he rejoiced that the cloud which hung over his beloved America had lifted. Sybil Jones then spoke to her cheeringly of the sympathy of Jesus… (and) that in her boys she had a charge to keep for the King." Jones parted ways with the former First Lady at the conclusion of "a season of feeling prayer." [32]

The honor accorded to Lincoln by the peace churches differed from their assessment of other prominent political figures of the era. On the surface at least, Lincoln displayed more sympathy towards conscientious objectors than did his Confederate counterpart, Jefferson Davis. When a delegation of five Southern Friends called upon Davis in the summer of 1862, he showed the visitors some courtesy, yet "remarked that he regretted to learn that there was within the limits of the Southern Confederacy a body of people unwilling not only to fight, but if needful to die in defense of their country." Margaret Crenshaw, daughter of Richmond-area

[32] Rufus M. Jones, *Eli and Sybil Jones: Their Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates, 1889), 170-79.

Quaker minister John Crenshaw, remembered an instance when her father voiced his displeasure with Davis straight to the Confederate President's face: "…my dear father said to (Davis) as he had refused to act for our relief he looked to God, who he was sure would make a way, where there seemed to be no way. Davis on that asked him 'then why did you come to me.' My father replied, 'because thou art the natural channel through which relief should have come.'" On one occasion, the peace churches harbored no reservations about speaking ill of the political dead. In June 1868, shortly after the death of former President James Buchanan, *The Friends' Review* wrote a scathing appraisal of the Pennsylvanian's years in office. According to the article, Buchanan ascended to the Presidency at a critical moment in American history: "At this juncture the commotions in Kansas called for wisdom, patriotism, justice and mercy on the part of the National Executive…Here seemed an opportunity to redeem the past and to win the love of posterity by *doing right.*" The next four years, however, proved to be a national disaster: "During the term of his presidency the political horizon grew dark and foreboding, and on his final departure from the White House there was no prevalent sentiment that he had so employed his vast opportunities as to promote glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, or good will to men." The editorialist pronounced Buchanan worthy of the "shade of obscurity" surrounding him at the time of his passing and slighted him with one of the highest of indignities: "We breathe not his name, but we refer to his career to point a moral." Indeed, the name James Buchanan appeared nowhere in the six-paragraph column.[33]

[33] Fernando G. Cartland, *Southern Heroes or the Friends in War Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1895), 127; Letter from Margaret E. Crenshaw, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; *Friends' Review* 21:42, 13 June 1868, 664-65.

Before it is assumed, however, that fond peace church remembrance of Lincoln was rooted in either Union sectionalism or Republican partisanship, mention should be made of the strained relationship Quakers experienced with a member of Lincoln's own cabinet. In the previously mentioned work *The Conscript Quakers,* Ethan Foster preserved the details of a tense encounter with Secretary of State William Seward. While Foster and fellow Quaker Charles Perry spoke to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in the War Department office, Seward sat silently nearby, surely hearing every word spoken. After the conversation with Stanton, Perry attempted to strike up conversation with Seward, but the Secretary of State snapped, "Why don't the Quakers fight?" Perry replied, "Because they believe it is wrong, and cannot do it with a clear conscience." After a "severe reprimand" from Seward for refusing to fight, the following exchange ensued:

> Foster: Well, if this world were all, perhaps we might take thy advice.
> Seward: The way to get along well in the next world is to do your duty in this.
> Foster: That is what we are trying to do, and now, I want to ask thee one question, and I want thee to answer it; whose prerogative is it to decide what my duty is, thine or mine?
> Seward (more angry and excited): Why then don't you pay the commutation?
> Foster and Perry: We could see no difference between the responsibility of doing an act ourselves and that of hiring another to do it for us.
> Seward: Then I'll pay it for you. I'll give you my check! (thrusting his hand into his coat pocket)

Fearing it would jeopardize their conscript-releasing mission, the two Quakers later informed the President of the conflict-laden conversation, but Lincoln simply chuckled and said, "Oh, he wouldn't say half as much to me when you were gone." Foster and Perry were apparently not the only Quakers to be received unfavorably by Lincoln's Secretary of State. Indiana Friend Charles Coffin, writing a 1911 remembrance, compared the "great courtesy and kindness" of Lincoln and "deep feeling and tender sympathy" of Edwin Stanton with his initial impressions of William

Seward: "We then visited each one of the secretaries, commencing with the Secretary of State, W.H. Seward, who was exceedingly curt and unkind and treated us quite uncivilly."[34]

Abraham Lincoln thus stood uniquely alone among mid-nineteenth century American political figures as a recipient of peace church veneration. Through their stories of favorable encounters with an accessible, compassionate and Christian Lincoln, the Friends and Brethren joined in the Lincoln apotheosis common to American life of the 1890s and early-twentieth century. With so many intriguing Lincoln anecdotes circulating throughout Progressive-era American culture, the historical Lincoln and the mythical Lincoln often blurred into each other. Even today, it becomes virtually impossible to judge the authenticity of the general substance of discourse within the Lincoln conversations, let alone the verbatim words Lincoln spoke. Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher, in the introduction to their compilation of Lincoln oral recollections, appear to take a cynical attitude towards most Lincoln reminiscences: "Associating oneself in print with the great man of the age could scarcely be anything but nourishing for one's self-esteem and reputation. In the process, some persons stretched limited acquaintance into intimate friendship; some exaggerated the amount of time spent in Lincoln's company; some overstated their influence upon him; and more than a few supplemented memory with outright invention, especially in the reproduction of dialogue." Using academic caution is commendable; the limitations of human memory alone require that critical scrutiny be applied to any attribution contained within quotation marks. The multifaceted nature of Lincoln's personality also lent itself to alternate understandings by different groups, according to Barry Schwartz: "Lincoln himself was ambiguous, complex, and many-sided, and…different communities, according to their experiences and interests, saw one side more clearly than others." Finally, the political

[34] Foster, *Conscript Quakers,* 14-17; *The American Friend* 18:16, 20 April 1911, 249-50.

opportunism of Lincoln confuses matters. The same Lincoln, for example, who proclaimed the peace churches the "salt of the nation" reportedly told a delegation of Methodists visiting his office that they belonged to "the most important of all denominations." Keeping these qualifications in mind, however, one can still posit that the favorable reception given to the peace churches by Lincoln was a product of neither faulty memory nor literary fabrication.[35]

Pinpointing the exact nature of the religion of Abraham Lincoln has been a contentious exercise for nearly one-hundred-and-fifty years, and determining whether such faith was "orthodox" seems a matter best left to theologians. What can be stated with certainty, however, is that Lincoln's religious beliefs fell outside of the conventional American Christianity of the mid-nineteenth century, and here he shared an affinity with the peace churches. While Christians on both sides of the sectional divide expressed the certitude that God favored their side and would lead them to military victory, Lincoln simply observed, "The Almighty has His own purposes." As one historian notes, Lincoln avoided "the sanctions of absolute holiness" by holding "a religious perspective above partisan strife that was not shared by most of the Christian theologians of his day or any day." The peace churches, while not immune to displays of self-righteousness, possessed an awareness of the burden of war as it rested on both humanity and Lincoln himself that the President must have found refreshing. In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln disclosed a personal war fatigue when he commented, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away." Three years earlier, Lincoln uttered the same sentiments to a Quaker correspondent, writing, "Engaged, as I am, in a great war, I fear it will be difficult for the world to understand how fully I appreciate the principles of

[35] Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words,* xlix; Schwartz, *Lincoln and the Forge of Memory,* 222-23; Carwardine, *Lincoln,* 287.

peace inculcated…by the Society of Friends.---I look forward hopefully to an early end of war, and return of peace." Overseeing the operations of a bloody war, in other words, did not necessarily make Lincoln a "warmonger." For this reason, Lincoln's role as Commander-in-Chief and the position of Quakers and Brethren as nonresistants need not be seen as purely oppositional. The Presidential tears and the "salt of the earth" language may or may not be fictitious embellishments, but a strong case can be made that, in the historic peace churches, Lincoln found spiritual and philosophical allies.[36]

In observing why the Lincoln stories resonated with the nonresistants, a telling statement appears in the last sentence of Henry Wilbur's *Friends with Lincoln in the White House:* "In any event, the story (of Isaac Harvey) is worth preserving for its portrayal of the light and leading of a Friend who represented the spirit of an older time, and also for its connection with Abraham Lincoln, now being considered the typical, if not the First American." In their depictions both of the "First American" and nonresistants "of an older time," the "Lincoln encounter" stories said as much about what the peace churches did for Lincoln (and, by extension, the nation at large) as they did about what Lincoln did for the peace churches. D.P. Sayler offered Lincoln trusted advice on how to deal with conscientious objectors. Eliza Gurney pointed Lincoln to God in the middle of an intense spiritual crisis. Isaac Harvey elbowed Lincoln into issuing the Emancipation Proclamation when he did. The Lincoln narratives thus adopted Lincoln as an honorary hero of peace, yet also commemorated the peace churches' own nonresistant congregants as heroes.[37]

[36] William J. Wolf, *Lincoln's Religion* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970), 186-87; Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln.* Volume 5 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 165 (letter from Lincoln dated 19 March 1862).
[37] Wilbur, *Friends with Lincoln,* 32.

As the peace churches looked back from their vantage point in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Civil War years appeared as a time when conscientious objectors fearlessly pressed their demands at the highest levels of government and one of the foremost Americans saluted their stance in return. In his words and attitude towards the Friends and Brethren entering his office in these narratives, Lincoln welcomed (at times pleaded for) their increased interaction with American religious, social and political life, and confirmed that the peace churches were good Americans while they were also good noncombatants. If these stories featured the "First American" encouraging increased cultural integration from the peace churches, however, Friends and Brethren such as Eliza Gurney, D.P. Sayler, and Isaac Harvey stood as a reminder that acculturation had its limits. These individuals endeared themselves to Lincoln because they held fast to the traditional tenets of their respective faiths; they also inspired postwar peace church members to stay true to their heritage. For the peace churches, Lincoln encounter stories thus valorized the Civil War past and reflected an ongoing search in the present for ways to be part of American society while staying a prophetic outsider to that same society.

If nonresistants remembered their relationship with Abraham Lincoln as amiable, they spoke of their Civil War encounters with military officials of both Lincoln's Union and the Confederacy in more adversarial terms. As soldiers from North and South fought each other with sabers, firearms, and artillery, members of the peace churches battled the spirit of militarism and its corruption (as they perceived it) of Christianity when they came into contact with military representatives. Firm resolve, a willingness to suffer or die, and the bestowal of divine favor may have all described the ideal Civil War soldier, but peace churches appropriated these

characteristics for their own use. In so doing, they created a new kind of Civil War hero, one who disarmed army officials with commitment to principle and displayed the utmost of courage without picking up a gun.

Chapter Four, Reimagining Christian Soldiers: Nonresistants Remember the Military

Before his long and illustrious career on the judicial bench, United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. served as a Civil War soldier. The experience of seeing action with the Union army at battles such as Balls Bluff and Antietam left the jurist with a lifetime of conflicting emotions. While Holmes reportedly refused to read histories of the Civil War or publicly discuss the causes and consequences of the fighting, he also carried his battle wounds and accomplishments as a distinct badge of personal honor throughout his lengthy life. At an 1895 Memorial Day address, Holmes told a crowd assembled at Harvard, "I do not know what is true. I do not know the meaning of the universe. But in the midst of doubt, in the collapse of creeds, there is one thing I do not doubt…and that is that the faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw away his life in obedience to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign of which he has little notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use." Holmes had little use for the moral idealism which often provoked men to fight, yet praised the virtue and professionalism of the common soldier to the point (if "faith" is understood in its most literal sense) of finding some degree of transcendent meaning in the act of soldiering.[1]

A more orthodox welding of faith and militarism appeared in the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The lyrics, written in 1864, borrowed military sentiment from the New

[1] Max Lerner, ed., *The Mind and Faith of Justice Holmes: His Speeches, Essays, Letters, and Judicial Opinions* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), 18-25. For more on Holmes' Civil War years and how that experience contributed to his subsequent beliefs, see Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2001), 33-69 and Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 743-66.

Testament ("Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.") while updating such a perspective for the mid-nineteenth century. The hymn urges followers of Christ to fight a strenuous yet winnable battle against the forces of evil: "Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; forward into battle see his banners go... At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee; on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!" Originally the song was no doubt intended as a metaphor for the day-to-day spiritual struggles associated with living a Christian life. It is tempting, however, to read lyrics such as "Onward, Christian soldiers/Marching as to war/With the cross of Jesus going on before" as an endorsement of literal militaristic activity, a musical affirmation of the assumed moral superiority which has often inspired nations to wage war. The ranks of both the Union and Confederate armies certainly contained countless soldiers who framed the Civil War in spiritual (if not apocalyptic) terms, believing God favored their side and that the cross of Jesus marched before them as they encountered foes of the Christian banner.[2]

As they reviewed their Civil War experience, the peace churches both rejected the "soldier's faith" of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and redefined the Christian soldiery of the popular hymn. For these bodies of faith, the war proved that there could be no possible harmony between nationalistic militarism (be that nation the Union or the Confederacy) and true Christian belief. Throughout the duration of the war, adherents of a gospel of peace found Northern and Southern military authorities to be legitimate wartime adversaries. With the passage of time, as

[2] 2 Timothy 2:3, NASB (New American Standard Bible); "Onward, Christian Soldiers" lyrics retrieved at www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh575.sht. For more on Christian justifications of Civil War military activity, see James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) and Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For more on how soldiers reconciled their military duty to kill with the Biblical injunction to not kill, see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71-74 and Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 33-35.

wartime experience turned into wartime recollection, the battle scars inflicted by the old foes still stung. Within "military encounter" narratives, defined here as those postbellum remembrances drawn from the Civil War where military personnel or activity infringed on the daily life of peace church members, nonresistants frequently endured verbal taunts and threats or, in more severe cases, physical and mental afflictions from Union and Confederate military officials. In one of the earliest attempts to document the wartime sufferings of peace church members, the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1868 spelled out the qualitative difference between their adversities and those of other Southerners: "We believe it right to record the sufferings of Friends in North Carolina during the late Rebellion, not that they so greatly exceeded those of others, but because principles of such high importance were involved in them as totally to separate them in character and results from the general calamities of war." The acts of "enduring grief" and "suffering wrongfully" for the sake of conscience distinguished the peace churches from those who took up arms, and such heroic stands of principle taken against a hostile army, the Yearly Meeting further reasoned, entitled the North Carolina Quakers to the same adulation given to military soldiers for battlefield exploits: "Such were the heroes of the Army of Peace!...Most meekly, yet most nobly, did they keep the charge, 'Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.'" A pamphlet entitled *True Heroism Displayed during the American War*, intended to inform British readers of the wartime deprivations of North Carolina Friends, repeated this same noble characterization of Southern Quakers: "In the great multitudes that swelled the two vast armies arrayed against each other there could not have been found instances of more lofty heroism, of calmer courage, and of more fearless unshrinking endurance of cruel sufferings, than were exhibited by that little band who followed as their only Captain the

Prince of Peace." Peace churches designated their Civil War heroes as Christian soldiers, but recast the meaning from fearless fighters to patient sufferers.[3]

In two separate monographs, historians James Marten and Stuart McConnell have noticed the proliferation of Civil War "soldiers' narratives" or "personal war sketches" in the late-nineteenth century (particularly during the 1890s). Today, these accounts authored by ex-soldiers are considered wearisome in their attention to detail and tepid in their often antiseptic descriptions of fighting. Soldiers' narratives, however, performed the important function of establishing veteran identity. Marten observes that committing memory to print allowed former soldiers to "redeem their individuality from the numbing magnitude of modern war." McConnell concurs by suggesting that the countless number of personal battle perspectives provided readers with "a record of what each individual soldier was doing within each army during each significant battle of the war, a sort of national diorama." In her study of "popular war literature" produced between 1861 and 1865, *The Imagined Civil War*, Alice Fahs also notes the "profound sense of narrativity" surrounding the Civil War, "…the abiding faith that every individual experience of the war was not only worthy of but demanded representation." While the literature published during the war frequently placed "ordinary people" (women, children, African-Americans) in the grand narrative of the Civil War, Fahs notices a shift towards "soldier-dominated" war literature occurring in the late 1880s and 1890s. The rise of the Grand Army of the Republic and the popularity of "battles and leaders" articles in widely-read periodicals contributed to what Fahs calls "a new reconceptualization of the war as primarily a military event," a body of literary work asserting "that the central meaning of the war was the shared

[3] North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, *An Account of the Sufferings of Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, in Support of Their Testimony Against War* (Baltimore: William K. Boyle, 1868), 1, 24; Tract Association of the Society of Friends, *True Heroism Displayed during the American War* (London: E. Couchman, n.d.), 8.

bravery of white Union and Confederate veterans." Marten, McConnell, and Fahs thus all agree that, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a new premium was placed on soldier's memory and a renewed effort undertaken to extract such memory. American culture valued the stories and anecdotes of those white men who experienced the fighting firsthand, and so a gendered, racialized, and militarized memory of the war predominated. [4]

The peace churches sought to extend the experiential scope of Civil War "narrativity." No evidence exists to suggest that nonresistants ever read or desired to read a personal war sketch written by a GAR member. Peace church "military encounter" remembrances, however, resembled soldiers' narratives in two ways. First, nonresistants shared the same concern with heroic individuality as war veterans. As the comprehensive military history of the war consisted of countless soldiers' reminiscences, nonresistants also sought to preserve wartime history one narrative at a time. According to Alice Fahs, this stress on the noble actions of the one fit the literary conventions of the time: "Heroism, by accepted mid-nineteenth-century definition, necessarily involved the actions of individuals." Secondly, the recounting of hardships in nonresistant "military encounter" narratives parallel the concerns with bravery in the face of violence found in veterans' narratives. Peace church members applauded the calm courage manifested by nonresistant heroes when confronted by military dangers, and frequently employed military language to do so (e.g., "soldier of Christ," "Christian hero," etc.). Nonresistants cast their faith as the antithesis of "army Christianity," defined by a 1901

[4] James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 253; Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 21-22 and 170-73; Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 311, 314-15. Fahs lists the following as examples of "popular war literature": "…war poetry, sentimental war stories, sensational war novels, war humor, war juveniles, war songs, collections of war-related anecdotes, and war histories." See Fahs, *Imagined Civil War,* 1.

contributor to *The Friend* as "a sort of theoretical or mental trust in Christ as a Saviour" bearing no resemblance to a faith "possessing (Christ's) gentleness and his love for all men." The challenge to "army Christianity," however, did not preclude nonresistants from remembering themselves as Christian soldiers. Within the "military encounter" narratives, quiet, ordinary practitioners of a pacifistic faith represented the "gentle Jesus," but did so in a heroic and thrilling fashion as they faced life-endangering adversities perpetrated by a military antagonist. Peace church narratives thus represented a unique contribution to the larger body of soldier-dominated literature, a noncombatant alternative in a culture saturated with soldiers' memory.[5]

Nonresistant narratives often asked the question: How did wanton disregard for religious freedom occur in America? In an introduction penned for the 1895 book *Southern Heroes,* Benjamin F. Trueblood expressed the conviction that persecution on the grounds of "loyalty to Christian principle" was to be expected in "a far-away past age" or in "dark and barbarous countries," but not in the United States of America. "How is it possible," Trueblood queried, "that such things can have happened here in a country which has made civil and religious liberty its boast for a century?" In Trueblood's estimation, the protagonists found in *Southern Heroes* book constituted "a line of martyrs" enduring "political hatred, selfish prejudices, military tyranny and pure maliciousness" in the vaunted land of the free and home of the brave. Trueblood suggested that the constitutional promise of free religious exercise had yet to be fulfilled as he referred to *Southern Heroes* as "…a part of the history of our country's struggles

[5] *The Friend* 74:34, 9 March 1901, 265; Fahs, *Imagined Civil War,* 164.

for and progress toward real freedom, the depth of whose meaning has as yet been but imperfectly understood." [6]

In 1913, *The Atlantic Monthly* published the diary of Cyrus Pringle, a Vermont Quaker conscripted and subjected to various hardships within a Union military camp after refusing to pay a commutation fee. (Five years later, Pringle's memoirs were circulated in book form as *The Record of a Quaker Conscience.*) In October 1863, after Pringle refused to clean his gun, two sergeants forced him to lie on his back while tying his outstretched wrists and ankles to stakes driven into the ground in an X-formation. Exposed to the heat of the day, Pringle acknowledged some physical discomfort but disclosed his primary source of anguish to be the state of the nation: "I wept, not so much from my own suffering as from sorrow that such things should be in our own country, where Justice and Freedom and Liberty of Conscience have been the annual boast of Fourth-of-July orators so many years." On another occasion, Pringle doubted the ability of his native country to protect his precious religious conscience: "Here we are in prison in our own land for no crimes, no offence to God nor man…we are here for obeying the commands of the Son of God and the influences of his Holy Spirit…I am troubled too much and excited and perplexed." For Trueblood and Pringle, the Civil War proved that freedom of religious conscience as guaranteed by the Founding Fathers was illusory.[7]

The process of conscription struck peace church protagonists as the most damning evidence of American religious intolerance. The article "The Experience of a Friend who was Drafted," published in *The Friend* in both 1880 and (in abridged form) 1900, contains several crucial literary components found in other "peace conscripts confront the military" narratives and

[6] Fernando G. Cartland, *Southern Heroes or the Friends in War Time* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1895), xxv-xxvii.
[7] Cyrus Pringle, *The Record of a Quaker Conscience: Cyrus Pringle's Diary* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 76-77, 44.

serves as a helpful paradigm for the genre. In the story, a Quaker (left unnamed in the original article, but identified in later reprints as William Shaw) living in Ohio received a draft notice in 1864 and, upon reporting to camp, informed officers why he could not fight: "…I was conscientious against taking the life of my fellow men, or in any way taking part in the war spirit, believing it to be in direct opposition to the command of our Lord, 'Thou shalt not kill.'" Other peace conscripts likewise offered explicit rationales for their refusal to fight. After being drafted into the 52nd North Carolina regiment, two pairs of brothers, Thomas and Amos Hinshaw and Cyrus and Nathan Barker, appealed to spiritual and constitutional principle in declining to pay the $500 exemption fee: "…they plead that religious liberty was one of the principles of their forefathers, that freedom of conscience was the inherent right of men, that war and fighting are contrary to the commands of Christ, and that liberty of conscience and freedom to obey Christ should not be purchased with money." The commanding officer of a Confederate artillery company presented another set of North Carolina Quaker brothers, Himilius and Jesse Hockett, three alternatives regarding their conscription: fight, hire substitutes, or perform some other "soldierly work" in lieu of fighting. The Hocketts held their ground in rejecting all three proposals: "…they could not fight, for it would be disobedience to Christ; they could not pay another to do for them what they could not in conscience do themselves; they could not perform army work of any kind, since their service would liberate others to engage in killing their fellow-men." The proclamation of nonresistant intent along with its accompanying rationales constituted the first crucial acts in the creation of peace church Civil War heroes.[8]

[8] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 201; *The Friend* 73:26, 13 January 1900, 207; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 196; *Friends' Intelligencer* 37: 47, 8 January 1881, 740.

As the narratives unfold, within moments of arriving at camp, the peace conscript typically underwent the test of an action which, if performed, would have compromised the draftee's peace testimony. In the case of William Shaw, two such demands were placed upon his conscience: wearing the uniform of a soldier and signing the muster roll. The Quaker declined both, forcing an officer to perform the act of dressing Shaw in military garb: "I discovered the officer found it a heavy job, for he often sighed deeply, and I was handled as carefully as if I had just recovered from a spell of sickness." Quaker Edward Cook lived in Keokuk County, Iowa where he was drafted in 1864. One of Cook's earliest memories of military life was the indignity of wearing an army outfit: "I was forced to put on the uniform, in consenting to which I afterwards felt I had made a serious mistake." As a member of a group which made nonswearing one of its theological cornerstones, North Carolina Friend Jacob Hinshaw found little difficulty in refraining from pledging allegiance to the Confederate Army: "They presented the soldiers' oath of allegiance to us, which we refused, telling them we did not take oaths, and besides that, we could not bear arms." In 1915, *The Friends' Messenger* published a story entitled "A Quaker Hero: The Story of an Eyewitness." The eyewitness in question, a former Confederate soldier named William Bowman and described by the periodical's editors as "a man of integrity" with "retentive memory," recalled the peculiarities of a new recruit assigned to his company soon after the Seven Days' Battles. The conscript's "plain language" identified him as a Quaker, but the antagonism towards the draftee only truly started when he refused to comply with one of the fundamental customs of military initiation: "Upon being brought a gun and cartridges, the usual procedure with the new recruits, he refused to accept them… (He) said that he would suffer

death rather than engage in war." While nonresistant conscripts found themselves forced into an earthly army, war memory reassigned them to a peace-preferring "Christian army."[9]

In the military encounter narratives, nonresistant conscripts frequently wrestle inwardly with the consequences of their peace-based beliefs, yet their exterior calm stands in marked contrast to the temperamental and often irrational behavior of the military hierarchy. Confined to an army barracks in Ohio, William Shaw confessed to feeling some "dismal forebodings of the future," but later experienced "a precious covering of Divine regard" and "a tide of the water of life flowing into my soul" leaving him with a "tranquil, quiet, trusting adoration" of God. The Confederate army held five North Carolina Quakers against their will but, after the battle of Gettysburg, the conscripts were taken as prisoners of war by Union troops. One observer retained this vivid memory of the five marching down Chestnut Street in Philadelphia with other Confederate prisoners: "…in their carriage and deportment there was a marked sobriety, very different from the reckless defiance and the loose swagger of the common rebel." Peace, tranquility, and sobriety (in both the behavioral and imbibing sense), however, were not virtues regularly found in the military officers of the peace church narratives. When assigned to his quarters, William Shaw felt certain that "we were in the hands of unprincipled men." After refusing to answer to their names or march in drill formation with the other draftees, Shaw and a fellow Quaker endured the wrath of the Major General: "Your stubbornness may even be the means of causing a mutiny among my men, but you are not to have your way…Now go back to

[9] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 201; *The American Friend* 6:38, 21 September 1899, 896; Letter from Jacob Hinshaw to William H.S. Wood, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3 (Letters to William H.S. Wood). William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania; *The Friends' Messenger* 22:9, December 1915, 2-3.

your quarters, and when you are commanded to drill, *drill*! You will have to do it, even if we have to place two bayonets before and two behind you, or if we have to run them into you." [10]

The nonresistants certainly recognized that verbal belittling or the threat of physical violence were necessary components in instilling discipline and maintaining order within the military structure. What truly appalled the peace church heroes, however, was the severity with which they were treated for following the leading of their own conscience and those instances where threats turned into literal physical persecution. In his "record of conscience," Vermont Quaker and conscript Cyrus Pringle continually commented on the rough treatment he received at the hands of Union officers. Making a sweeping generalization, Pringle accused the junior officers he encountered of "liberally" possessing "pride, vanity, conceit, and an arbitrary spirit, impatience, profanity, and contempt for holy things." In Pringle's mind, officers unable to understand "pure Christianity and spirituality" ran roughshod over vital religious beliefs in order to further the imperatives of war: "One after another comes in to relieve himself upon us. Finding us firm and not lacking in words, they usually fly into a passion and end by bullying us. How can we reason with such men?" One particular colonel, filled with "cold heartlessness," caused special grief for Pringle. After the Quaker conscript pleaded his case, begging for both "release from the attempts by violence to compel my obedience and service, and a trial… in a manner conformable to law," the colonel said he had shown Pringle all the favor possible, then "declared furthermore his belief that a man who would not fight for his country did not deserve to live." A dejected Pringle wrote, "I was glad to withdraw from his presence as soon as I could." This juxtaposition of reserved conscripts and aggressive officers in peace church memory came at a time when notions of "passionate manhood" dominated American culture. Pringle's

[10] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 201; Ibid. 54:13, 6 November 1880, 101.

narrative thus not only contrasted peace heroes with military heroes, but also reasserted an antebellum ideal of manliness as restraint and self-control.[11]

Frequently the peace church narratives differentiated the harsh behavior of officers from the admiration expressed by sympathetic soldiers. The act of nonresistance certainly acquired much more resonance when someone outside the community of the peace churches noticed and appreciated that principle put into action. Heroic stands of the nonresistants as described in the narratives regularly prompted onlookers to show sympathy, renounce military ideals, or even (in rare instances) adopt the peace-based faith. When the irate Major General placed William Shaw in a guardhouse for punishment, the young Friend ministered to the guard responsible for overseeing his incarceration. According to the article, the guard approached the Quaker and said, "Men, I do pity you, as it is such a filthy place, and such hard cases to be your company, but I do like to see men live up to their principles." The Quaker answered, "Perhaps thou hast felt condemnation for wrong-doing; or a glow of satisfaction when thou doest well." After the guard confirmed that he had experienced such feelings, Shaw continued, "Well, now, live up to this, and thou mayest be brought into as tight a place as we are," to which the guard said, "I want to do so." [12]

Further south, the cruelty of officers in the North Carolina 22nd Regiment pushed Confederate soldier William Bowman to value the Quaker peace stance. When the Quaker draftee in Bowman's company refused a gun and cartridges, officers forcefully strapped the gun to his back and placed him in the middle of the day's fighting. The Friend left the battle unscathed, but after refusing to wear the gun a second time, the punishment grew more

[11] Pringle, *Quaker Conscience,* 61, 49, 75; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 70-71.
[12] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 202.

excessive: "Then a barrel with a hole sawed in the top was put on him, his head protruding through, and with it thus hanging around him he had to march up and down before the lines, with a soldier following him. Still he refused to bear arms." In the next round of retribution, the Quaker carried a heavy log for four hours with a soldier positioned behind to keep him moving. In one final "act of compulsion," Bowman watched as "…they shackled his hands behind him, threw him upon his back, doubled his knees into a cramped position and bound a bayonet through his mouth, drawing it down tightly for a gag. They placed him, tied in this manner, in the hot sun. When he was at last released he was spitting blood." Through all of these ordeals, the sweat and strain of the Friend provoked Bowman to remember, "…his will and faith were strong and kept him true to his convictions." Looking back fifty years, the one-time Confederate soldier reminisced, "I never learned more concerning him, and do not know whether he obtained release or suffered death. If all of us had been men of his type, there would have been no war." Bowman's reminiscence proves that peace hero narratives were more than an act of nonresistant self-justification. The powerful testimony of the bound-and-gagged Quaker lived on for years in Bowman's memory alongside other recollections of his past military career.[13]

In another story, a brave soldier saved a Quaker conscript from the rage of the rest of his regiment. When Edward Cook declined to perform any labor which might be perceived as military in nature, his lieutenant entrusted him with watching the valuables in camp so that nothing would be stolen while the other troops gruelingly worked at cutting ties for railroad repair. The other members of the 9th Iowa Infantry resented this action, believing that Cook was not sharing in the workload. When soldiers threatened to take punishment into their own hands and string Cook up by his thumbs, one articulate soldier stepped forward from the mob and

[13] *The Friends' Messenger* 22:9, December 1915, 2-3.

defended the Quaker with a most American-sounding appeal: "I volunteered in the first company that was raised in my part of Ohio, and I have been in the army ever since. I claim to be as old a soldier as there is here, and I came out to fight for liberty, and liberty of conscience, too; and if you want to do anything to this man you have me to fight first." The response stunned both the angry soldiers and Cook himself: "His bold speech hushed the tumult like magic. Thus my great Protector shielded me."[14]

In a few exceptional instances, military members approached (or even fully underwent) something of a conversion experience to peace principles after witnessing the conduct and courage of nonresistants. In a biographical sketch first published in 1891, Brethren elder Benjamin Moomaw described events which transpired around his farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley thirty summers earlier. The 51st Virginia Regiment arrived in the area in July 1861 for military training, and some malevolent neighbors soon directed the eight or nine hundred members of the regiment towards the Moomaw residence: "Some of our neighbors, thinking it a good opportunity to inflict a punishment on me for my anti-war proclivities, piloted some of the officers to my place…which was indeed a very suitable place for the occasion." Moomaw, in his own recollection, extended graciousness and hospitality to the men, even inviting twenty officers to dinner one occasion, yet did so in a manner not compromising his "Christian principles." Regiment members repaid Moomaw's kindness by issuing orders that "no damage should be done me in any way, nor should there be any intrusion upon my premises, which was strictly observed." Years later, Moomaw met the daughter of Captain Ross, one of the officers stationed at the Brethren ministers' home. The young woman suggested to Moomaw that his example had influenced her father, a man who was "not a member of any church, but inclined to the doctrine

[14] *The American Friend* 6:38, 21 September 1899, 898-99.

of the German Baptist Brethren." Moomaw held out hope that the former Confederate officer would become a full-fledged member of the Brethren community: "…since our mission field is extending in that direction, a meeting-house being built in his County, not very far from his home, may we not hope that the good seed, sown thirty years ago, may bring forth fruit in the near future?"[15]

A more explicit renunciation of the military lifestyle in favor of nonresistance occurs in the personal narrative of Jesse Buckner. When the war began, the Chatham County, North Carolina native (and Baptist) served as a colonel in the Carolina Militia where he "threw himself eagerly into the Southern cause and began to raise volunteer companies." The refusal of local Quakers to take part in a parade, however, convinced Buckner to scrutinize their principles for himself. Eventually, Buckner reached the conclusion that "it was not right to slay his fellow-men" and resigned his commission in the fall of 1861. Soon afterwards, Buckner fully realized his commitment to peace one dark night while on his way to a "political meeting": "…he lost his way, and wandering, in no small distress of mind, he reached at last the public road, and the steps of a building which proved to be the Friends' Meeting-House. While seated there alone, in solemn meditation, he became satisfied that it was his duty to unite himself with the people who worshipped there." In January 1863, Buckner officially became a member of the Friends and spent the duration of the war being passed from "camp to camp" and "gaol to gaol," hearing "sneers and taunts and cruel threats," and surviving an illness "which brought him to the brink of the grave." This faithful endurance earned the former militia colonel a reputation in Quaker memory as "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" who trusted "the Captain of his Salvation." Such

[15] *The Gospel Messenger* 29:43, 3 November 1891, 674.

examples of soldiers or officers acquiring the peace religion, however, remained the rare exception rather than the rule.[16]

Peace church reminiscences found unapologetic sinners vastly outnumbering willing converts within military camps and frequently addressed the pervasiveness of vice in army life. In his personal journal, conscript and North Carolina Friend Himelius Hockett wrote, "…I do not see that we can do much for the credit of our Society in such a place of confusion as this, as there is continual rioting, fiddling, dancing, swearing and drinking, frequently among the officers." Iowa Quaker Edward Cook believed camp life to be "a fearful school of vice" and took particular offense to the widespread gambling present in his regiment: "Through those long halls could be seen hundreds of men seated on the floor around blankets on which they were playing cards, laying them down with that spiteful slap that always tells so clearly the demoralizing nature of the game, while around them lay the little piles of money, 'put up just to make it interesting.'" Cook then recalled an incident of "drunken debauchery" which made him "almost ashamed of the human form." While traveling on a train bound for Cincinnati, members of Cook's company found a carload full of whiskey and promptly ingested the contents. After the train stopped at Covington, Kentucky (located just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati), drunken soldiers roamed the streets and left a path of destruction in their wake: "I saw a soldier just before me thrust the butt of his rifle through a costly window. The cost of that glass has never gone into the war statistics, neither did the retrograde movement in the temperance cause, or the increase of crime—in their aggregate costing some millions of millions—which came as legitimate results." As a result of his experience as a conscript, Cyrus Pringle observed that the combination of intense battle and endless hours of inactivity created fertile ground for both demoralization and

[16] North Carolina Yearly Meeting, *Sufferings of Friends,* 13-14; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 149-50.

emasculation of the common soldier: "Men are ranging through the grounds…apparently without a purpose. Aimless is military life, except betimes its aim is deadly. Idle life blends with violent death-struggles till the man is unmade a man; and henceforth there is little of manhood about him." In their recollections, former Quaker conscripts provided anecdotal evidence for the postwar nonresistant contention that intemperance, crime, and other vices represented moral declines directly attributable to the military life of the Civil War (see chapter 1).[17]

Offensive as they may have been to Quaker sensibilities, decks of cards and bottles of whiskey still posed less danger to peace conscripts than the possibilities of physical cruelty at the hands of officers or transfer to the battlefield. William Shaw's heart shrank when he learned that the War Department ordered more Union troops into the Shenandoah Valley, and that he was a prime candidate to be sent to Virginia. Pacing his room in nervous anticipation, Shaw all at once saw "a helpless infant" lying on the ground. Shaw feared for the safety of the child, "lest it should be crushed under the feet of the guards." Suddenly a giant hand reached down from the heavens and snatched the tiny babe out of harm's way. Shaw understood this vision to be a guarantee of divine protection: "This assured me beyond a doubt, that I was under the care of Providence, therefore I need fear no evil. I wrote to my wife, that 'The day of my deliverance draweth nigh.'" Later, an officer confirmed Shaw's spiritual impressions by informing the Quaker that his name was not taken. Relieved at the prospect of escaping military duty, Shaw nonetheless commiserated with the hundreds in his unit sent away to certain battlefield action: "Poor fellows, my heart yearned for them; as it seemed doubtful whether they would ever see

[17] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 267-68; *The American Friend* 6:38, 21 September 1899, 897-98; Pringle, *Quaker Conscience,* 30.

their families again, and more than all, if they were launched into a never-ending eternity, could I hope their end would be peace!"[18]

As illustrated by the example of William Shaw, supernatural intervention played a crucial role in many peace-hero narratives. Nonresistants frequently avoided the calamitous effects of warfare through timely, unexplainable phenomena which, in their minds, could be classified only as acts of God. On one occasion in the tense days before Gettysburg, such intervention manifested itself as a simple contractual agreement. Quaker Ebenezer Worth maintained a large farm near West Chester, Pennsylvania where those in the community knew him as "a man of uprightness, temperance, and purity of life." According to an 1889 article in *The Friend*, upon learning of the Confederate advance towards the Keystone State, Worth "covenanted with his Heavenly Father that if He would not permit the Rebel army to cross the Susquehanna River, he would devote the whole of his large crop of corn, then growing, to the benefit of the poor—a crop estimated to be worth $1200 to $1500." When the Confederates failed to cross the Susquehanna, Worth donated $1000 towards the benefit of Southern freedmen, and also purchased yarn to be used for socks and stockings for the poor. In the opinion of *The Friend*, this story demonstrated both the "power and goodness" of God and that "the prayer of the righteous man availeth much." [19]

In the same year of 1863, Quaker Samuel Brown repeatedly outmaneuvered injury and death. Brown, originally from Philadelphia, resided in Vicksburg, Mississippi during the war where he operated a drug business. Caroline Thomson, Brown's sister, described one example of her sibling's preservation in an 1881 letter: "…once while sitting on the second story balcony of

[18] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 202.
[19] *The Friend* 62:50, 13 July 1889, 396-97.

the store, dressed in white, or very light clothing, & the Sun shining on him, so that he could be seen at a distance, a ball was shot from the opposite side of the river and struck the wall and entered it one-and-a-half inches above his head." Later, Thomson remembered, a shell raced through Brown's house leaving a large hole about a foot from his bed before settling into the cellar without exploding. Finally, on an evening when Brown had fortuitously left his home, another shell entered his house and blew his bed to bits. Thomson attributed Brown's ongoing security to the hand of God: "My brother was a good, conscientious man, and we always felt that he was under his Heavenly Father's especial care, who not only preserved his life, but guarded him from evil." [20]

Supernatural agency also aided nonresistants in avoiding the draft. In his reminiscences of wartime in the Shenandoah Valley, R.J. Heatwole recalled the case of neighbor and fellow Mennonite Henry Brunk. A soldier from the area who was well-acquainted with Brunk attempted to hunt the Mennonite down and bring him into camp, but when an actual face-to-face encounter with Brunk occurred, the soldier experienced short-term blindness: "He knew Brunk well, but as he met him in the road one day his eyes were holden and he did not recognize him." In 1911, Heatwole continued to vouch for the veracity of the Brunk story: "Bro. Andrew Shenk of Missouri has this man [the Confederate soldier] now for a neighbor and took me to his house, and I heard him tell me the above, saying he never could understand why he didn't know Brunk that day, having always known him before!" For North Carolina Quaker Alfred Cook, writing about himself in the third-person, heavenly protection expressed itself in the form of divine premonitions: "(Cook) could always tell by his feelings when he was being hunted and would

[20] Letter from Caroline Thomson to William H.S. Wood, 1881. Box 2, Folder 3. William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

hide himself in the woods and says that he was not once deceived by his feelings and many times he would be impressed to leave the house when there was no evidence of any to disturb." One morning, while working in his field, "an impression" gripped Cook immediately, telling him he must leave. Cook had no sooner slipped "half soles" on his shoes when he heard his father say, "There they come." The encroaching Confederate troops shot and killed a neighbor of Cook's, but the Quaker slipped into the surrounding woods and successfully evaded conscription.[21]

In 1895, the book *Southern Heroes*, a lengthy description of the wartime sufferings of North Carolina Friends authored by Fernando Cartland, was published. In his preface, Cartland expressed his desire that the book be "an instrument in the hand of God to convince the minds of many of the reasonableness of peace and the unrighteousness of war." Similar in its intent as GAR collections of veteran narratives, *Southern Friends* functioned as a "diorama" of individual nonresistant wartime experience. In Cartland's work, some of the most amazing instances of supernatural intervention occurred among those nonresistants already confined within the military. Cartland included the first-person testimony of William B. Hockett, a Quaker conscript from Guilford County, North Carolina, who refused to pay a commutation fee, thus earning the disapprobation of his commanding officer. When Hockett refused to march in drill formation, an officer sought to trample the Friend with his horse, but an invisible hand appeared to hold the animal back: "An officer then swore he would ride over me, and made many efforts to do so, but failed, for his horse could not be made to step on me. At one time he carefully placed his foot between my arm and my side, without in the least injuring me." Another North Carolina Quaker, Isaiah Macon, silently endured the atrocities of one of the battles of Winchester. Before the

[21] *The Gospel Herald* 4:28, 12 October 1911, 445; Alfred Cook manuscript, c. 1881. Box 2, Folder 2 (Sufferings of Friends). William H.S. Wood Collection, 1860-1887. MS Coll. 1026. Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College. Haverford, Pennsylvania.

combat ever began, a Confederate officer uttered, "If Macon will not fight, put him in the front to stop bullets for those who will." Positioned at the front of the fighting, Macon witnessed "the fierce shouts and fearful oaths of the combatants around him," "the dreadful groans of wounded men and horses," and "the gaping wounds made by shell, shot and sword." In spite of the increasing carnage, Macon defied the prediction of his officer by stopping no bullets, as described by Cartland: "(Macon) seemed to possess a charmed life. His comrades fell all around him, their places being filled by others who wondered at the strange sight,---a man with plain citizen's dress, having neither pistol, sword, nor gun, and no military cap nor coat, calmly filling his place in battle line, but taking no part." Eventually, when Confederate troops retreated, Macon lay still on the ground, "preferring, doubtless, to fall in the hands of the Northern men rather than continue his connections with those who had so harshly treated him."[22]

In a tragic turn of events, Isaiah Macon died a few days after the aforementioned battle as a captive in Point Lookout prison. Cartland described Macon as "a remarkably sensitive lad" (a man so uncomfortable with "the sight of blood…that he would rather be excused from killing the fowls needed for his dinner") and attributed his death to "mental suffering caused by his being taken from his loved ones, and by the terrible scenes of battle." In Cartland's eyes, however, Macon's death only affirmed the efficacy of Providence: "No violent death was his; but a calm, peaceful passing away from scenes of strife and the noise of battle to the place prepared for him by the Prince of Peace." In another passage from *Southern Friends*, Cartland wrote, "In the experience of those Friends, and of others who were conscientious in their position in favor of peace, not only did (God) support them by his presence and power, but not one of all those who

[22] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* vi, 239, 192-93.

steadily refused to bear arms was permitted to come to a violent death." Such assumptions necessarily led to a reconstitution of the notion of martyrdom, a moving away from the more literal meaning of death for a cause towards a definition based on suffering for the sake of righteousness. As confirmation of the "peace sufferers" as holy exemplars, frequent comparisons were made between nonresistants and spiritual heroes from the Bible. William Shaw, during a period of intense suffering, identified with the Old Testament prophet Daniel: "I put up my cries and tears to Israel's unslumbering Shepherd, craving with much earnest entreaty, that He, who preserved Daniel in the lion's den, and the three Hebrew children in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, would arise for our deliverance." When William Hockett, trapped marching with troops to a military camp and wondering when his next meal would come, received a large loaf of bread thrown directly at him through a nearby window, he immediately called to mind "the Lord feeding Elijah by the use of a raven."[23]

The most obvious point of correspondence, however, between the suffering Civil War peace conscripts and hallowed figures of the Bible was Jesus himself. Within military encounter narratives, nonresistants found nothing blasphemous about describing their war experience in the language of metaphorical (or, as will be described later, physical) cross-bearing. Gazing back fifteen years to his experience as a Union conscript, William Shaw closed his wartime memories with the benediction, "All praise to Him that enabled me to *endure the cross* and despise the shame, to his glory." Peace reminiscences frequently appropriated the language and symbols of the life of Christ, particularly the Passion, to describe, differentiate, and consecrate the nonresistant wartime experience. Jesus also, however, played a vital role in military culture. First, there were the ongoing revivals, converting anywhere between 100,000 and 200,000 Union

[23] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 191-94, 143-44, 244; *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 202.

soldiers and over 100,000 Confederate soldiers. Historian Steven Woodworth refers to the Civil War as "a single large revival, approximately two and a half years long, occasionally interrupted by military operations." Secondly, Gardiner Shattuck Jr. notes the mid-nineteenth century belief that Christianity transformed soldiers into more effective fighters: "(faith) raised men above the fear of death and inspired in them 'the manhood that makes the soldier truly brave.'" This clash of Christological emphases, the peace church Jesus of patient suffering and the military Jesus of fighting martyrs, occurred frequently in nonresistant Civil War memory.[24]

"Cross endurance," as defined by William Shaw, took various forms throughout the Civil War peace narratives. At times, simply putting the teachings of Christ into practice defined one as a peace hero. Jesse Buckner, the former North Carolina militia colonel turned Quaker, offered the example of New Testament nonresistance *par excellence:* "…as on one occasion a man struck him, he actually turned the other cheek to be struck also; but the soldier's heart was not equal to giving a second blow." North Carolina Friend William Hare exemplified the Christian command to love one's enemies. During the war, in what Fernando Cartland termed "one of the most unprovoked cases of cruelty that could be imagined," Confederate ruffians dressed in military garb shot Hare in the back of the head after taking money from him. Initially left for dead, Hare later fully recovered and, at the time of Cartland's writing, still sought to model the Christian example of mercy: "…(Hare) still lives, occasionally meeting those men [Hare's

[24] *The Friend* 53:26, 7 February 1880, 202 (emphasis mine); Steven E. Woodworth, *While God Is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 253; Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 15, 23, 92, 96.

would-be assassins] on the streets of a neighboring town; but he declines to tell who they are, and says he tries to forgive them."[25]

Sensing impending suffering or death, peace conscripts often experienced their own "Gethsemane moment," a period of wrestling with God and his will before ultimately choosing submission. Quaker draftee Cyrus Pringle remembered his feelings of acute isolation, both from those at home and from God himself: "…doubts and fears and forebodings seized me. I was alone, seeking a resting-place and finding none. It seemed as if God had forsaken me in this dark hour; and the Tempter whispered, that after all I might be only the victim of a delusion." The next morning, however, found Pringle with a changed heart and attitude: "…I enjoy peace, and feel as though I could face anything. Though I am as a lamb in the shambles, yet do I cry, 'Thy will be done,' and can indeed say, 'Passive to his holy will/Trust I in my Master still/Even though he slay me.'" When told that he would likely be shot that evening or the next morning, North Carolina Friend William Hockett offered up an impassioned prayer which bore more than a passing resemblance to Christ's moment of agony and apprehension preceding the Crucifixion: "O Lord, my Heavenly Father, my prayer is that Thy name may be glorified and not my will be done. But if it be Thy will that I should lay down my life …take away the fear of man, and leave me not in the hour of trial, but support me by Thy arm of power…O God, here am I. My heart is resigned. Come life, come death, Thy will be done, not mine." Their close resemblance to the words of Scripture notwithstanding, these remembrances replicated the experience of the Civil War soldier as much as Christ himself. In a biography of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., scholar G. Edward White characterizes war as "a particularly fertile breeding ground for heroism…an environment in which one could affirm what it meant to live all the more fully, because one was

[25] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 148, 368.

continually facing death." For postwar nonresistants, Christian soldiers such as Cyrus Pringle and William Hockett stared the starkness of death square in the face, yet emerged as authentic spiritual heroes resigned to the will of the Savior.[26]

Some conscripts avoided the metaphorical cup of suffering and death by uttering the words of Christ himself. On June 24, 1863 William Hockett refused to march and drill with his company, prompting one Colonel Kirkland to order his troops back eight paces. After Kirkland gave the three commands "Load," "Present arms," and "Aim," Hockett raised his hands and prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Fernando Cartland recorded the reaction in the pages of *Southern Heroes*: "Not a gun was fired. They lowered them without orders, and some of the men were heard to say that they 'could not shoot such a man.' The order was then given, 'Ground arms.'" Another North Carolina Friend, Seth Loughlin, repeated Hockett's tactic and gained the same result. Accused of insubordination for refusing to fight, Loughlin was placed in front of twelve soldiers. Six men aimed guns with bullets at Loughlin, while the other six held unloaded guns. Loughlin's entreaty, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," sent a ripple of sympathy (and, perhaps, guilt) throughout the camp: "Each man…lowered his gun, and they resolutely declared that they would not shoot such a man, thereby braving the result of disobeying military orders…He who holdeth our lives in his hand melted the hearts of the officers as well, and the sentence was revoked." After serving time in prison, Loughlin died as a result of chronic diarrhea in a Richmond, Virginia hospital in December 1864. The Marlboro Monthly Meeting of Randolph County, North Carolina (where Loughlin held his Quaker membership) composed a memorial in honor of Loughlin expressing

[26] Pringle, *Quaker Conscience,* 66; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 238; G. Edward White, *Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: Law and the Inner Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 83.

the disruption the Civil War had effected to the cherished Christian tradition of *ars moriendi*, the act of dying surrounded by close family and friends*:* "He died amongst strangers, far from his home, no kind friend being near to soothe him, or to comfort, or to hear his last words." A fellow Friend who observed Loughlin's sufferings created his own tribute to the fallen Quaker entitled "The Sacrifice," an ode which differentiated Loughlin's imitation of Christ from the forces of evil prolonging his confinement:

> Aye, on the idol's altar slain a spotless victim lies,
> Whose spirit heathen tortures failed to tempt from yonder skies—
> A sacrifice to thirst for blood, to Moloch and to Mars,
> To passion wild, ambition curst, to slavery and wars!
> But whether in the prison's gloom, or freedom's palaces,
> With Christian hope, so sweet and sure, may our last end, like his
> Be underneath the cross—and washed in streams that ever flow
> Out from the Lamb's devoted side, our souls be pure as snow![27]

If William Hockett and Seth Loughlin repeated the words of Christ, other nonresistants replicated the physical sufferings of Christ. North Carolina Friends objected to the "blasphemous" treatment of Jesse Hockett, a Quaker conscript forced by his Confederate captain to march through town with a wooden cross tied to his back. Hockett's persecution for standing true to peace made him "a gazing stock by reproaches and afflictions." Solomon Frazier of Randolph County, North Carolina joined the Friends too late to fall under Confederate exemption requirements. In December 1864, soldiers arrested Frazier, threw him into Salisbury prison, and subjected him to punishments of gagging, piercing with a bayonet, and "bucking down," an infliction where an individual in a stooping position had his wrists tied in front of the knees while a pole was placed between the elbows and knees. When these measures failed to move Frazier to fight, the captain then ordered another humiliating, yet ultimately heroic

[27] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 239, 211-13; *The Southern Friend* 1:22, 15 February 1866, 171-72. For more on the Civil War's challenge to the "Good Death" tradition, see Faust, *Republic of Suffering,* 3-31.

punishment: "As if determined to exhaust every means of punishment, they tied (Frazier's) arms to a beam fastened to a post, like a cross, and raised him upon it in imitation of the Christ for whom he suffered." As the captain spat and swore at Frazier, the young Quaker responded, "If it is thy duty to inflict this punishment upon me, do it cheerfully; don't get angry about it." The exasperated captain relented, saying to his men "If any of you can make him fight, do it; I cannot." Almost three decades after his release from Salisbury, Frazier took delight in his service for the cause of peace and rejoiced "that he did what he could to hasten the day when the sword shall be beaten into the plowshare and the spear into the pruning-hook."[28]

The use of the cross as physical and mental punishment appears curious in a mid-nineteenth century American context. Both a pervasive Protestant culture outside the battlefields and reported revival within the camps make accounts of soldiers' unwillingness to persecute those nonresistants repeating Jesus' words more plausible than those of peace heroes placed on a cross. If true, were the experiences of Jesse Hockett and Solomon Frazier attributable to aberrations, profane exceptions to a military culture with an at least nominally Christian influence? Or was this literary fabrication? Judging the historical reliability of such narratives lies outside the scope of this study, but some observations can be helpful about the power of the cross in establishing postwar memory. In his classic study of World War I memory, Paul Fussell speaks of "crucifixion myths" circulating after the Great War. The most popular version of this tale involved a Canadian soldier tied to a cross and murdered by German captors with bayonets substituting for Roman nails. For Fussell, this imagery proved crucial in establishing the sainthood of the sufferer and the demonization of the foe. Former soldiers used the cross, in Fussell's words, as both "symbolic of their own suffering and sacrifice" and "propaganda…an

[28] North Carolina Yearly Meeting, *Sufferings of Friends,* 12, 20; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 203-04.

instrument of hate." One can see the same objectives in the peace narratives, although "instrument of opposition" may be preferable to "instrument of hate." To nonresistants, peace heroes more literally bore the burden experienced by the Prince of Peace himself than those who professed Jesus, yet fought. In a culture where both combatants and noncombatants shared knowledge of and reverence for the Crucifixion, nonresistant Civil War memory demarcated their brand of heroic Christianity from army Christianity. [29]

A blatant example of wartime memory borrowing the language of the Eucharist can be found in Fernando Cartland's treatment of the experience of Jesse Milton Blair. In December 1864, Confederate troops arrested Blair, a Quaker neighbor of Solomon Frazier, and transported him from his North Carolina home to a company stationed near Petersburg, Virginia. After Blair refused to bear arms, a soldier pierced Blair in the side with a bayonet, an image provoking comparison to the sword in the side of Christ. Later, the commanding officer ordered Blair to remove his clothes, a proposition which the modest Friend found unsettling. The officer then informed Blair, "Now you must take one hundred lashes on your bare back or fight." Those performing the punishment gathered together one hundred switches, a different switch for each stroke. In a scene reminiscent of the flogging of Jesus on the road to Calvary, Blair withstood the whippings: "Jesse tried to keep account of the strokes as they fell heavily on his back, but the suffering became so severe that he was unable to do so." This cruel torture produced a broken body and shed blood: "…as he was untied Jesse reached his hand behind him, finding the flesh badly cut and the blood flowing freely down his body." In imagery combining the militaristic and the Christological, Cartland held Blair up as an authentic spiritual hero: "(Blair) recognized the authority of no other captain save Jesus Christ…Jesse had enlisted under the banner of the

[29] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 117-20.

Prince of Peace, and would not turn traitor nor renounce his Master's cause—no, not for his life."[30]

While New Testament motifs of forgiveness and righteous suffering dominated the peace church narratives, Old Testament understandings of heavenly operations also worked their way into wartime memory. Frequently, divine retribution visited those who dared challenge the peace heroes and the cause they espoused. Fernando Cartland boasted that no North Carolina Quakers died violent deaths as a result of the war, but the same could not be said of the managers of Andersonville, the notorious Confederate prison in southwest Georgia which served as the traumatic site of incarceration for several Friends. John H. Winder, the Confederate Brigadier-General in "full charge and control" of Andersonville, collapsed on a January day in 1865, "struck dead by the hand of God" in return for his inhumane treatment of prisoners, according to Cartland. That same year, one of Winder's most trusted associates, Captain Henry Wirz, gained the opprobrium of being the only Civil War military official executed for committing "war crimes." Cartland included a lengthy section of an 1864 report filed by Confederate authorities detailing the deplorable conditions at Andersonville in order to verify that no anti-Southern bias was coloring his depictions: "We have no wish to reflect unkindly upon any, but honestly to record the facts pertaining to the subject before us, and in some degree to give the reader an impartial account of the work and results of the war." [31]

Other foes of the peace cause also encountered providential vengeance. During the winter of 1863-64, Confederate troops captured Thomas Kennedy, a Quaker known for his outspoken abolitionist and anti-secessionist beliefs, near his Goldsboro, North Carolina home. Upon

[30] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 204-07.
[31] Ibid., 154-63. For more on Andersonville, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 796-99.

arriving at camp, the elderly Kennedy suffered a vicious blow to the mouth from the fist of Daniel Gurley, a local slave-driver and nemesis of Kennedy employed by the Confederacy. If Kennedy suffered temporary pain, however, God dealt Gurley a more lasting hardship: "Only a little later Daniel Gurley was struck dumb by the hand of God, and so remained the rest of his miserable life, which was but a few years. 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.'" In comparison to others, Gurley seemed fortunate to escape with the loss of his voice. General Daniel of the Confederacy informed Quaker conscripts and brothers Himelius and Jesse Hockett that he would not require them to fight in the next battle, but that he would place them at the front in order to preserve those loyal to the "Southern cause." The Hockett brothers told General Daniel they preferred to suffer wrong rather than do wrong, and Providence apparently issued its verdict in favor of the Quaker siblings. In the words of Himelius Hockett himself, "General Daniel was soon ordered to assist General Lee, and before the time came for us to act as 'breastworks to stop bullets' he was killed in battle." Divine retribution, however, not only awaited those outsiders hostile to the peace cause, but also confronted those within the peace community who abandoned foundational principles. Isaac Harvey constituted the lone example (if Fernando Cartland was correct) of a Southern Friend abandoning his faith and fighting for the Confederacy: "(Harvey) yielded to the demands made by the authorities, accepted the bounty money and military equipments, and, trusting in carnal weapons rather than in the mighty weapons of the soldier of Jesus Christ, he entered the ranks of the Confederate army." Not surprisingly, Harvey's life came to a sudden, violent end: "Soon afterwards he entered a battle. He was one of the first, if not the first, to be killed." [32]

[32] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 384-89, 268-69, 223,

Those military personnel fortunate enough to evade the wrath of God still found themselves chided by peace authors for their lack of spiritual knowledge. Nonresistants distinguished what they considered to be their authentic Christianity from an antiquated Old Testament mindset which freely sanctioned warfare. Cyrus Pringle remembered sharing his peace principles with a Major who seemed more intent on "bullying… rather than arguing." The Major told Pringle, "I make some pretension to religion myself," and then "quoted the Old Testament freely in support of war." While in camp, Himelius Hockett entered into a spirited debate with a man certain that the Bible permitted, or even encouraged, warfare. In his defense, the man pointed to David, "…a man after God's own heart, and…a great warrior, for while Saul slew his thousands, David slew his tens of thousands, and destroyed his enemies by force of arms." Hockett countered with an argument for progressive revelation, noting that "the Bible was full of prophecies pointing to the advent of Christ as the Prince of Peace" and that the command "Resist not evil" superseded the old injunction "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Misunderstandings surrounding peace church origins exasperated nonresistants as much as faulty Biblical interpretation. Himelius Hockett could not believe the theological and historical ignorance of a judge-advocate who was certain that William Penn fought the Indians. Telling the official he had been "grossly misinformed," Hockett offered the judge-advocate a succinct history of the founder of his faith: "… (Penn) resorted to no carnal weapons, but overcame his enemies by the spirit that overcomes evil with good." With their commitment to the "good and correct" reading of Christianity, peace churches continually faced the temptation of spiritual smugness. Cyrus Pringle spoke glowingly of Major J.B. Gould of the 13th Massachusetts and appreciated his "pure kindness," "self-control," and "good humour." Even with these virtues present, however, Pringle noticed the deficiencies of Gould's personal faith relative to his own:

"As Congregationalist (Major Gould) well knew the courts of the temple, but the Holy of Holies he had never seen, and knew nothing of its secrets. He understood expediency, but is not the man to 'lay down his life for my sake.'" Again, the Friends positioned their own faith against "army Christianity" with its "mental" acknowledgment of Christ, rejection of Christian love, and outmoded endorsement of violence waged in the name of God.[33]

While Major J.B. Gould acknowledged himself to be a Congregationalist Christian, other officers affirmed the incompatibility of religion and military life. Once conscription began in earnest in 1861, a number of young male Quakers (between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five) from the Holly Spring meetinghouse reported to officials in nearby Ashboro, North Carolina to make a plea for exemption. After the Friends recited their objections to fighting, however, one Confederate officer informed them that "…the army was no place for religion; that the military authorities had nothing to do with that question. They wanted men to fight the Yankees, and men they must have." When brothers Jesse and Himelius Hockett refused to drill or take a gun, the colonel of the company chastised their beliefs by replying that "…it was no time for religious scruples…that it was the duty of every man alike to aid in the defense of his country and property, that it would be time enough for people to embrace such a religion as they pleased when the war was over." The cool composure of the Quaker brothers galled another Confederate officer. Seeking to deflate any pretenses the Hocketts may have had of imitating Jesus, the officer dismissively asked, "I reckon you think you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, don't

[33] Pringle, *Quaker Conscience,* 42, 51-52; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 278-79, 272; *The Friend* 74:34, 9 March 1901, 265.

you?" Using a shopworn scriptural reference, Himelius Hockett concluded that reasoning with such men was tantamount to "casting pearls before swine."[34]

Their differences and hostilities aside, both nonresistants and high-ranking military officials believed that the Christian faith, as understood and practiced by the peace churches, contradicted the ideals of the military establishment. No nonresistant made this assertion more forcefully than Tilghman Vestal, a Quaker from Columbia, Tennessee who came closer to national celebrity than any other Civil War-era "peace hero." Vestal's narrative combined the Christian motif of patient endurance through intense physical suffering with an impassioned defense of religious belief in its opposition to militaristic nationalism. In September 1864, as the war still lumbered on, one of Vestal's fellow Friends, Judith Crenshaw, wrote the young man, "…if thee is spared to see the close of the strife now raging in our midst, and to hold out faithfully in support of our Christian testimonies to the end it seems to me that would seem a…favorable if not a more consistent time to publish to the world an account of thyself." Crenshaw's words proved prescient as Vestal's published account indeed circulated throughout the country in the early 1870s. Originally published in the *Nashville Banner*, under the title "Vestal's Grit: The Tennessee Quaker Who Refused to Fight in the Late War," Vestal's story later appeared in newspapers in locales such as San Francisco, Hartford, and Macon, Georgia and created Vestal's reputation as the quintessential Christian soldier of the peace cause. [35]

[34] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 180, 254-55, 257.

[35] Letter from Judith A. Crenshaw to Tilghman Vestal, 10 September 1864 (Document J29). Tilghman Vestal Documents, John B. Crenshaw Papers, 1861-1865. Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College. Greensboro, North Carolina. The appearance of "Vestal's Grit" in the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* (2 October 1873), the *Hartford Daily Courant* (28 October 1873), and the *Georgia (Macon) Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger* (7 October 1873) was confirmed by conducting searches in the *America's Historical Newspapers, 1690-1922* and *19th Century U.S. Newspapers, 1800-1899* databases. For a recent concise and well-illustrated review of Vestal's wartime experience, see Stephen T. Rogers, "Tilghman Vestal: Tennessee Potter and Civil War Conscientious Objector," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 69 (Spring 2010): 2-17.

"Vestal's Grit" was the rare exception of a "military encounter" narrative not originally written by a peace church member or an author with obvious peace sympathies. Fernando Cartland credited George Maney, a Confederate Brigadier-General during the war, with writing the popular article. In a brief preface, the *Banner* noted that Maney's stature as "a prominent citizen of this State," "a leading member of the bar," and "an ex-Judge Advocate and officer of the Confederate States Army" lent credibility to his narration of "one of the most interesting and curious events of the late War." The story began when Vestal reported to General Braxton Bragg's headquarters in Chattanooga in July 1863. Assigned to the 4th Tennessee Regiment, Vestal refused to fight, hire a substitute, pay the $500 exemption fee, or engage in any activity which would possibly be construed as military duty. The regimental chaplain confronted Vestal with the argument "I wouldn't give a cent for a religion that is opposed to my country," but Vestal promptly replied, "I wouldn't give a cent for a country that is opposed to my religion." The young Quaker (then eighteen years old) admitted that he could raise the requisite $500 with little effort, but principle prevented him from doing so: "…suppose I pay the Confederate Government $500, that will enable them to employ someone else to fight, and it will be equivalent to my hiring another man to do what I think it wrong to do myself." When presented with the opportunity to perform alternative service in lieu of fighting, Vestal again demurred, "I regard it my duty to do all I can for the sick and afflicted in either army, but if I were to take the position of nurse in a hospital, I would thereby occupy the place of some other man who would go out and fight." Through all the subsequent exchanges, eyewitness Maney found Vestal to be "as firm and inflexible as the everlasting hills," and even conceded, "It was the sublimest exhibition of moral courage I had ever witnessed." [36]

[36] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 326; *Herald of Truth* 10:12, December 1873, 195-96. In Vestal's diary, the exchange

Confederate officials directed various appeals towards Vestal, but all failed. When Vestal confessed that he had cried upon telling his mother goodbye, one officer believed that the obligation of familial expectations would induce Vestal to fight: "…if your mother were here now, and could see how you are situated, she would tell you to take your gun and go out and do your duty as a soldier." Privileging his faith over his national identity, Vestal explained that he was indeed following maternal wishes: "No, sir, the last thing my mother said to me was to be true to my religion, and *I mean to do it.*" Henry S. Foote, former governor of Mississippi and wartime representative of the Nashville District in the Confederate Congress, happened to be in camp at the time to solicit soldiers' votes for an upcoming election. When he heard about the curious Quaker in his midst, Foote felt certain that Vestal's sense of manliness (and, perhaps, Southern chivalry) would compel him to fight. Maney recalled the conversation:

> Foote: What, young man, won't you fight? You are a stout, good-looking young man. Is it true you refuse to fight?
> Vestal: Yes, sir.
> Foote: Why, you are all wrong about that. Suppose you were to marry a beautiful young lady, and some ruffian were to come into your house and grossly insult her, wouldn't you kill him?
> Vestal: No, sir.
> Foote (jumping up from his seat in an excited manner): Why, God damn him, I'd kill him in a minute.

After Foote regained his composure, in one last botched attempt to coerce Vestal into fighting, the Confederate congressman invoked the authority of historical precedent, an intellectual strategy which proved ultimately embarrassing:

> Foote: Young man, you are all wrong about this matter, even from a Scriptural standpoint.

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between Vestal and the chaplain is slightly lengthier. According to this rendering, the chaplain said, "I have but little use for a religion that does not coincide with a good, sound, republican government," to which Vestal replied, "I have but little use for a government that does not coincide with a good, sound, Bible-founded religion. You make the religion bend to the government, I am one of those who gives religion the preference when there is conflict between it and the government." Tilghman Vestal Diary, 1862-1865 (Part I), 28-29. Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College. Greensboro, North Carolina.

> When Christ was upon earth he directed his disciples to pay tribute to Caesar. The money thus paid went into the Roman treasury, and was used in carrying on the wars of the Roman people.
> Vestal: No, sir; you are mistaken about that. The Temple of Janus was closed at that time, and there were no wars going on.
> Foote: I believe he knows more about it than I do. I don't know whether the Temple of Janus was closed then or not.[37]

If Vestal won the battle of knowledge of historical antiquity, however, he lost the war for immediate freedom. Confederate officials sent Vestal off to Knoxville and then to Orange Court House, Virginia, where he was reassigned. The Brigadier General of Vestal's new regiment favored physical compulsion over emotional or intellectual persuasion, and ordered Vestal to be bayoneted for refusing to follow orders. The Tennessee Quaker thus joined the ranks of other peace heroes who corporeally reenacted the Passion within the context of conscription. Vestal's stand of suffering impressed more than a few onlookers, according to George Maney: "He bore it with the spirit of a martyr, and the soldiers, seeing that he would die willingly in preference to sacrificing his principles, refused further to punish him. No punishment, no threats, could shake the settled purpose of his soul for a moment." Fernando Cartland offered his own tribute to Vestal in the pages of *Southern Heroes:* "Seventeen times the resolute soldiers of the army pierced the unresisting soldier of Jesus Christ, and each time they met with a refusal to accede to their demands. Some of the wounds were deep, but the heroic sufferer was the victor." When General Henry Walker gave an order for Vestal to be bayoneted more, soldiers revolted, even threatening to whip Walker if he dared mistreat Vestal. After subsequent confinements in the notorious Castle Thunder in Richmond and Salisbury Prison in North Carolina, Vestal gained his

[37] *Herald of Truth* 10:12, December 1873, 196; *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin,* 2 October 1873.

freedom on March 16, 1864 after agreeing to work for a Richmond, Virginia potter holding no government contracts.[38]

After the war, Vestal spent most of his remaining years in Fall River, Massachusetts residing in relative obscurity. The onetime conscript occasionally taught, fathered twelve children, and obtained a patent for a mode of "taking off and putting on wagon bodies" before his death in the 1920s. In 1900, however, as American soldiers battled Filipino revolutionaries, *The American Friend* sought to resuscitate the reputation of Vestal by reprinting the original "Vestal's Grit" article. Hailing Vestal as a "hero of peace," an introduction to the reprint challenged the conception of heroism rooted in military might: "In these latter days, after 1900 years of so-called Christian civilization, we find 'the man behind the gun' exalted to be the hero of the hour, the ideal held up to the youth of the land by pulpit, press and rostrum." In a swipe at imperialist rationales for the Philippine War (providing Filipino "uplift," proving American manhood, increasing trade, etc.), *The American Friend* denounced the "good to come" argument used to initiate and promote warfare, calling it the same tactic "used by Catholic and Protestant to excuse all the cruelties which have been committed in the name of religion." The Tilghman Vestal story, however, provided the nation with an alternate model of "muscular spirituality": "The narrative which follows talks of another sort of hero; of one who, though only a boy, had faith enough to believe that the precepts of Christ and his apostles were practicable, and courage enough to follow their example." Without benefit of a statue built or poem composed in his honor, Tilghman Vestal thus became the most decorated Civil War veteran of the Friends, a

[38] Ibid., 196-97; Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 316-19; Tilghman Vestal Diary (Part I), 44-48.

valiant soldier and articulate apologist for the peace cause whose example gained new relevance in the jingoistic climate of the early-twentieth century.[39]

Newspapers throughout the nation circulated the exploits of nonresistant men such as Tilghman Vestal, but peace church chroniclers also committed the Civil War "military encounter" narratives of women to print. The literary accounts of female peace heroes lacked both the theologically imitative physical suffering of their male counterparts and the designation "Christian soldier," but such remembrances still valued the courage and resolve shown when confronting members of the military establishment. In defending their homes and families, their distinctive religious way of life, and their gender, female peace heroes showed that "turning the other cheek" did not automatically translate into passive docility. A writer in the *Herald of Truth* told of a Mennonite woman from the Shenandoah Valley left to fend for herself and her three young children after Confederate troops dragged away the woman's husband as a draftee. Household resources dwindled until only enough flour was left for three loaves of bread. The inviting smell of baking bread attracted nearby famished Confederate soldiers. While the Mennonite sister felt enough pity for the hungry troops to part with two of the loaves, she insisted that the third be left for her and her children. When one desperate soldier seized the final loaf by force, the woman lunged straight for his conscience: "…before he went out of the house she wished him to do her a favor. Her husband, she said, was gone, and might be dead; she had nothing to live upon; and she told him to kill her and her children, and then he might take the loaf." The startled soldier placed the loaf of bread down, and departed. Much like Seth Loughlin,

[39] Rogers, "Tilghman Vestal," 14; *American Friend* 7:26, 28 June 1900, 615. For a helpful summary of arguments for and against American military involvement in the Philippine War, see Hoganson, *American Manhood,* 133-79.

who dared utter "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" in front of a firing squad, the unnamed Mennonite sister disarmed hostile soldiers with her conviction and tenacity.[40]

Another female nonresistant cogently objected to the disparaging behavior of a male military official. *Southern Heroes* spun the story of a Confederate officer who demanded the horse of a Quaker woman living near Winchester, Virginia. Facing down a revolver pointed in her face, the Quaker woman challenged both the officer's manliness and his Southern identity: "I cannot be robbed of many years. Shoot if that is the way with you Southern gentlemen, who so boast of your chivalry." The officer rode off, Fernando Cartland reported, without the desired horse. Those within the military hierarchy could not fail to notice the valor of female nonresistants. One of the most prominent Union generals, Philip Sheridan, confessed to some trepidation about dealing with peace church women. Elizabeth Comstock (previously discussed in chapter 3 regarding her meeting with Abraham Lincoln) and five other female Friends arrived in Winchester in October, 1864 with the innocuous intent of conducting a hospital ministry for the region's many sick and dying soldiers. At the sight of these women and their "old-fashioned long bonnets," however, Sheridan nervously asked an aide, "What do those women want? Have they come here to lecture me?" Having been apprised of the intention of the women, Sheridan relaxed, but admitted "Well, I am relieved, for their appearance frightened me more than all the enemy in front, for I knew what to do with them, but this army of Quaker women I did not know how to meet." Sheridan would soon learn, however, that female Friends could be helpful in accomplishing his desired military objectives.[41]

[40] *Herald of Truth* 24:20, 15 October 1887, 306.
[41] Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* 337, 343-44.

The narrative of General Philip Sheridan's encounter with Rebecca Wright, a Quaker schoolteacher from Winchester, Virginia known for her strong Unionist sympathies, added elements of intrigue to the standard peace church motif of devotion to principle under duress. On the evening of September 14, 1864, while visiting Wright and her sister Hannah, a family acquaintance and recuperating Southern soldier spoke in detail of the weakened state of Confederate forces. Two days later, as Wright sat alone in her classroom during noon recess, an "intelligent-looking Negro" opened the door, asked for "Miss Wright, the Unionist," and informed the teacher that he had come bearing a message from General Sheridan. The speechless Quaker woman then watched as the messenger removed a ball of tin foil from his mouth containing the following communique:

> I learn from Major General Crook that you are a loyal lady and still love the old Flag. Can you inform me of General Early and his forces, the number of his divisions, or expected intentions? Have any more troops arrived from Richmond, or are any more coming, or reported to be coming? I am very respectfully your most obedient servant, P.H. Sheridan, Major General Commanding. You can trust the bearer.

Still in a state of apprehension, Wright nevertheless complied with the general's request and wrote, "I do not know how the troops are situated, but the force is much smaller than represented. I will take pleasure hereafter in learning all I can of their strength and position, and the bearer may call again. Very respectfully yours." This information, sparse as it appeared on the surface, satisfied Sheridan.[42]

Whether she realized it at the time or not, Wright had given Sheridan the vital disclosure that both a Confederate division of infantry and a battalion of artillery had vacated the Winchester area in order to fight alongside General Robert E. Lee. Two days after receiving the

[42] Joint Committee of Hopewell Friends, assisted by John W. Wayland, *Hopewell Friends History, 1734-1934, Frederick County, Virginia* (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1936), 135-36; Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, Volume II* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1888), 6.

curious message and messenger, Wright witnessed firsthand the fruition of her revelations: "…before daybreak (on the morning of September 19) the roar of cannon was heard, and the following day was one of suspense and anxiety, but finally looking out from the garret window she spied the Union flag flying and coming into Winchester." In January 1867, Sheridan rewarded Wright with a chain, a breast-pin, and an inscribed gold watch in return for her act of Union service. The watch and the ensuing publicity, however, aroused community resentment and prompted Wright to move to Philadelphia. According to Quaker sources, during the first term of the Grant administration, Wright wrote Sheridan a letter detailing her recent hardships. The ex-general responded by landing Wright a lucrative position within the Treasury Department in Washington, an appointment kept by Wright until her death in 1914.[43]

The story of Rebecca Wright received corroboration from Philip Sheridan himself. In his personal memoirs, published in 1888, Sheridan devoted considerable space to describing the Unionist reputation of Wright, the espionage involved in including her in military operations, and the subsequent benefits of Wright's inside information to the progress of the Union army. Sheridan praised the Quaker teacher for her bravery in passing along the valuable intelligence: "On reading my communication Miss Wright was much startled by the perils it involved, and hesitatingly consulted her mother, but her devoted loyalty soon silenced every other consideration, and the brave girl resolved to comply with my request, notwithstanding it might jeopardize her life." The Union general's tone, however, turned more self-congratulatory when describing a meeting he held with General Grant on the evening of September 16: "I went over the situation very thoroughly, and pointed out with so much confidence the chances of a complete victory…that he (Grant) fell in with the plan at once, authorized me to resume the

[43] Hopewell Friends, *Hopewell Friends History,* 136.

offensive, and to attack Early as soon as I deemed it most propitious to do so…my knowledge of the situation striking him as being so much more accurate than his own." After securing victory at Winchester, Sheridan finally introduced himself in person to Rebecca Wright, "…the woman who had contributed so much to our success, and on a desk in her schoolroom wrote the dispatch announcing that we had sent Early's army whirling up the valley." Her contributions to Union victory notwithstanding, gendered assumptions found in both the military and nonresistant mindsets prevented the recognition of Rebecca Wright as "soldier-hero." In the eyes of Philip Sheridan, Rebecca Wright placed her life in peril as any good soldier would, but because pure military activity fell outside the purview of women, Wright remained at best a "brave girl" or at worst a pawn, an unsuspecting member of the "old-fashioned long bonnet" crowd used to further the general's military success and personal reputation. From the peace church perspective, postbellum authors measured Civil War heroism in terms of quiet yet bold defiance, protests frequently made in bodily form against the sin of warfare. While exhibiting commitment to the cause of the Union, Wright's actions contributed to military victory, thus compromising her peace (and therefore Christian) witness. By accommodating rather than confronting a high-ranking member of the military establishment, Rebecca Wright could not hope to earn the title of Christian soldier, a designation in any case typically reserved for nonresistant men.[44]

The military rank of Philip Sheridan entitled him to more power than the overwhelming majority of soldiers and civilians living during the Civil War years, and his wartime memoirs (two volumes containing just over nine hundred and fifty pages of text) weigh considerably more than the reminiscences of many other Civil War participants and observers. In his desire to preserve an individual narrative of wartime experience, however, Sheridan was no different from

[44] Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs II,* 2-9, 29.

countless thousands of others who lived through the troubling years from 1861 to 1865. The quest to record for prosperity an account of one's personal victories and ordeals throughout the war extended well beyond only those who fought. The Civil War was a pivotal historical moment for the peace churches, and nonresistants sought to recover the "high and dangerous action" faced by that generation within their own Civil War memory. In their "military encounter" narratives, the peace churches differentiated their own wartime heroes from the officers and soldiers of the war, yet personal peace war sketches described the Civil War experience in language a Christian military veteran would use: the fortitude to withstand one's enemies through strength granted by God, the ability to endure physical suffering and deprivation as a mark of personal faith and courage, and, in rare instances such as Seth Loughlin and Isaiah Macon, admiration for those who made the ultimate Christian sacrifice by laying down their life. Nonresistants saw these experiences as acts of soldierly bravery, a peace-respecting version of "seeing the elephant" or, in the words of Stephen Crane's literary protagonist Henry Fleming, "going into the blaze." While Quaker remembrance celebrated a large group of diverse heroes in both the North and South, however, Brethren wartime memory coalesced around the figure of John Kline, a pastor and denominational leader murdered near his Shenandoah Valley home in the summer of 1864. The story of Kline and the postwar lore surrounding him drew a sharper line between heroism and martyrdom, and raised the adulation of peace heroes to new hagiographic levels.[45]

[45] White, *Oliver Wendell Holmes,* 82; Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage,* edited with an introduction and notes by Gary Scharnhorst (New York: Penguin, 2005), 13.

Chapter Five, 'Living and Moving Amongst Us Again': John Kline and Civil War Martyrdom

In a December 1894 issue of *The Herald of Truth*, Mennonite readers found an article entitled "Heroes and Martyrs." While not specifically addressing the Civil War, the piece held special relevance for the wave of wartime remembrance sweeping through the historic peace churches during the late-nineteenth century. The author, one J.A. Ressler, suggested that heroes were nascent martyrs: "All true martyrs are heroes…Nearly every hero must sacrifice so much of self to his cause that his sufferings may well be called martyrdom." Both heroes and martyrs possessed sterling character and a sacrificial spirit: "The hero is one who in the face of dangers gives himself to a noble cause and succeeds. The martyr is one who takes a stand against popular opinion and by so doing sacrifices life, liberty, or property." Lest his readers should conflate the two individuals, however, Ressler argued, "The hero presses his work by his own personal effort; but it is often the case that the martyr, by his death or suppression, helps his cause a thousand fold more than he could by personal exertion." In his closing remarks, Ressler confirmed that, for Christians, martyrdom was the ultimate realization of an always-desired heroism: "Strive to be a hero. If the world neglects you, remember that you can be a hero whether the world knows it or not. And if the world hate you sufficiently to make a martyr of you, thank God for the privilege." Ressler's conclusion appeared far-flung. On the surface, at least, late nineteenth-century America bore no resemblance to an age of martyrs, and certainly sufficient hate did not exist to cause groups such as Mennonites to fear for their lives.[1]

[1] *Herald of Truth* 31:23, 1 December 1894, 356.

Throughout the long period of church history, martyrdom has been a conceptually fluid category. Medieval scholar Brad Gregory, for example, points to the Late Middle Ages as an era when "the patient endurance of suffering" replaced dying for the faith as the essential prerequisite for martyrdom. Transferring Gregory's understanding to nonresistants of the Civil War era, one finds no shortage of martyrs. As patient sufferers, many peace church members lost property, others watched as the state deprived them of basic liberties, and some carried scars as remnants of physical torment on their bodies for their life duration. A few did not live to see the end of the war. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Quaker authors such as Fernando Cartland classified southern Quakers Seth Loughlin and Isaiah Macon as martyrs, "good soldiers" whose deaths advanced the Christian cause of peace. Loughlin died of dysentery and mental anguish claimed the life of Macon, but the argument was easily made that the Civil War, at least indirectly, took the lives of these two young men. With the additional defense offered by Cartland that no Quaker died a violent wartime death, Friends could celebrate the gallantry of Loughlin and Macon in dying for their principles and, at the same time, demonstrate a special form of divine protection for those espousing the peace viewpoint. Brethren, on the other hand, claimed a more literal martyr in John Kline, a minister and evangelist shot and killed by Confederate bushwhackers near his Rockingham County, Virginia home in June 1864. In the five decades after his death, Kline became the patron saint, in the truest sense of the word, of Brethren Civil War memory. The remembrance of Kline's life, his spiritual reputation along with his cultural and political example, guided Brethren as they sought to position themselves within American life in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. But it was Kline's death

which, in Brethren eyes, elevated him beyond the status of hero and proved that Christian martyrdom could and did occur on American soil.[2]

Although Brethren recognized John Kline as the preeminent Civil War martyr, other Brethren suffered violent wartime deaths. John A. Bowman (1813-1863) lived and ministered in Sullivan County, Tennessee where his "more than ordinary" oratorical abilities made him a highly-esteemed preacher and a ubiquitous figure presiding at countless local weddings and funerals. On September 8, 1863, several men wearing the uniforms of Confederate soldiers entered Bowman's barn, located near Blountville, seeking saddle-horses. Bowman attempted to reason with the intruders, and a 1906 account described the ensuing confrontation: "(Bowman) implored them not to take his horse, as he very greatly stood in need of his service, and during the time he gently laid his hand upon the horse's mane, whereupon one of the soldiers drew his gun and shot him dead." Thus, a shot fired by "a thoughtless, reckless man in the garb of a soldier" cut short the life of "a useful servant of the Lord." In 1912, another Brethren biographer used even more laudatory language when remembering Bowman's death: "That sharp musket-shot penetrated many homes and touched many hearts, as the dastardly deed of the assassin was borne on the still morning air by the pitiful grief and moans of his loving companion and dear children. He truly died a martyr's death." The practice of nonresistance provided the proof of Bowman's death for an explicitly spiritual cause: "It is well known that the position he took in favor of peace and against war made him enemies among a certain class." [3]

[2] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 52, but all of chapter 2, "The Late Medieval Influence," proves helpful; Fernando G. Cartland, *Southern Heroes or the Friends in Wartime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1895), 191-94, 211-13.
[3] S.F. Sanger and D. Hays, *The Olive Branch of Peace and Good Will to Men: Anti-War History of the Brethren and Mennonites, the Peace People of the South, During the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing

In general, however, Brethren embraced John Kline as more of a martyr-hero than John Bowman. Perhaps Brethren viewed Bowman's death as tragic yet random, a contingent accident of time and space based more on a refusal to part with a horse than a defense of the faith. More likely, Kline's stature and length of service within the denomination caused his commemoration to overshadow the remembrance of Bowman and other wartime Brethren heroes.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1797, John Kline migrated with his family to Linville Creek, Virginia (approximately thirteen miles from the Rockingham County seat of Harrisonburg) when he was around fourteen years old. In early 1835, just as he was beginning his long ministerial career, Kline started keeping a diary and would continue to record entries until his death. The Kline diary remains a vital Brethren document for several reasons: a) it offers a rare look into the day-to-day workings of a Brethren pastor in antebellum America, b) when first published in 1900 as *Life and Labors of Elder John Kline, the Martyr Missionary,* it only heightened the already extensive mythology surrounding Kline, and c) *Life and Labors* provides a window into the concerns of Brethren in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, thanks to the volume's editor, Benjamin Funk. The cover and title page of *Life and Labors* freely admit that the reader will not find Kline's diary in its pristine form, but rather a collation of the diary made by Funk. Throughout the book, Funk at times inserts himself and his commentaries into the life of Kline in a manner so subtly intrusive that it becomes difficult to determine where the Kline narrative stops and Funk's asides start. At other points, Funk discards portions of the original diary, making comments such as "(During this period) there is nothing in the Diary demanding special notice." (It has been estimated that Funk published only around ten percent of the diary's 10,500

House, 1907), 96-97; D.L. Miller and Galen B. Royer, *Some Who Led, or Fathers in the Church of the Brethren Who Have Passed Over* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1912), 87-89.

entries.) In the book's introduction, Funk characterized how he viewed his role as collator: "As a kind-hearted, loving mother puts her child's best new dress on it before taking it to church or in public, so have I endeavored to clothe the diary of Brother Kline in a suitable attire of Sunday clothes." Such a methodology raises the suspicion of editorial foul play with the source materials, but nevertheless Funk's approach makes *Life and Labors of Elder John Kline* as much a document of postbellum Civil War memory as a journal of an antebellum Brethren pastor.[4]

Although Kline called Linville Creek home, he constantly ventured far away from his Northern Virginia residence. In the pages of *Life and Labors*, Kline emerges as a preeminent pastoral figure, a minister with Herculean stamina and commitment. The Brethren elder led council meetings and Yearly Meetings, performed marriages, funerals, anointings, and love feasts (the Brethren term for Holy Communion), preached sermons, visited personally with hundreds of Brethren, and, on top of these pastoral responsibilities, made medical visits. In the early days of 1836, Kline announced in his diary his embrace of botanical "Thomsonian medicine": "Active depletion of the body, by copious bloodletting, blistering, drastic cathartics

[4] Benjamin Funk, *Life and Labors of Elder John Kline, the Martyr Missionary, Collated from his Diary by Benjamin Funk* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1900), 479, v. The only critical appraisal of Funk's collation of the John Kline diary appears in an unpublished and undated manuscript written by Rev. Charles E. Nair (1873-1955), a onetime pastor of the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren (Kline's home congregation). According to Nair, Brethren leaders interested in publishing Kline's diary approached Funk to oversee the project because of his association with and admiration for Kline (Funk occasionally accompanied Kline on his travels). Brethren elder Daniel Hays told Nair that when he asked Funk what became of the original diary (in reality, many small pocket-sized notebooks), the elderly Funk replied, "I took them and gave them a decent burial." Speculation abounds as to what Funk did with the diary and why he did it. Did Funk literally bury the documents, or, as some have suggested, did he keep the books in his own possession while waiting to see how well *Life and Labors* sold? If Funk indeed destroyed the diary, was it because he uncovered some damning indiscretions committed by Kline, was he embarrassed by Kline's lack of educational refinement, or had the passage of years made him careless with an extraordinary historical source document? These questions continue to go unanswered, as *Life and Labors* represents the only extant remnant of John Kline's "lost diary." Charles E. Nair, "John Kline Among His Brethren or How He Filled His Place," in Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley: Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume IV: Broadway, Cherry Grove, Singers Glen, Timberville and Surrounding Areas, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, Virginia: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates, 2007), 1043-47.

and starving, is, to my mind, not the best way to eradicate disease and restore the diseased human body to its normal state…(Dr. Thompson) is introducing a new system of medical practice which I believe to be more in accordance with the laws of life and health than any I know of." His knowledge of beneficial regional roots and herbs allowed Kline to conduct a multifaceted ministry. As one Brethren author wrote in 1912, "For the body (Kline) dispensed the herbs, and for the soul the teachings of the Divine Master." Benjamin Funk also attested, "Brother Kline rarely went on an errand with a single aim. His object seemed to be to crowd into his life all the service for both man and God that it was possible for him to do." Kline thus set the precedent for a postwar Brethren understanding of evangelism increasingly emphasizing practical, humanitarian service alongside promoting doctrinal belief.[5]

Over the course of his diary, Kline traveled over 100,000 miles, over thirty thousand of which were spent atop his beloved mare, Nell. It is little wonder, then, that Funk took the time to eulogize horse as well as rider: "She proved to be a very remarkable mare indeed. For strength and endurance, through cold and heat, in hunger and thirst, over mountains numberless and pathless woods and valleys, on long and exhausting journeys, Nell has had few equals." In his haste to add Nell to the pantheon of great historical horses, Funk drew an awkward parallel between Kline and Alexander the Great: "History has not been willing to drop the name of Bucephalus; and Nell is more worthy of a place on its roll. He bore a conqueror for a corruptible crown; she bore a conqueror for an incorruptible crown." The physical appearance of Kline, along with his faithful equine companion, may have suggested the early nineteenth-century circuit rider, but his views on evangelism appeared to run years ahead of the great majority of antebellum Brethren. While his Brethren contemporaries thought of evangelism in passive terms,

[5] Ibid., 38-39 (diary entry for 1 January 1836); *The Gospel Messenger* 61:21, 25 May 1912, 322.

a satisfaction in letting uninvited outsiders come to the community by their own volition, Kline saw countless opportunities in the burgeoning nation to take the soul-saving initiative. In 1844, for example, Kline welcomed the transportation revolution and, in particular, the advent of "the iron horse" as an evangelistic instrument: "The Baltimore & Ohio railroad will soon be completed to Wheeling, and this road, in connection with other roads likely to be built and connect with it, will open a very active traffic between that city and the East. I feel like saying to the Brethren everywhere that now is the time to sow the pure seeds of Gospel Truth in the West." Funk recognized Kline as the progenitor of "outward-looking" Brethren evangelism and found his approach relevant at the start of the twentieth century: "(Kline's) heart was set on the ministry of the Word…This consideration incited him to untiring activity in preaching, praying, exhorting, singing, and to whatever else might instruct, comfort and encourage the child of God, or warn the sinner of his danger and bring him to Christ." [6]

If Kline cast his primary gaze towards the eternal, however, he also engaged himself in crucial issues of the temporal. Kline made shrewd observations about the American political landscape and compiled an impressive list of personal contacts, while tying his activism to traditional Brethren concerns. Funk's *Life and Labors* shows off Kline's political acumen as the Virginia pastor displays an acute awareness of current events and makes statements which, in time, ring as prophetic. On 4 July 1847, Kline attended a Methodist church in Albemarle County, Virginia and immediately observed the crucial issue dividing Brethren from "the wealthy classes" of local Methodists and Baptists: the institution of slavery. Upon hearing a heart-rending

[6] Funk, *Life and Labors,* 40, 261, 176 (diary entry for 11 November 1844), 359-60. From 1843 through 1863, Kline travelled a total of 83,686 miles for an average of 4,404 miles per year. These figures do not include mileage for 1846, the year Kline contracted a sickness (typhoid fever, most likely) and curtailed his travel. See Ibid., 206-10. For more on antebellum Brethren "passive evangelism," see Dale R. Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines, 1650-1987* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, 1989), 137.

story of a family of North Carolina slaves sold into separation at a slave auction, Kline wrote, "…I do believe that the time is not far distant when the sun will rise and set upon our land cleansed of this foul stain, though it may be cleansed with blood. I would rejoice to think that my eyes might see that bright morning, but I can have no hope of that." Twelve years later, a few weeks before John Brown's failed raid on Harpers Ferry, Kline combined political and astronomical speculation after witnessing the following portent: "Last night the sky presented a very wonderful appearance. It was luminous with a scarlet light nearly throughout the entire night…People may brand me superstitious, but I can not resist the impression that this, with other signs, betokens the shedding of blood in our land."[7]

Perhaps the most insightful political and personal prognostication uttered by Kline, however, took place on the dawn of the Civil War's first year, a little over one hundred days before the capture of Fort Sumter. Writing in his diary on 1 January 1861, Kline ominously observed:

> The year opens with dark and lowering clouds in our national horizon. I feel a deep interest in the peace and prosperity of our country; but in my view both are sorely threatened now. Secession is the cry further south; and I greatly fear its poisonous breath is being wafted northward towards Virginia on the wings of fanatical discontent…Secession means war; and war means tears and ashes and blood. It means bonds and imprisonments, and perhaps even death to many in our beloved Brotherhood, who, I have the confidence to believe, will die, rather than disobey God by taking up arms.

Repeating his previous contention, Kline credited slavery with causing the coming woes of the nation: "It may be that the sin of holding three millions of human beings under the gallant yoke of involuntary servitude has, like the bondage of Israel in Egypt, sent a cry to heaven for vengeance, a cry that has now reached the ear of God." Even if war broke out, however, Kline's faith remained anchored to God: "All is dark save when I turn my eyes to him…This is my

[7] Funk, *Life and Labors,* 212-13 (diary entry for 4 July 1847), 420-21 (diary entry for 29 August 1859).

ground of hope for my beloved brethren and their wives and their children. He alone can provide for their safety and support. I believe he will do it." In the pages of *Life and Labors,* Kline thus took his place alongside biblical prophets as an individual whose spiritual insight translated into pertinent political and social commentary.[8]

Slavery and secession dismayed Kline, but the issue demanding the bulk of his political energies during the war was securing nonresistant exemption. As Kline engaged in the political sphere by petitioning figures such as Virginia Governor John Letcher and Congressional representative John T. Harris, he entered into a form of evangelical work by promulgating and clarifying Brethren belief: "I can but entreat these men to stand in defense of our Brethren, and try to devise some plan by which they can be exempted from the necessity of bearing arms. I feel sure that if we can be rightly understood as to our faith of life, there will be some way provided for their exemption." Writing to Confederate Congressman John Baldwin in July 1862, Kline stressed the importance of staying true to Brethren principle: "…we are a noncombatant people. We believe most conscientiously that it is the doctrine taught by our Lord in the New Testament which we feel bound to obey." Nonresistance, however, did not preclude obedience to the state: "Yet, as touching things and obligations, which in our view do not come in conflict with the law of God, in whatever way our government may demand of us we feel always ready and willing to do." State-mandated obligations accepted by the Brethren included "paying our dues and taxes" (provided those were non-military in nature) and "assisting in internal improvements." After positioning the Brethren as good citizens, Kline then asked for the Congressman's favor: "Please use all your powers and influence in behalf of us, so that the Conscript law or all other

[8] Ibid., 438 (diary entry for 1 January 1861).

Confederate laws be so constructed that Christian conscience be so protected that the south shall not be polluted with a bloody persecution."[9]

Kline further demonstrated his political dexterity in a lengthy note sent to one Confederate Colonel Lewis in December 1861. The elder connected Brethren nonresistance to the commands of scripture, but also used constitutional arguments in defense of freedom of conscience: "…in this unholy contest, both law and all former precedents of making drafts have been set aside…This is without precedent in a land of Christian liberty." Kline appealed to Section 16 of the Virginia State Constitution which, in his interpretation, prohibited individuals from being "enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened" for personal religious belief. No one had recently changed the wording or intent of the State Bill of Rights; therefore, Kline continued, "…a great breach of the constitution has been practiced on us for we have been enforced, restrained, and molested because of our religious belief and opinion." Kline then invoked two Virginia-born Founding Fathers as historical leverage for Brethren rights: "None that have a spark of the spirit of Washington or Jefferson in their hearts would desire to compel their fellow countrymen to take up arms against their conscience, and to force them to kill their fellow man." It appears that Kline's arguments carried weight in certain political circles. His efforts certainly helped play a part in creating the Confederate act of October 1862 which exempted Brethren, Friends, Mennonites and "Nazarenes" from military service (upon the hiring of a substitute or the payment of a commutation fee). A letter written by Virginia Governor John Letcher to Kline conveyed a favorable response as well: "I would be glad to see the arrangement in regard to military service, suggested in your letter adopted. I think it entirely responsible, that those who

[9] Ibid., 446 (diary entry for 20 December 1861); D.H. Zigler, *History of the Brethren in Virginia* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1908; reprint, Brethren Publishing House, 1914), 115-16 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

have conscientious scruples, in regard to the performance of military duty, should be relieved by the payment of a small pecuniary compensation." For Benjamin Funk, the political legacy inherited from Kline was the significance of one voice, no matter how small or culturally isolated: "Some may say, 'It is a small thing to write a letter to the President of the United States, or to a member of his Cabinet, or to a member of Congress, or to the Governor of one's State'…It may be said that the greatness of all such correspondence depends upon the magnitude of the subject involved…God only knows the full measure of Brother John Kline's service and influence in this way." Kline's correspondence and influence furthered the nonresistant cause by helping to achieve exemption for all four peace churches within the Confederacy, and also proved that Brethren could participate in the political arena without compromising their spiritual integrity.[10]

While his stances on slavery, secession, and nonresistance endeared him to fellow Brethren, Kline's beliefs created distrust among many of his Rockingham County neighbors. Not only did Kline oppose both core Confederate beliefs and the military service necessary to fight for them, but his travels also raised suspicions in his community. From 1862 to 1864, as moderator of the Brethren Annual Meetings, Kline journeyed to gatherings in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. His provocative views and Northern travels led some to believe that Kline was a Union spy in the garb of "Dunker" pastor. Concerns regarding the elder's Confederate loyalty resulted in Kline's two-week imprisonment in a Harrisonburg jail in April

[10] Zigler, *Brethren in Virginia,* 100-01, 117-21, 96; Funk, *Life and Labors,* 447-48. Section 16 of the Virginia Bill of Rights reads, "That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other." *The Constitution of Virginia, 1776* at http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/va-1776.htm. Accessed 6 February 2013.

1862 alongside a group of eighteen Brethren and Mennonite men arrested the previous month while attempting to cross the Allegheny Mountains in order to reach Union territory. Kline tried to maintain a positive outlook during the incarceration, but admitted, "The minds and spirits of nearly all the prisoners are so broken down by the state and prospects of the country that interesting and instructive conversations can hardly be held." Funk underscored the peril of an 1863 trip made by Kline to Pennsylvania when he wrote, "…a great part of his way lay through a mountainous and thinly-peopled country… he did not know where he was safe from arrest, as army lines at this stage of the war were almost constantly changing. How great, then, must have been his love for the Brethren!" At Hagerstown, Indiana, Kline told those assembled for the 1864 Annual Meeting, "Possibly you may never see my face or hear my voice again. I am now on my way back to Virginia, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. It may be that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I feel that I have done nothing worthy of bonds or of death, and none of these things move me." On 31 May 1864, while dining at the home of George Cowger in West Virginia, Kline informed the dinner guests, "I am threatened; they may take my life, but I do not fear them; they can only kill my body."[11]

Kline's faith, politics, and forebodings all set the scene for the fateful day of Wednesday, June 15, 1864. Accounts differ as to whether Kline went out to shoe Nell at a local blacksmith, visit a sick acquaintance, or repair the clock of a neighbor, but in any instance the return home proved fatal. Around 11:00 in the morning, the guns of an unspecified number (most likely two or three) of Confederate irregulars perched above the roadside fired several bullets into Kline as he rode atop Nell. In a region and time increasingly numbed by violence and loss of life,

[11] Funk, *Life and Labors,* 452 (diary entry for 9 April 1862), 466, 477 (diary entry for 19 May 1864), 479 (diary entry for 1 June 1864).

Brethren quickly ascertained that this was no ordinary wartime death. Annie Zigler Bowman (1849-1935), a Valley resident and acquaintance of Kline, remembered the loyalty of Nell in securing assistance for her longtime travelling companion: "…it was her continued nickerings that brought help when her master was brought down by the wicked bullet and lay dead in the road. She never left his side, but nickered again and again as if she would arouse him to go home. The neighbors heard this nickering up in the woods, and went to see what it meant." The final impression of Kline most repeated in Brethren Civil War memory, however, was the smile gracing Kline's face as he sojourned into the eternal. Benjamin Funk vouched, "The writer's own eyes witnessed this. It may be that this smile was the reflection of the joy that thrilled his soul as he stepped out of his broken tenement of clay into the presence and light of his Redeemer." As a Brethren pastor passed away, a Brethren martyr was born.[12]

Interestingly enough, the effort to turn John Kline into a martyr predated the death of Kline. Two separate letters printed in the January 1862 issue of the Brethren periodical *The Gospel Visitor* repeated the rumors of Kline's demise circulating throughout the denomination. A correspondent writing from Mt. Morris, Illinois, inquired, "There has news come to us from the South that brother John Kline and another brother by the name of Arnold have been shot just for saying, 'they thought it not right for brethren to go to war.' We would like to know the certainty." At the other end of the Union, reports surfaced of a Berks County, Pennsylvania pastor telling his congregation that "the Rebels" had hung John Kline. An individual hearing this sermon quoted the pastor as saying, "They had tried to force (Kline) into their army, which he

[12] For the various theories as to what Kline did on the morning of June 15, see Funk, *Life and Labors,* 479, and Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1997), 286. Annie Zigler Bowman, "Memories of Elder John Kline," *Gospel Messenger,* 18 April 1936, 20; Funk, *Life and Labors,* 479.

refused to do, being conscientious in the matter; they then destroyed and confiscated all his property, and hung him to a tree." The notion of Confederate military officials conscripting a Brethren elder in his mid-sixties may have been dubious, but this did not still Brethren anxieties. Bombarded by requests for reliable information concerning Kline, the editor of *The Visitor* could only entrust Kline's current condition to the sovereign hand of God: "…the present state of things in our land and nation, and especially in the South is such that 'prayer should be made without ceasing of the church unto God for' our Brethren in affliction, for our neighbors, land, and nation, rulers and lawgivers, friends and enemies, and for all mankind." Two issues later, a reader who had recently fled Virginia reported, "I know that brother John Kline is still living and in health, although there have been some hard threats." This news temporarily eased Brethren fears, but the Shenandoah Valley remained an unstable region. At this early date, Kline's nonresistant convictions had already cemented his reputation as a Brethren hero, but a change in classification from hero to martyr hovered constantly around Kline.[13]

After June 1864, once numerous sources confirmed the actual murder of Kline, outpourings of grief and sacral remembrance filled the pages of Brethren periodicals. In the *Christian Family Companion,* editor Henry R. Holsinger differentiated the "anti-slavery, anti-war, and anti-secession" Kline from the "proslavery, anti-christian dynasty" of the Confederacy and lamented, "Knowing the sentiments entertained by our brother in regard to the questions dividing our people and the spirit and character of his enemies, the intelligence of his martyrdom was more the signal for sorrow and pain, than of surprise." Elevating Kline to hallowed status, Holsinger then eulogized, "The name of Bro. John Kline, of Virginia passes down to future posterity as the first Christian martyr, in the history of our church in America." The editor of the

[13] *Gospel Visitor* 12:1, January 1862, 30; *GV* 12:3 March 1862, 92-93.

Gospel Visitor experienced the pain of not only having to report the death of John Kline, but also the manner in which this fatality occurred: "… his sudden, violent and cruel death, being shot down without a moment's warning by the hands of murderous rebels." Drawing from the biblical book of Acts for an analogy, the author continued, "…we hope and trust he was ready to depart with the prayer of the first martyr, Stephen: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their (his murderers') charge!'" In the same August 1864 issue, a brother from West Virginia provided further details about the crime: "…Elder John Kline was found dead, lying in a road not far from his house, shot with four balls. A rebel soldier said that he was shot for traveling West carrying news and helping people to get out of the S. Confederacy." Remarks such as the one furnished by the rebel soldier prompted one reader of *Christian Family Companion,* under the pen name "A Friend," to rise to Kline's defense: "He had been, originally, a strong and determined Union man, but he had made up his mind to live and die in the Confederacy, and was engaged, not in the dissemination of the Union sentiments, but in striving to do all the good he could to the souls as well as to the bodies of men." While not denying Kline's engagement with pressing political matters, the letter-writer testified that spiritual, rather than political, motives truly governed Kline. [14]

In another effort to validate Kline's character, the *Gospel Visitor* reprinted the obituary of Kline found in "a rebel paper," the *Rockingham Register*, on 24 June 1864. Under the heading "Murder," the *Register* characterized Kline as "an aged Dunker preacher of considerable prominence," "a man of great influence with and in his church," and "a man of the strictest integrity in his business transactions." These qualities notwithstanding, the newspaper also remembered Kline as "an uncompromising union man" and acknowledged his 1862 jail time.

[14] *Christian Family Companion* 1: Specimen Number 2, 4 October 1864, 9; *Gospel Visitor* 14:8, August 1864, 228; *CFC* 1:15, 11 April 1865, 119.

The *Register*, however, saw no reason to attribute Union sympathies as the ultimate cause of Kline's death: "(Kline) had however been honorably acquitted, and was pursuing 'the even tenor of his way,' passing frequently by permission of our authorities within the Yankee lines to preach and hold other religious services." The author predicted that "the removal of one of the pillars of the church" could have devastating effects on the Brethren community, but then admitted that not only "Dunkers," but also the Shenandoah Valley as a whole faced an uncertain precarious future: "Whilst our people differed with Mr. Kline in the erroneous views which he entertained, yet all good citizens must deplore such a lawless wreaking of vengeance upon the person of an unarmed and feeble old man. Such things show how rapidly we are drifting into scenes which must be full of terror to us all."[15]

Being an unsolved murder mystery, the death of Kline frequently drew speculation regarding the perpetrators alongside words of reverence for the fallen. In February 1865, Henry Kurtz of Mount Joy, Pennsylvania informed fellow Brethren readers of the *Christian Family Companion* that a band of Shenandoah Valley refugees who recently found their way into Pennsylvania fingered one specific individual as the murderer: "… (they) state that the name of the rebel who murdered our Bro. is JACOB ACKER, and that he boasts of having committed the wicked deed. ..They say they know Acker well, and that he threatened he would shoot him (Kline) after he came back from the Annual Meeting." Writing in the 1880s, Valley resident Orra Langhorne claimed that, within Rockingham County, the identity of the shooters was no great mystery: "Although the assassins who so cruelly murdered the innocent old man were masked, there was no doubt in the community as to the names of the ruffians who had committed the brutal deed." Langhorne failed to name names but, with an attitude similar to that displayed by

[15] *Gospel Visitor* 14:8, August 1864, 228.

Quakers in their "military encounter" narratives (see previous chapter), recalled the divine retribution which seemingly visited three of the crime's accomplices: "It is somewhat remarkable that three of the ruffians engaged in the murder of Johnny Kline, met violent deaths, the fourth wandering restlessly to and fro upon the earth, seeking rest and finding none." The passage of time would not abate Brethren fascination with the particulars of the murder. In 1987, Ray A. Neff released a book entitled *Valley of the Shadow* which provided his own hypothesis concerning the true assassin of John Kline.[16]

The first of several musical odes to Kline emerged from the time the murdered pastor spent in jail. At some point in their 1862 imprisonment, members of the group of eighteen Brethren and Mennonites convicted of attempting to flee the Confederacy composed the verses of "The Prisoner's Hymn" while Kline supposedly contributed the words of the chorus. The original hymn contained nine stanzas, three of which proclaimed nonresistance as crucial in establishing Civil War heroism:

> We know it is God's holy will, Our fellow men we shall not kill;
> But we should lead a Christian life, and not spend all our days in strife…
> Although the world at us may look, as though too much we undertook,
> To leave our dearest friends behind, and seek a safer place to find:
> But this we did for conscience sake, We did not wish God's law to break;
> For those who will the Savior grieve, Damnation surely will receive.

The chorus of "The Prisoner's Hymn" incorporated the motif of pilgrimage, the life of spiritual strangers in a strange land: "We'll sure go home as soon as freed/ A holy life with God to lead/ Go home, go home, and that indeed/ As soon as God the way will speed." In the earthly realm of wartime memory, the song also reaffirmed a sense of self-conscious outsider status among the Brethren. Their commitment to nonresistance made the Brethren and Mennonites American

[16] *Christian Family Companion* 1:9, 28 February 1865, 71; *Brethren's Family Almanac,* 1894, 15; Ray A. Neff, *Valley of the Shadow* (Terre Haute, Indiana: Rana Publications, 1987).

strangers, yet their peace principles marked them as distinctively Christian. Those who killed and spent "days in strife," on the other hand, received eternal punishment.[17]

The year 1879 marked a pivotal historical moment in the development of John Kline memory. That year, Brethren held their Annual Meeting at Linville Creek, the very vicinity where Kline's life ended fifteen years earlier. Members of the German Baptist Brethren family gathered from across the nation to participate in the customary yearly activities of conducting denominational business, corporate worship, and food and fellowship with each other. When time allowed, however, many Brethren found their way to the meetinghouse cemetery to stand in the presence of Kline's gravestone. In *Baptized in Blood,* Charles Reagan Wilson argues that both the American and Lost Cause "civil religions" highly valued the dedication ceremonies of military monuments. These public gatherings, Wilson continues, contained rituals consisting of "partly commemorative rites" ("re-creating the mythical past") and "partly mourning rites" ("converting dead heroes into revered ancestors"). One sees both of Wilson's ritualistic functions being performed at the 1879 Annual Meeting. Benjamin Funk reported that the sight of Kline's headstone stirred memories of a lost and revered past among the Brethren faithful: "One sister, with tears in her eyes, said: 'He preached my mother's funeral.' Another said: 'He used to visit us in Ohio; and we always loved so much to see him come.'…It would be vain to attempt to follow up all the affectionate memories that were expressed by the loving throngs of sanctified hearts that surrounded his tomb." As Brethren grieved over their loss, they also converted Kline from adored pastoral leader into mythic figure. Again, Benjamin Funk observed from Linville Creek, "…there was one grave from whose humble mound each visitor seemed eager to pluck a

[17] "The Prisoner's Hymn," date and author unknown (emphasis mine). Box H, Folder 15. Durnbaugh Research Collection, Young Center. Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

flower, a leaf, or any other little thing that might be carried back home and enshrined in a casket for a memento of one never to be forgotten. That grave was the grave of John Kline." [18]

Long after the 1879 gathering ended, the trips made by Brethren admirers to Kline's graveside continued. Charles E. Nair served as a minister at the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren in the early twentieth century and witnessed firsthand the continued Brethren preoccupation with the memory of Kline: "Since that memorable day [the day of Kline's funeral] an untold multitude from all over the Brotherhood have come and stood with unexpressed emotions and looked on his mound, and read the names and dates, and the striking inscription at the bottom of them on the modest tombstone: 'When he was present he was useful/ When absent wanted much,/ He lived desired. When Killed lamented.'" In its own unique way, the John Kline gravesite served as a Civil War monument by honoring the memory of a beloved figure who displayed spiritual bravery before being struck down by the exigencies of war. In an era when military monuments increasingly dotted the landscape, the Kline tombstone commemorated the heroism of both an individual and a religious community attempting to counteract the suffering of military campaigns and battles with a message of peaceful nonresistance. While a historical product of the Civil War, however, the John Kline burial plot also represented a throwback to a much earlier form of religious veneration. The simple mound and modest tombstone contained three necessary elements of martyrology: a saint, holy relics (e.g., the flowers plucked by 1879 conference attendees), and a site of pilgrimage.[19]

The language of hagiography permeated Kline remembrance throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Instead of drawing comparisons to Catholic saints,

[18] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 29; Funk, *Life and Labors,* iv.
[19] Charles E. Nair, "John Kline," 1046.

however, Brethren likened Kline's life and death to those of familiar Biblical heroes. Benjamin Funk associated the visage of the dying Kline with the first martyr of the church: "Stephen's living face was as the face of an angel. Brother Kline's dead face was the face of a saint—no, not the face of a saint, but the face of the earthly casket in which a saint had lived, and labored, and rejoiced; and out of which he stepped into the glories of the eternal world." Funk may have gleaned literary inspiration from the sermon delivered at Kline's funeral based on Acts 8:2 ("And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him"). The 1907 book *The Olive Branch*, written as "a history of the trials and experiences of the Brethren during the late war between the States," found the selected scripture verse for the memorial service to be proper and fitting: "As Stephen was the first Christian martyr, and Brother Kline the last then known, the appropriateness of the text was apparent." Charles Nair, on the other hand, recreated Kline's final horseback ride as a mid-nineteenth century "triumphal entry": "Did (Kline), like the Master, who was going to Jerusalem last, feel that his time was drawing near? Had he in following his Master, chosen the path that was now bringing him to a point he could not with honor avoid? He seems as a lamb going to the slaughter." In describing Kline's powerful preaching abilities, Brethren elder Daniel Hays measured Kline against a hallowed American political hero: "The personal bearing of Benjamin Franklin before Parliament is not more worthy of a place in history than that of Elder John Kline before an audience." Returning to more spiritual language, Hays summarized and consecrated the last moments of Kline's life: "He had ascended the mountain of life, and in the light of heaven from its summit was contemplating that 'better country where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'"[20]

[20] Funk, *Life and Labors,* 479-80; Sanger and Hays, *Olive Branch,* 7, 126-27; Nair, "John Kline," 1044; *Brethren's Family Almanac,* 1898, 17.

The story and adulation of John Kline received wider attention in 1886 when an article by Mrs. Orra Langhorne appeared in *The New England Magazine.* Langhorne grew up in Harrisonburg and, although not Brethren, knew Kline and his reputation well. Referring informally to the Brethren minister as "Old Johnny Kline," Langhorne meticulously recalled Kline's characteristic "blue homespun garments which are the uniform of the Dunker Brethren": a flax-linen shirt, cut-away coat, homemade shoes with leather strings, and a broad-rimmed felt hat. In an era which linked wartime heroism to masculinity, Langhorne found something more tender in Kline's physical presence: "…there was altogether about him an air of peace and serenity, seeming to lift him above the world of strife in which ordinary mortals dwell…There was something almost feminine in his gentle presence, and fierce indeed must have been the nature, which coming in contact with him, did not feel his calm, sweet influence." When Langhorne's father warned Kline that his Unionism and noncombatant stand placed him in great jeopardy, Kline responded that "…he felt no anxiety on his own account and hoped he should never shrink for the call of duty." The next day, Langhorne and her siblings heard violent "sobbing and weeping" coming from their father downstairs. "Four masked ruffians" murdered John Kline "in cold blood," Orra's father informed the rest of the family. In Langhorne's recollection, "'A more cruel murder has not been committed since John the Baptist was beheaded,' said my father, as we all sat weeping over the story so common in human annals since all the days of Abel, of the innocent life of the holy one taken by the hands of evil men, who but lack the bodily form to make them beasts of prey." In the last words of the article, Langhorne established Kline as a genuine Brethren martyr: "Among the Dunker communities throughout the Union the memory of old gentle Johnny Kline will ever be revered, and the

example of his patient, faithful life will be held up for emulation among his people. Today in all that region Johnny Kline is spoken softly as the household word—of whom God has taken."[21]

Like other John Kline narratives, Orra Langhorne repeated the tale of Kline as tranquil while dying. According to Langhorne, word spread throughout the community that the "country man" who first discovered Kline's body encountered "…the calm face, which wore its habitual look of heavenly peace, a faint smile resting upon the lips, the eyes gently closed, as if in sleep." Such imagery suggested certain martyrdom, a serene transition from a violent earthly end to an eternal peace. Another Kline tribute, however, cast the murder in stark terms, a death comparable more to a modern soldier than a saint of antiquity. At an unspecified date soon after Kline's death, J. Senger composed a song in Kline's honor entitled "The Lonely Grove." Senger depicted Kline as a great pastoral figure shedding "tears of love" for the surrounding region: "He often crossed the mountains high and often journeyed prairies through/ To warn the flock of dangers nigh and tell them what they ought to do." The majority, however, failed to heed Kline's evangelistic call: "Few here and there would join his band, while passing through this wilderness/ While Satan fought him hand to hand, to drive him back in and distress." In the final two verses, Senger provided his own literary interpretation of Kline's last moments:

> While others died upon the bed, with sighing friends to weep around;
> He in the distant grove lay dead, on nought but leaves and stones and ground.
> A sudden blow took life and sense, while passing through that lonely grove,
> Yet none could tell from whom nor whence, but he who lives in heav'n above.

References to the "calm face" and "faint smile" of Kline are nowhere to be found in "The Lonely Grove," only a hero dying in isolation. Senger's musical ode thus reflected the dislocation brought by the Civil War to traditional religious understandings of death as a communal event.

[21] *Brethren's Family Almanac,* 1894, 3-17.

As further explained by scholar Drew Gilpin Faust, "The *hors mori*, the hour of death, had therefore to be witnessed, scrutinized, interpreted, narrated (in the traditional conception of *ars moriendi*, the Good Death) …The sudden and all but unnoticed end of the soldier slain in the disorder of battle, the unattended deaths of unidentified diseased and wounded men denied these consolations." While local townspeople such as Langhorne's "country man" easily identified the body lying along the road as Kline's, a solitary violent death in a disorderly environment still invited comparisons between the death of Kline and the wartime deaths of military personnel. Intentional or not, Senger's song contextualized the martyrdom of John Kline within the distinctive familial and philosophical concerns created by the Civil War.[22]

The drawing of analogies between Kline and the military heroes of the era continued with the often-reprinted poem, "He Died at His Post." Both Benjamin Funk (in 1900) and Brethren authors Miller and Royer (in 1912) included the poem with their biographical recollections of Kline. Brethren attributed the poem to Kline himself as a tribute written for his late friend Joseph Miller, but a soldier's poem with the same title authored by J.W. Holman exists from the era. Holman's poem praised the patriotic sacrifices made by fighting men: "Farewell youthful soldier! we ne'er will forget/ The life thou has offered, the death thou has met!/ Of thee may our nation in history boast/ And tell the whole world, thou didst die at thy post." It appears then that Kline adapted this poem in nonresistant language, and Kline's version subsequently became both

[22] "The Lonely Grove," Words and Music by J. Senger (date unknown). Box H, Folder 15 (John Kline). Donald F. Durnbaugh Research Collection. Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College. Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 9, but for a richer understanding, see all of Faust's chapter 1, "Dying," pp. 3-31. In his lengthy manuscript concerning John Kline, Charles Nair seemed to dispute the characterization of Kline's "lonely" dying. According to Nair, "A man told me he was a boy then, and ran up over the hill through the woods nearly a mile from home to the place and there was a crowd already ahead of him and he did not get to see the face of the dead, as he was already covered with leafy branches cut from the trees." Nair, "John Kline," 1046.

self-authored eulogy and Civil War reconceptualization. Fighting the influence of Satan and his minions, Kline represented a powerful spiritual warrior: "For in order he led in the van of his host/ And he fell like a soldier, he died at his post." In a generation that assigned great weight to the last words of dying soldiers, Kline's final utterances only solidified his reputation as a giant of the faith: "He wept not for himself that his warfare was done/ The battle was fought and the victory won/ But he whispered of those whom his heart clung to most/ 'Tell my brethren for me that I died at my post.'" Unlike other wartime heroes, however, this soldier demanded no days of remembrance or memorialization in marble: "He asked not a stone to be sculptured with verse/ He asked not that fame should his merits rehearse/ But he asked as a boon when he gave up the ghost/ That his brethren might know that he died at the post." As Kline expired in the temporal sense, he simultaneously arose to meet his master: "He passed o'er the stream and has reached the bright court/ For he fell like a martyr; he died at his post." Kline's great legacy, therefore, was a standard for future Brethren to follow: "An example so brilliant shall not be lost/ We will fall in the work, we will die at our post." Thus, through no effort of his own, a poem written (with inspiration from J.W. Holman) by John Kline furthered John Kline's reputation as "soldier-martyr." The account of Kline, his bloodshed, and warfare on behalf of peace stood as an alternative to the military soldiers remembered in verse, song, and public ritual throughout both the North and South.[23]

In 1912, in the midst of the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil War, the Brethren periodical *The Gospel Messenger* conceived yet another tribute for John Kline. Part of the mysterious allure of Kline down through the years rested on the absence of any photographs taken of the Brethren

[23] Funk, *Life and Labors,* 480; Miller and Royer, *Some Who Led,* 47; "He Died at His Post," by J.W. Holman, accessed at www.civilwarpoetry.org/union/soldierlife/post.html on 6 February 2013. For more on the significance attached to soldiers' last words, see Faust, *Republic of Suffering,* 10-18.

pastor. Those who knew Kline well said that he, like other Conservative Brethren of the time, interpreted Exodus 20:4 ("You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth") quite literally and understood the Mosaic commandment to prohibit photographic images. *The Messenger,* however, sought to rectify this paucity of photographic source material. Noting the "scores of people living who saw him," the editor of *The Messenger* asked readers for help in constructing a long-overdue composite picture: "We wish those who remember how he looked would make a drawing of him as his features are remembered or select a picture resembling him, and send the same to us. A score of drawings, or selected pictures, would help us to form some idea regarding the appearance of the remarkable man." The editorial encouraged those without drawing abilities to send in their written recollections of Kline and inquired specifically as to "the color of his eyes and hair," "his height, weight, and general appearance," and "his pulpit habits, his manner of presiding over a Conference, and his manner of life in general." Drew Gilpin Faust cites a Gettysburg College professor who spoke of the "aching hearts in which the dread void of uncertainty remained unsatisfied by positive knowledge" in the lives of those whose loved-ones went missing in the war. Similarly, the *Messenger* sought to recover "positive knowledge" of Kline's appearance, demeanor, and ministry to help alleviate the pain of a brutal wartime loss.[24]

This plea from the *Gospel Messenger* elicited only two subsequently published responses. Henry Niswander of Kinross, Iowa spent time with Kline in the Harrisonburg jail cell in 1862 and remembered well Kline's "medium height," "nearly white" hair, "short, chubby beard," and plain dress consisting of "a homespun suit of blue jeans." Kline spoke with ease from behind the

[24] Exodus 20:4 NASB; *Gospel Messenger* 61:23, 8 June 1912, 358; *GM* 61:18, 4 May 1912, 280; Faust, *Republic of Suffering,* 132.

pulpit, Niswander remarked, but his concern for people of all ages truly made him an admired pastor: "He was especially respected by the young people, as he was of a social turn of mind, and seemed to realize that the future welfare of the church would depend on the rising generation." The great geographic distance separating Niswander and Kline made contact between the two rare during the last months of Kline's life, but the elderly Niswander still treasured Kline's memory and character: "…if Timothy loved Paul more than I loved Bro. Kline, his love was great…In the death of Bro. Kline, surely a father of Israel passed away." Daniel Hays of Broadway, Virginia, in respecting the convictions of Kline, wrote the *Messenger* without forwarding an accompanying picture: "…Bro. Kline, like many of the Brethren of the day, was conscientiously opposed to the taking of likenesses, and any attempt at a picture of him would not be true to the original, and anything but pleasing to him, were he living, or to his friends who know him and remain." Hays estimated Kline to stand five feet, six inches tall and weigh near one hundred seventy pounds and, like Niswander, described hair color, facial features, and voice timbre. The predominant theme of Hays' remembrance, however, was how the simplicity of Kline comprised his greatness. Kline's trademark felt hat and blue denim suit resembled his inner life and outer profession; all were "simple in form and color, and free from all ornamentation." In fact, Hays argued, a preoccupation with the physical presence of Kline would only detract from the memory of his true spiritual strengths: "There was nothing attractive about him except it be his unwavering devotion to duty and the solidity of his character." Pointing to the "home feeling," and "consistency of life" that accompanied Kline's personality, Hays regarded Kline as a model worthy of imitation: "Here is the picture of a well-spent life, and this way is open to all." The fiftieth anniversary of the war with its Blue-Gray veterans' reunions and battlefield remembrances may have compelled Brethren to collect extensive reminiscences of

their greatest Civil War figure. If, however, Brethren clamored for extraordinary heroic details concerning John Kline, those few remaining individuals who did remember Kline represented him in an older Brethren language of unattractive simplicity, a portrayal only reinforcing a status of religious outsider. [25]

John Kline memorials continued in Brethren circles deep into the second half of the twentieth century. Musicians created more songs about Kline, including a number entitled "The Ballad of John Kline" written by composer Andy Murray. This Kline ballad borrowed liberally from the early-1960s Jimmy Dean hit "Big Bad John" as it compared Kline's small physical stature to his spiritual standing ("…little John Kline was a great big man—big John"). As the centennial of his assassination arrived in 1964, Kline also found himself as the subject of a children's book entitled *The Middle Man.* Being a piece of children's literature, the book understandably avoided the delicate subject of Kline's violent death. The conclusion, however, left no doubt that Kline was both a great historical wartime figure and a spiritual exemplar: "And so John Kline rode Nell in peacetime and in the middle of the war to visit people, to heal people, and to tell people that God loves everyone. John Kline was full of God's love for everyone. He was God's middle man." In June 1997, the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren hosted a three-day John Kline Bicentennial Celebration (the 200th anniversary of Kline's birth) filled with historical reminiscence and family-friendly recreational activities. Young children crafted John Kline necklaces and created salt maps detailing John Kline's missionary travels, while adult attendees listened to workshops on herbal medicine and blacksmithing, chatted with a John Kline impersonator roaming the grounds, and experienced a dinner theatre presentation entitled "The Final Journey of John Kline." That same year, a small but dedicated group of horse and Kline

[25] *Gospel Messenger* 61:23, 8 June 1912, 358.

enthusiasts in Rockingham County founded the John Kline Memorial Riders. Every year since 1997, the Kline Riders have embarked on an annual three-to-four day horse ride seeking to revive the historical memory of Kline throughout the Shenandoah Valley region.[26]

All of this celebration of John Kline in word, song, and ritual prompts the question: Was Kline truly a martyr? In the words of J.A. Ressler (see p. 195), did Confederate supporters "sufficiently" hate Kline enough to turn him from hero into martyr? What differentiated Kline from John Bowman, another Brethren wartime casualty (see p. 197), or other peace church members who experienced physical pain, underwent psychological anguish, or lost valuable property during the war? A helpful means of qualitatively appraising the phenomenon of martyrdom can be found in *Salvation at Stake,* a study written by Brad Gregory examining Protestant, Catholic, and Anabaptist martyrs of the sixteenth century. Gregory offers four "prerequisites for martyrdom" which, although focused on the Reformation era, remain useful criteria for confirming or denying the martyrdom of Kline. First, Gregory states, "…the notion of martyrdom must exist and be available to contemporaries." For the Brethren, two sources of martyrdom notions served as plausible inspiration for the rhetorical elevation of Kline. Their theological roots in Anabaptism gave Brethren both knowledge of printed Anabaptist martyrologies such as *Martyrs Mirror* and belief in the long-held Anabaptist tenet that obedience to God necessarily resulted in earthly suffering. Seen in this perspective, John Kline provided a bridge from American Brethren back to the Radical Reformation. A more contemporary and

[26] "The Ballad of John Kline," Andy Murray (date unknown). Box H, Folder 15. Durnbaugh Research Collection. Young Center, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; Dorothy Brandt Davis and Sara Elizabeth Davis, *The Middle Man* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1964, 1992); .John Kline Bicentennial Celebration registration packet. Box DD (Durnbaugh Lectures and Publications), Folder 32 (John Kline Bicentennial Celebration). Durnbaugh Research Collection, Young Center. Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; *John Kline Memorial Riders* pamphlet, mailed by Emmert F. Bittinger of Broadway, Virginia to the author, April 2011.

secular source of martyr conceptualizations, however, existed in the Civil War military monuments and memorial days pervading postbellum America. As demonstrated by "The Lonely Grove" and "He Died at His Post," Brethren possessed a familiarity with the language of sacrifice of life spoken at Decoration Day observances and monument dedications, and appropriated this distinctly American language of martyrdom to serve their own needs. John Kline not only died for his faith, but died the death of a Civil War soldier: violent, sudden, and alone.[27]

For his second martyrdom prerequisite, Brad Gregory explains, "There must be people willing to punish the heterodox with death." Both John Kline's nonresistant faith and his stances against slavery and secession placed him outside of Confederate religious and sociopolitical orthodoxy. If eyewitnesses are correct, those hostile towards Kline made highly visible and audible personal threats towards him in an environment where, by all accounts, nothing less than anarchy prevailed by the summer of 1864. Thus, from the beginning of the war (if not earlier), John Kline had foes willing to kill him, but the political, legal, and economic deterioration of the Shenandoah Valley in the last year of the war made punishing the "heterodox" simpler. Thirdly, Gregory argues, "There must be people willing to die for their religious convictions." Even if Kline's remark "…they may take my life, but I do not fear them; they can only kill my body" (see p. 206) is apocryphal, evidence still confirms that a) someone with Confederate sympathies issued well-publicized threats against Kline, b) Kline knew of these threats, and c) Kline did nothing to alter his actions or beliefs in light of these threats (e.g., refusing to travel to the North for Annual Meeting). Finally, the fourth stipulation of Gregory coincides with the main argument

[27] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake,* 26. I am indebted to Denise Kettering-Lane of Bethany Theological Seminary for bringing Gregory's monograph to my attention.

of this chapter: "There must be survivors who view those executed for their religious convictions as martyrs." In his edited version of the Kline journal, Benjamin Funk positioned John Kline as an intermediary between divinity and humanity. As a historical figure, Kline's name deserved inclusion on "the list of great men," according to Funk. The circumstances of his death, however, seemed to place Kline in another realm as a spiritual being: "We saw him, not as Elisha saw Elijah in sight, ascend to heaven, but with the eye of faith we saw him clothed in a celestial body, and with the ear of faith we heard the welcome: 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The Civil War thus provided the Brethren with the means to practice an ancient form of religious veneration within a context of wartime commemoration familiar to postbellum Americans. As described in the previous chapter, the Quakers believed that patient wartime physical or mental suffering qualified one as a martyr. Many other members of the wartime generation viewed martyrdom in a secular sense as bravery for a cause resulting in death displayed on the battlefield. The German Baptist Brethren, on the other hand, perpetuated the memory of the murder of John Kline as a true martyrdom, death by execution *because of* and *for the good of* the faith. Even as the Civil War introduced new social, political, economic and technological phases of American modernity, Brethren remembered the war as the breeding ground of an American saint.[28]

While the Civil War claimed John Kline as one of its many casualties, numerous other Brethren and Mennonite residents of the Shenandoah Valley suffered serious economic losses as the result of constant military incursions into the region. The establishment of the Southern Claims Commission as a government agency in 1870 offered the hope of restitution for damaged or destroyed crops, livestock, and property. Commission testimony, however, often became a

[28] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake,* 26; Funk, *Life and Labors,* 479, vi, iii-iv.

dialogue between state and religious community regarding the responsibilities of American citizenship, the prevalence of violence in American society, and the validity of Civil War memory. As the adjudication of claims lasted into the twentieth century, government representatives increasingly contested the conception of Civil War heroism constructed by members of the peace churches.

Chapter Six, 'Distressingly Quiet': Nonresistants, The Southern Claims Commission, and Civil War Memory

On May 23 1861, the typically sleepy hamlet of Timberville in Rockingham County, Virginia witnessed heightened tensions. Across the state, citizens traveled to the nearest polling place on this late-spring day to vote on a referendum which, if passed, would ratify secession in Virginia.[1] In Timberville, only two individuals dared to vote against the ordinance of secession, one of which was David Rhodes, a member and future minister of the Brethren faith. Rhodes carried a reputation throughout the community as a plain-speaking, no-nonsense advocate of Unionism. In testimony held before the Southern Claims Commission, a government agency charged with determining the wartime extent of Unionist sympathies of Southern residents, acquaintance Jacob Moyers called Rhodes "one of the most fearless and outspoken union men in the whole county…He was a very bold and resolute person and cared for no man. There was strong talk of hanging him." Joseph Wampler, also testifying on Rhodes' behalf, confirmed Moyers' observations: "I was told that when Rhodes voted against secession, he cursed the crowd and told them 'damn you, you said you would hang me if I voted for the union, come on and do it, I have voted for the union.'" The testimony provided by both Moyers and Wampler

[1] On April 17 1861, three days after Fort Sumter, a convention meeting in Richmond voted 88-55 in favor of secession. According to Daniel Crofts, transpiring events rendered the May referendum irrelevant: "By that time (May 24, 1861) the entire Confederate government was installed at Richmond, making the results of the referendum a foregone conclusion." See Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 340. For a fuller discussion of how Virginia Unionists forced a referendum in the first place, see Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates,* 136-44.

impressed government commissioners enough to pronounce the following concise verdict in favor of Rhodes: "His loyalty was notorious."[2]

While the brazenness of David Rhodes makes for an amusing historical anecdote, Rhodes was by no means representative of Shenandoah Valley nonresistants. His willingness to cast a vote against secession under the threat of mob violence and his public denunciation of Confederate supporters (not to mention his cursing) differentiated Rhodes from his Brethren and Mennonite counterparts. A more typical example of nonresistant wartime behavior can be found in the person of John Miller, a Brethren resident of Linville, Virginia. In 1871, seated before members of the Southern Claims Commission, Miller maintained, "I was threatened with damage to my person or property on accounts *(sic)* of my Union sentiments," but also admitted that he did not make an effort to vote in the May 1861 referendum. Commissioners subsequently minced few words in their appraisal of Miller's Unionist commitment: "Claimant was so *utterly neutral*, and *distressingly quiet*, that we are unable to perceive, the faintest indications of loyalty manifested by him during the War." The failure to vote pro-Union and the lack of publicly proclaimed Union-evincing language cost Miller a considerable government reparation.[3]

An 1871 act of Congress created the Southern Claims Commission in order to reimburse Union-adhering Southerners for wartime property losses resulting from United States Army seizures. To receive compensation for military deprivations, claimants were required to undergo

[2] Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley: Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume IV: Broadway, Cherry Grove, Singers Glen, Timberville and Surrounding Areas, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, Virginia: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates, 2007), 874, 875, 877, David B. Rhodes Claim #9314.

[3] Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley: Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume II: Greenmount, Edom, and Linville, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, VA: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates: 2004), 498, 502 (emphasis mine); John D. Miller Claim #2552.

two challenging tests: a test of loss of property for "official army use" and a test of loyalty. Establishing loyalty in turn consumed much of the time and effort of the Commission. SCC records housed in the National Archives provide rich and rare documentation of a postbellum dialogue between nonresistants and the state. Religious conviction, civic obligation, and gender expectations became intertwined issues throughout the Commission proceedings. Poring through the countless pages of witness testimonies, personal depositions, and government briefs, one encounters two contested notions of loyalty. For the Mennonites and Brethren living in Rockingham County, Virginia, one of the two sizable peace church communities in the Confederacy, Southern Claims Commission testimony constituted a means of both remembering the sacrifice and sorrow experienced during the war and proving wartime fidelity to the Union. During the war, in informal conversations with trusted neighbors, Rockingham County nonresistants praised the Union cause, and some risked their well-being by helping navigate other Union supporters or Confederate army deserters to the North. The Commission, on the other hand, defined allegiance in more active and public terms than Mennonites and Brethren. "Distressing silence" was no viable expression of citizenship during times of war; the government demanded "notorious loyalty." Claims commissioners singled out four actions as dangerously disloyal: economic interaction with Confederate supporters, hiring a military substitute to serve in the Confederate army, voting for the Virginia secession ordinance, and failing to use Unionist language in public. The actions of the Southern Claims Commission thus encompassed more than purloined horses or confiscated chickens. Out of claims proceedings emerged a standard of loyalty measured by the willingness to subject oneself to personal violence, a belief rooted in militaristic Civil War memory.

Bordered by the Allegheny Mountains on the west and the Blue Ridge Mountains on the east, Rockingham County contains over eight-hundred-fifty square miles of acreage in the Shenandoah River Valley of northwestern Virginia. The county, founded in 1778, gained a reputation early on as a regional "breadbasket" through its production of corn, wheat, and oats; the numerous farms dotting the lush landscape also raised highly-valued livestock including cattle, sheep, and hogs. Mennonites arrived in the region as early as 1730, while Brethren migrating from Pennsylvania established permanent settlements soon after the Revolutionary War. This "county of farms and farmers" suited the "plain" peace church lifestyle, and both groups lived in relative cultural isolation, speaking predominantly German until the 1840's. Officially, both Mennonites and Brethren condemned the practice of slavery, yet evidence shows that, as late as the 1840s, some Valley Brethren hired slaves owned by other community members to labor on their farms, arguing all the while that slave ownership (not the act of hiring slaves) violated church belief. The national debate over slavery eventually drew Rockingham County into a swirling vortex of passionate emotion. A considerable minority opposition to secession lingered in the county up until Fort Sumter; by the end of April 1861, according to one of the first county histories, Rockingham County displayed an attitude "definitely and decidedly for the Confederacy." The confluence of a significant peace church population, close proximity to Civil War battle zones, and the documented recollection of war experience makes Rockingham County a valuable locale for studying nonresistant Civil War memory through source material found in Southern Claims Commission testimony.[4]

[4] John W. Wayland, *A History of Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, Virginia: Ruebush-Elkins, 1912), 9-15, 133, 262, 365-70; Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1997), 191, 267. The 1845 Brethren Annual Meeting designated hiring slave labor as "…little better than purchasing and holding slaves, and that it would be best for a follower of Jesus Christ to have nothing to do with

On March 3 1871, President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law a bill authorizing the creation of the Southern Claims Commission. Provisions of the legislation enabled the President to appoint three commissioners who would oversee the processing of claims and pass along their findings and recommendations to Congress for final approval. The original bill also stipulated that claims needed to be filed on or before March 3 1873. During the two years between March 1871 and March 1873, the Commission received 22,298 claims worth $60,258,150.44. When the Commission closed its doors for good in March 1880, it had only granted $4,636,920.69 to claimants while disallowing $55,621,229.75, making for an approval rate of less than eight percent (fraudulent claims involving large sums certainly altered these numbers). Tennessee residents submitted the most claims (4,027), followed by Virginia (3,731), Georgia (3,447), and Alabama (2,581), while only ninety-one claims emanated from Texas. The end of the Southern Claims Commission, however, did not signify the end of Southern claims. In 1883, Congress passed the Bowman Act, making the Court of Claims responsible for handling Southern claims. This federal court handled claims until March 1915 when Congress finally removed the court's jurisdiction and effectually ended the hearing of Southern Civil War claims. The idea of reimbursing Southern loyalists encountered cynical opposition from the beginning. John Brownlow, son of Tennessee Senator William B. ("Parson") Brownlow and himself a field agent for the Southern Claims Commission, said "…it would seem that almost every claimant feels that Uncle Sam had more money than he can conveniently take care of and he is doing a kindness to him to relieve him of the burden." During debate over the proposed Bowman Act in 1882, Wisconsin Congressman Edward Bragg repeated the sentiments of Brownlow: "These

slavery." Durnbaugh, *Fruit,* 267. In 1912, John Wayland estimated 2500 Brethren to be living in Rockingham County along with roughly 600 Mennonites. Wayland, *Rockingham County,* 250, 262.

claims in a great measure are like wine; they grow richer and better and finer-flavored as year after year rolls over them." Bragg suggested that the Bowman Act be renamed "A bill to surrender the Treasury of the United States to the claim agents in Washington." The controversy over Southern claims thus mirrored the simultaneous debate over veterans' pensions; government benevolence provided in return for wartime sacrifices stood in uneasy tension with the American ideal of self-reliance.[5]

To quiet the opposition and discourage spurious claims, the Commission established strict standards for reimbursement. Two strenuous tests confronted those petitioning the government for compensation: the test of loss of property and the test of loyalty. The language of the 1871 bill creating the commission defined reimbursable items as "stores or supplies…taken or furnished for the use of a portion of the army of the United States." The most common items found on Southern claims included "quartermaster stores" such as horses, mules, wagons, and grain, and "subsistence stores" of hogs, cattle, bacon, and molasses. According to its regulatory guidelines, the commission classified as admissible evidence those items taken "for the actual use of the army, and not for the mere gratification of individual officers or soldiers already provided by the Government with such articles as were necessary or proper for them to have." The commission, however, excluded from consideration "any and all items of damage, destruction, and loss, of property; of unauthorized or unnecessary depredations by troops and other persons upon property." Proving actual army use, therefore, presented a great challenge to claimants. Commission procedure made no allowance for acts of destruction by Union soldiers

[5] Frank W. Klingberg, *The Southern Claims Commission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 72, 81, 157, 185, 190. According to Klingberg, the SCC functioned "more as a quasi-legal extension of a committee of Congress than as a court (p. 92)." Klingberg's work, though dated, still proves helpful for its description of Commission assumptions and procedures.

intended to keep crucial supplies out of Confederate hands or property looted by Union army members for personal gain. In an ideal world, Union officers and soldiers would observe strict military protocol, apologize profusely to Unionists for any inconvenience caused by the necessary requisition of vital goods, and issue a government voucher on the spot to pay for any damages.[6]

Wartime realities in Rockingham County, however, were neither so neat nor so tidy. In a letter dated August 5, 1864, General-in-Chief Ulysses S. Grant issued the following military directive: "In pushing up the Shenandoah Valley…it is desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. Take all provisions, forage, and Stock wanted for the use of your Command. Such as cannot be consumed destroy. It is not desirable that the buildings should be destroyed, they should rather be protected, but the people should be informed that so long as an Army can subsist among them, recurrences of these raids must be expected…Bear in mind, the object, is to drive the enemy South." Grant entrusted Major General Philip H. Sheridan with carrying out two key strategic objectives in the Valley: "…drive the Confederates from the Potomac River line and the lower Valley…destroy the Valley's capacity to send food and other logistical goods to Lee's army."[7] Sheridan succeeded on both counts. In late September and early October 1864, Sheridan's army burned 450 barns and 31 mills, destroyed 100,000 bushels of wheat and 50,000 bushels of corn, and carried off 4,200 sheep, 3,350 hogs, and 1,750 cattle in

[6] Ibid., 117; Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley: Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume I: Mount Crawford and Cross Keys, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, VA: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates: 2003), 648-49.
[7] John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Volume 11: June 1-August 15, 1864* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 377-78. This command is contained in a letter to Maj. Gen. David Hunter, but Grant gave the same instructions to Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan. See Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), xx, note 6.

Rockingham County alone.[8] "The Burning" ravaged crucial Confederate provisions and dampened an already weakened Confederate morale.[9]

In a recent essay, historian William Thomas makes the following observation about those Shenandoah Valley residents who supported the Confederacy: "They admitted to themselves that while nothing ought to astonish them, nearly everything in the summer and fall of 1864 did. The war changed from something largely distant and contained to something unpredictable and invasive." Thomas' remarks also hold true for Rockingham County nonresistants. Mennonites and Brethren found themselves squeezed between the hostilities of Confederate community members on one side and the depredations of Sheridan and his troops on the other. A letter dated November 19 1864 and written by Mennonite Michael Shank to the editor of the Mennonite periodical *Herald of Truth* vividly summarizes the anguish and sense of loss experienced by Valley nonresistants during the Sheridan campaign:

> When Gen. Sheridan's army came into the Valley of Va., about the last of September, the "Boys" or prowlers, contrary to the General's orders, commenced pilfering and plundering; squads of them would go to citizens houses in almost frantic appearance, their very faces speaking terror to the inhabitants, while they were searching every room from cellar to garret, breaking open bureau drawers, chests and closets, taking whatever suited their fancy, such as money, watches, jewelry, wearing apparel &c, at the same time threatening to shoot the inmates of the house if they followed after them. In the meantime our horses, cows, and cattle were taken; the grainhouse was broken open and robbed of its contents, and when the body of the army passed up, thousands upon thousands passed over my farm in a number of columns, through corn and grainfields; thus they continued their work of destruction until they reached Staunton or its vicinity, from whence they commenced retreating and burning barns, mills &c. For several days before we left we saw great columns of smoke rising like dark clouds almost

[8] Figures originally published in *Rockingham Register and Advertiser,* 11 November 1864. See also John L. Heatwole, *The Burning: Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, VA: Rockbridge Publishing, 1998), 192.
[9] Gary Gallagher offers this sound assessment of the damage wrought by Sheridan: "Contrary to local legend in the Valley and Lost Cause propaganda, Sheridan's troopers and soldiers did not put all barns, mills, and stocks of grain and hay to the torch. Neither did they slaughter or carry off all livestock and burn private dwellings indiscriminately. But during The Burning in late September and early October, as well as more generally during the campaign, they did severely damage the Valley's logistical output." See Gary W. Gallagher, "Two Generals and a Valley: Philip H. Sheridan and Jubal A. Early in the Shenandoah," in Gallagher, *Shenandoah Valley Campaign*, 15.

> from one mountain to the other, still approaching nearer to us, and when they were within one and a half miles of our house we chose rather to leave all behind and flee to a land of peace and quietude, than to endure the terrors already inflicted upon us, as well as the fate which was yet awaiting us.

Shank believed in the inviolability of the Union, yet Union military forces provoked him to flee over two-hundred miles from his home to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where at the time of the above letter Shank and his family subsisted "principally upon the charities of the Brethren."[10]

If establishing property losses based on authentic army use provided a challenge in the chaotic wake of Sheridan's raid, affirming one's loyalty proved equally as difficult. Created during the supercharged atmosphere of Reconstruction, the Southern Claims Commission emerged from two seemingly contradictory impulses. The very existence of the commission suggested that Southern Unionists deserved some reward for their fidelity to the United States during the war. Opponents of Unionist relief argued, however, that the South should be treated as a rebellious whole rather than a collection of diverse individuals. The first Annual Report issued by the commission reflected this latter belief in presumed collective guilt: "Voluntary residence in an insurrectionary State during the war is *prima facie* evidence of disloyalty, and must be rebutted by satisfactory evidence… (Loyalty) is a fact to be established by proof, and is not to be presumed…it is easier and more profitable to be loyal now than it was during the war." "Genuine Unionism," in the eyes of the commission, required more than either mere "dissatisfaction with the Confederacy" or general "aversion to military service." Commission historian Frank

[10] William G. Thomas, "Nothing Ought to Astonish Us: Confederate Civilians in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign," in Gallagher, *Shenandoah Valley Campaign,* 222; *Herald of Truth,* December 1864, 82-83. Southern Claims Commission officials eventually awarded Shank, a resident of Dayton in Rockingham County, $445 of a $1667 claim. Commissioner Isaac P. Baldwin characterized Shank's loyalty as "clear as the light." See Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley: Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume III: Bridgewater, Dayton, and Surrounding Areas, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, VA: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates, 2005), 542, Michael Shank Claim #19059.

Klingberg describes the government's interpretation of Union loyalty as "a life of treason to the Confederacy…conscientious objection to the Southern cause." If evidence of disloyalty was present in acts like voting for secession, hiring a substitute to serve in the Confederate army, or continuing economic relations with Confederate supporters, such evidence could only be overcome with proof that the disloyal act was undertaken under duress or the existence of other evidence showing acts of "overt loyalty." In their rulings, commissioners thus confirmed that where loyalty was concerned, "concrete actions" upholding the Unionist cause carried more weight than "abstract ideals" and acts of "open subversion" towards the Confederacy mattered more than "passive resistance."[11]

Rockingham County nonresistants thus certainly confused claims commissioners by attempting to prove loyalty on the grounds of what can best be termed "passive subversion." For at least one witness, Union support meant nothing more than a good home-cooked meal. When asked about the loyalty of Mennonite Jacob Wenger, Benjamin Miller testified, "He seemed to rejoice at the approach of the Union Army and said we ought to go roasting turkeys for them." Brethren member Jacob Miller made use of his considerable financial resources to keep other conscientious objectors out of the Confederate army, according to his brother Daniel: "I know that he gave his money liberally to keep our men out of the army and urged others to do so and when the fine law was passed he was very active in procuring exemptions for such of our members as were too poor to pay the fine themselves and could not take their families through

[11] 1st General Report of the Commissioners of Claims, *House Miscellaneous Documents,* 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, No. 16, p. 2-3, quoted in Klingberg, *Southern Claims*, 89; Klingberg, *Southern Claims,* 17, 89, 98, 102, 104.

the mountains to the North." At the sum of $500 per Confederate commutation fee, Miller paid a hefty price for maintaining nonresistant principles of Valley Brethren.[12]

More frequently, however, Mennonite and Brethren loyalty testimony made mention of a shadowy underground network offering lodging and means of escape to West Virginia or other Northern locations to Union supporters and Confederate army deserters alike. Abraham Heatwole of Mount Crawford told commissioners, "I kept a great many refugees at my house and helped them to escape. I kept them hid in a secret place convenient of access when in danger to enter and sent them by the regular guides to the mountain pilots. My house was a sort of rendezvous for refugees and deserters from the rebel army making their escape from the confederacy." One of those refugees, John Rodes, referred to the Heatwole house as "one of the terminals…of the Underground R.R." According to Rodes, upon his arrival at the Heatwole residence, "I found five persons waiting for the guide who came and took us by night to other places, where others were collected who joined us until, our arriving at the mountains depot, our party numbered sixty-eight refugees and deserters, who were conducted in safety through the mountains." John Harshbarger, a Brethren man from Cross Keys, also used the language of the railroad in an attempt to prove his opposition to the Confederacy: "I was a Depot Agent at an underground RR to assist in getting through the lines any who would undertake the task, we would harbor partys and feed them in our barn and in the woods until we could get a small company to our pilot." Samuel Whitmer revealed himself to be a mail carrier to those in exile: "He (claimant Christian Snell) helped refugees and cooperated with me in collecting and distributing letters and information to and from refugees and their families." Nonresistant

[12] *UCWE*: II, 271, Jacob Wenger Claim #15912; Ibid., 158, Jacob Miller Claim #9783.

testimony revealed an extraordinary degree of coordination and communication involved in the transport of Confederate dissenters.[13]

If witnesses are to be trusted, some local farmhouses became complex labyrinths of hidden doors and secret passageways. J.P. Diehl recalled growing up in a house engaged in harboring refugees: "I remember the hiding of neighbor boys as well as our own, in a closet in our setting room; the closet having a small door and the said door was covered by placing a bureau over same; the closet was under the steps, further my mother took the shelves from a safe and hid one at a time in there." William Maiden characterized Daniel Miller as "a Dunker and an original Abolitionist" and described Miller's "secret cellar in his house to conceal refugees in when in danger reached by a trap door in the floor of his bedroom." Mary Geil recalled that local secessionists referred to her family's house as a "damned Union hole" and further depicted the risks entailed by concealing Confederate opponents: "…on one occasion a party came to our house…They pretended at first to be refugees and wanted assistance to get through the lines, thinking to take my husband and father but I suspected them at once and they did not get a chance to arrest them." The number of people assisted by Rockingham County nonresistants remains a mystery. One claimant, Brethren Joel Garber, boasted, "I helped put hundreds of conscripts through the union lines, and I came near losing my life two or three times by it; I was shot at several times." While finding corroboration for such a secretive enterprise proves challenging, a comment found in an 1862 issue of *Leslie's Illustrated* may shed some light. In November of that year, the newspaper reprinted the observations of an individual who spent considerable time in the "Antietam region" after the notorious battle: "Thousands of deserters, he

[13] *UCWE*: I, 167, 270, Abraham Heatwole Claim #8997; Ibid., 539, Jacob and John Harshbarger Claim #2567; *UCWE*: III, 328, Christian and Susanna Snell Claim #16942.

says, escaped into the mountains, chiefly Northern-born men who were pressed into the rebel service, and they are gradually making their way into the settlements of Pennsylvania for clothing and food, which are generously bestowed." Without naming Mennonites or Brethren as abettors, the article suggested a large presence of Confederate conscripts seeking passage through the mountains to the North. Mennonite and Brethren testimony before the Claims Commission affirmed the presence of a tightly-integrated transportation network and believed that this passageway for the disaffected played a key role in weakening the Confederacy, and, by extension, assisting the Union.[14]

When Jacob Moyers appeared before the commission to vouch for the loyalty of Abraham Beery, he unhesitatingly stated, "(Beery) was a Mennonite in belief and most of them were loyal men." The loyalty testimony of Moyers worked so well that it may have called Beery's nonresistance into question: "He was all the while so bitterly opposed to the hot headed secesh that he would have hung them up anywhere." Throughout commission proceedings, witnesses such as Jacob Moyers continually validated the Union sentiments of local Mennonite and Brethren communities. Mennonites in the region possessed a reputation as "natural union people," and Jacob Brunk told commissioners that Mennonites refused to take their Unionism lightly: "I belong to a religious Sect called Mennonites whose creed is opposed to the employment of force or the use of arms, and if any member engaged in the rebellion voluntarily he would be excommunicated from our Society; our Society declared its sympathies as in favor

[14]*UCWE*: I, 444, Mathias Diehl Claim #9734; Emmert F. Bittinger, ed., *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley*: *Southern Claims Commission Records, 1871-1880, Volume V: Goods Mill, Leroy, McGaheysville, Port Republic, Roadside, and Harrisonburg Areas, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, VA: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates, 2009), 111, Daniel Miller Claim #19288; *UCWE*: II, 342-43, Jacob Geil Claim #21844; *UCWE*: I, 140, Joel Garber Claim #8413; *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 1 November 1862, 94.

of the Union cause, and promised any aid it could give consistent with our faith, and I was in perfect accord with the declared principles of our faith." Benjamin Bowman expressed similar sentiments regarding the Unionism prevalent in Brethren circles: "If any of the members of our church indulged in the expression of disloyal sentiments they were reported by the other members, and admonished, and if persisted in they were called to account, and if still rebellious they fell under the judgment of the church." On occasion, claims commissioners took these assertions at face value. Awarding Brethren couple Christian and Susanna Snell sixty-five dollars and sixty cents of a claim worth eighty-seven dollars and thirty-five cents, a commissioner commented, "She and her husband were unquestionably loyal to the Union; they were Dunkard in religion and loyal in politics."[15]

Church reputation, however, did not ensure reimbursement. Commissioners scrutinized claimant testimony for four activities which, if performed voluntarily and not under duress, were considered inherently disloyal. First, the SCC frowned upon economic relationships with Confederate supporters or representatives of the Confederate government. When Brethren claimant Joel Glick admitted that he had invested over six-thousand dollars in Confederate bonds, the commissioners concluded, "This would seem to indicate that he had confidence in the Confederacy." Confederate military officials compensated Mennonite Jacob Driver after taking a horse, steer, grain, and hay. Driver also purchased a one-hundred dollar Confederate bond ("not that I had any confidence in it," Driver explained to the commission) for the sole purpose of paying his taxes. The commission subsequently disallowed Driver's entire claim. John Stinespring, a Brethren mill owner, attempted to couch his transactions with Confederates in a

[15] *UCWE*: IV, 412, Abraham Beery Estate Claim #18421; *UCWE:* I, 251, David Rhodes (Rodes) Claim #16950; *UCWE:* V, 666, Jacob Brunk Claims #16948 and #17903; *UCWE:* III, 267, Henry Niswander Claim #16506; *UCWE*: III, 331, Christian and Susanna Snell Claim #16942.

language of humanitarian concern: "I sometimes sold the (Confederate) soldiers a little flour also--not to aid or comfort the rebellion, but to satisfy hunger." The commission ruled that Stinespring provided "no proof of loyal conduct." John Rhodes, on the other hand, received a favorable ruling from commissioners. According to Rhodes' widow Fanny, "when he had anything to sell he would let the poor have it instead of selling it to the confederates."[16]

Secondly, the SCC objected to the hiring of substitutes. Prior to July 1861, nonresistants could choose to opt out of militia service by paying a fine. Conscription legislation passed by Virginia lawmakers in July 1861, however, exempted conscientious objectors only if they provided and paid for a substitute. On March 29 1862, only weeks before the Confederacy took control of conscription, Virginia introduced an exemption fee totaling five-hundred dollars plus two percent of the assessed value of the draftee's taxable property. In the crucial period between July 1861 and March 1862, therefore, nonresistants thus found themselves with three unfavorable options: flee the region or hide out, hire a substitute, or serve in the Confederate military. In their survey of Mennonites in the Civil War, James Lehman and Steven Nolt write, "There is little evidence that Virginia Mennonites debated the merits of hiring substitutes or considered it a form of indirect participation in the same way they viewed noncombatant personal service." Faced with potentially compromising alternatives, Mennonite and Brethren chose the "lesser evil" of furnishing substitutes rather than fight themselves.[17]

The Southern Claims Commission, however, appeared less than concerned with the intricacies of Virginia conscription law and viewed all provisions of substitutes as aiding the

[16] *UCWE:* III, 100, Joel Glick Claim #15515; Ibid., 632, 637, Jacob Driver Claim #16920; *UCWE:* IV, 535, John Stinespring Claim #8704; *UCWE*: I, 298, John Rhodes Claims #16949 and #21858.

[17] James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt, *Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 67. In *UCWE*: I, 15-19, Bittinger provides a helpful overview of the often complex conscription legislation in both Virginia and the Confederacy.

Confederate enemy. Isaac Wenger, a Mennonite conscript from Edom, told how the captain of his militia company provided him with the name of a man who would fight in Wenger's place: "…he could make a soldier of him and not of me. He knew I was a Mennonite and would not fight." Wenger seemingly eased his conscience regarding both his Confederate and Christian obligations by hiring the man for military service, then later convincing the substitute to desert. Commissioners dismissed Wenger's claim. In concluding remarks for the case of claimant Joseph F. Kline, commissioners employed the language of class to explain why hiring a substitute, even on the grounds of religious scruples, constituted an act of treachery: "We hold that personal service in the ranks of the Rebel Army is an act of disloyalty and *furnishing a substitute to the service is of precisely the same nature and character* and so we must hold, else the rich man who is able to furnish a substitute for the Rebel ranks may be regarded as loyal, while the poor man who is not able to pay for a substitute but goes himself is held to be disloyal." Of course, for Mennonites, loyalty was more variegated than the SCC conception. The primary Mennonite loyalty belonging to the Prince of Peace meant avoiding warfare at all costs, preserving Mennonite purity even if it meant the spiritually distasteful act of hiring another man for warfare. Claims commissioners thus assumed (rightly so, many times) that Mennonites valued their "other-worldly" commitment to personally steering clear of war over their loyalty to the United States of America.[18]

Throughout the lifetime of the Southern Claims Commission and later under the Court of Claims, the aforementioned May 1861 vote for ratification of Virginia secession emerged as the key "litmus test" of loyalty. At commission investigations, witnesses referred to the "reign of terror," "air full of threats," and "excited state of the public mind" present at voting locations

[18] *UCWE:* II, 440-41, Isaac Wenger Claim #9778; *UCWE*: IV, 200-01, Joseph F. Kline Claim #2550, emphasis mine.

across Rockingham County. Mennonite Anthony Rhodes affirmed that staying at home on the day of the special election proved as dangerous as voting for the Union in person: "In our newspapers it was said as reproach and a threat, that the man who did not vote at all was as bad as the man who voted against secession." Even Claims Commissioner Isaac P. Baldwin once freely admitted, "I am well convinced that hundreds of good union men voted secession through fear." In the vast majority of cases, however, the commission considered a vote against the Union to be a greater menace than the threat of personal coercion: "We have had occasion several times to say, that this act (voting pro-secession) performed by the citizen in his civil capacity, in the exercise of his political privileges, thus aiding to take his state out of the Union, is as clearly disloyal, as the act of fighting in the armies of the Confederacy to keep this state out after secession." In 1898, the Court of Claims reached the same conclusion: "…one single act of disloyalty is sufficient to bar the claim under the provisions of the Bowman Act. Certainly there could possibly have been no more disloyal act than casting a vote in favor of the ordinance of secession." A heroic stand, by commission definition, involved defying the mob and casting one's vote in favor of the Union.[19]

Those nonresistants who voted in favor of secession offered differing defenses for their actions. Some Mennonites and Brethren believed, no doubt after persuasion from Confederate supporters, that if the South showed a "united front" on the secession issue, the North would in turn back down from armed conflict. Samuel Long represented one of those conscientious objectors who voted for secession "for the sake of peace," trusting that "if we all voted for

[19] *UCWE*: II: 444, 343 and V: 815; *UCWE*: II, 564, Anthony Rhodes Claim #9728; *UCWE*: I, 254, David E. Rhodes (Rodes) Claim #16950; *UCWE*: III, 514, Silas Sandy Claim #8278; *UCWE*: II, 407, John Shaver Claim #9721. According to *UCWE*: I, 70, in Rockingham County only twenty-two votes out of more than two-thousand cast were against secession, while more than fifteen-hundred voters stayed away from the polls. These numbers appear small for the entire county and may apply to the polling place at Mount Crawford, Virginia only.

secession there would be no danger of war; I am religiously opposed to war and I voted for secession not because I wanted to break up the Union. I was always in favor of the Union." Simeon Heatwole described his vote for secession as "a mixture of fear and hope. I was fearful of the consequences of a refusal, and hopeful of a peaceful settlement of our difficulties, as we were told it would prove if we were unanimous and united on the question." Brethren member Jacob Senger cast his vote for secession ratification "under the belief that it would lead to a peaceful settlement of our difficulties, and when I found that Secession resulted in war I greatly regretted having voted as I did, and determined to do all I could to help Union men." The commission, however, dismissed nonresistant hopes as groundless (and ultimately disloyal) naïveté. In the case of Jacob Senger, commissioners ruled, "Mr. Senger voted for it (secession) 'under the belief that it would lead to a peaceful settlement of our difficulties'; This must mean that if Virginia adopted the ordinance secession would be accomplished and the Union dissolved without war; That was not adhering to the Union cause." For these nonresistants, the prospect of peace was too appealing to vote against secession, and this decision ultimately disqualified them from the full benefits of Union citizenship.[20]

More frequently, however, Mennonites and Brethren identified the pervasive specter of community violence as the reason why they voted for secession. According to Daniel Huffman, even the local newspaper, *The Rockingham Register* published in Harrisonburg, played an important role in promoting anti-Unionist hostility before the vote: "Every man who supported the Union or who did not join the Secesh party were threatened with some kind of violence, they were denounced in the papers as traitors fit for the halter, or fit food for gun powder and all such

[20] *UCWE:* III, 188, Samuel E. Long Claims #16622 and #17298; Ibid., 841, Daniel J. Good Claim #21843; Ibid., 522, Jacob Senger Claim #17935. .

things, which was repeated by private citizens all through the county and Union men were afraid of violence to themselves or their property." The SCC countered, however, by requiring claimants to distinguish between generalized and explicit threats.[21]

Seeking to collect a claim of over thirteen-hundred dollars, John Driver offered this justification for voting in favor of secession: "It was against my judgment. I was compelled to vote for it by threats of death." Driver's excuse failed to impress the commissioners, who found the phrase "threats of death" too ambiguous: "We are not willing to accept the excuse, unless we are told *who made the threats, when and how made, just what they were and all the language, acts and circumstances* in that connection, so that we can see the claimant to have acted under compulsion or a reasonable fear of bodily injury." Commissioners thus differentiated a widespread fear of intimidation from threats made by specific individuals at specific times with specific intent. Brethren Samuel Cline no doubt damaged his own standing before the commission when he confessed, "Do not recollect that any one ever made a personal threat directly to me in regard to my life or personal liberty; do not think they did. Do not recollect that any one ever made any threat at all." Likewise, claims commissioners rejected compensation for Brethren Samuel Wampler because his loyalty never placed him sufficiently in harm's way: "He (swears) to loyal sympathies and that is all. He was not threatened nor molested. He did nothing and suffered nothing for the cause of the Union. His claim to loyalty on his showing is an idle pretense." During the 1900-01 term of the Court of Claims, U.S. Special Attorney John C. Daugherty went so far as to deny that an oppressive environment ever existed in Rockingham County: "It has never been generally known or understood that a voter in Virginia was in danger of being shot for voting the Union ticket when Secession was under consideration in that

[21] *UCWE*: I, 317, Abraham Shank Claim #21833.

state…the vast proportion of the people in every section of the State voted their sentiments on that question freely and without hindrance of any character." Without substantial documentation of "injuries, threats, or molestations," government compensation became a highly unlikely prospect for nonresistant claimants.[22]

Duress often acquired gendered meanings during commission testimony. The commissioners' remarks occasionally implied that the failure to place oneself in a vulnerable position at the ballot box for the good of the Union signified a weak masculinity. When Brethren minister Joseph Wampler told commission representatives he was "frightened into" voting for secession, commissioners remarked, "We hold that the act of voting of the dissolution of the Union and the overthrow of the Government of the United States is just as inconsistent with adherence to the Union and the Government, as bearing arms against it; and that neither one or the other can be justified or excused, on the assertion that *the claimant was afraid.* He must show circumstances of imminent peril to person or to life or such exercise of actual force as shall indicate that he had no choice left him." In 1896, at John Driver's hearing before the Court of Claims, government attorney James M. Tanner questioned Driver's fortitude: "He could have done as…many Union men did do; that is, he could have refrained from voting at all. Or he could have voted against secession, as some did. It appears that he was *too courageous* to be deprived of his vote, and *too timid* to vote as his 'political sentiments' required." The response offered by Driver's attorney, Gilbert Moyers, may have only confirmed the court's suspicions of Driver's masculine courage: "What of it if some men braver than the claimant took the risk and voted against the ordinance of secession, does that argue that the claimant was not intimidated

[22] *UCWE*: IV, 732, 735, John W. Driver Claim #8155, emphasis mine; *UCWE:* I, 411, Samuel Cline Claim #2523; Ibid., 645; *UCWE*: IV, 235, Michael B.E. Kline Claim #8157.

into voting as he did? Quite the contrary. If he was not as resolute and heroic as some of his neighbors the stronger the reason for his yielding to threats and surrounding conditions. *All men are not constituted alike."*[23]

James Anderson, on the other hand, exhibited the loyalty and nerve required by commissioners. Anderson, a Brethren member from Ottobine, "piloted" eighteen deserters from the Confederate Army into Maryland in the fall of 1863. He registered a vote in favor of secession in the May 1861 election, but because Anderson provided names and details the commission found his action to be legitimately under duress:

> A report was started that I was a damned Abolitionist and had come here to run the slaves away and all such reports, consequently I was marked and when the election day came around I was afraid to vote my sentiments…I should not have gone to the polls at all; had I not been intimidated by a man named Thomas K. Fulton who came there with several others who began to curse me and demanded to know why I was not at the election calling me a damned Abe Lincoln Abolitionist, and told me I must go and vote or he would have me sent right off to Richmond.

Those who did not find themselves staring down the barrel of a gun or dragged forcibly to the ballot box still remembered the secession referendum as a traumatic event years later. Mennonite Samuel Hartman remarked, "I was so mortified and grieved with having voted for the ratification of Secession that I have never voted since…I permitted myself to be induced by persuasion and intimidation or threats to vote against my inclinations and against my intentions and solely in the interest of peace as I supposed, and have ever since regretted it." The resolution to vote one's conscience subjected nonresistant males to the threat of injury and death; the decision to vote against one's conscience resulted in years of self-incrimination.[24]

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[23] *UCWE*: IV, 359, Joseph Wampler Claim #2542, emphasis mine; Ibid., 754-56, John W. Driver Claim #8155, emphasis mine.

[24] *UCWE:* III, 797-98, James Anderson Claim #19267 (The Commission awarded Anderson $440 of a $700 claim); *UCWE*: V, 812, Samuel Hartman Claim #21857.

The fourth and final component of the test of loyalty included the evidence of loyal language demonstrated by the claimants. Phrases such as "public reputation," "speaking freely," "speaking in the presence of others," and "exerting influence" permeated commission hearings. Vouching for the loyalty of William Rodehafer, Noah Flory said without reservation, "Claimant is a free talker, and expressed himself freely when in the company of Union people." As the war dragged on and local hostilities mounted, other Rockingham County nonresistants found it necessary to practice discretion when sharing political views. Brethren bishop Solomon Garber spoke for many in his religious community when he testified, "We all had to be very prudent and cautious in what we said as detectives of the (Confederate) government were watching us, and we had to know each other quite intimately before speaking very fully about the war our sentiments." Even David Rhodes, the unabashed Brethren Unionist described at the beginning of this chapter, learned to rein in free expression, according to loyalty witness Joseph Wampler: "At the beginning of the war he would talk union anywhere in all places—but after a while found he could not do it with safety and was more cautious."[25]

As was the case with the Virginia secession vote, the question of language became intertwined with gender expectations. Men who lacked the backbone to share their Union sentiments in an unfriendly environment forfeited any grounds for government compensation. Jacob P. Slusser made the following remarks about neighbor Daniel Sluss: "He was generally regarded as a Union man by the neighbors, but was very quiet, peaceable, and harmless, and was in consequence not disturbed as some others were who were more Prominently known." The government was not impressed by the "quiet, peaceable, and harmless" depiction of Sluss and

[25] *UCWE:* IV, 440, 446; *UCWE:* I, 594, William Rodehafer Claim #2569; *UCWE:* III, 119, Mary Kagey Claim #2521; *UCWE*: IV, 874, David B. Rhodes Claim #9314.

disallowed the claim. Commissioners also rejected the petition of Samuel Hartman. Loyalty witness and fellow Mennonite Sarah Diehl said of Hartman, "He is not much of a talker before strangers, but always spoke very freely with us, and always expressed decided Union sentiments," an assessment too honest to aid Hartman's appeal.[26]

Nonresistant males who kept quiet about Unionist beliefs also risked being stigmatized as "timid." Henry L. Rhodes, in witnessing for his Mennonite brother Frederick, observed that Frederick "did not express himself very freely. His wife was a strong secesh and the subject was not a pleasant one to talk about when two of the family disagreed…I don't know as he was publicly known much, he is one obscure quiet person and rather timid." Another witness, Henry Early, also suggested that Frederick Rhodes' wife kept her husband and his Union sympathies in line: "I frequently saw him and often conversed with him about war matters; he was not very free to express himself at the beginning, he was living on a place with a strong secesh, and his wife was a secesh and he was in a sense tongue tied. After his wife died in 1863…I saw him more frequent and from that time he spoke freely and always in favor of the union cause." In their concluding remarks, the Commissioners of Claims pronounced, "It is very evident from all the testimony in the case, that he was not one of the earnest Union men many of whom were found in Rockingham County…His nephew says he don't remember hearing others speak of him and his brother 'don't know as he was publicly known much.'" To add insult to injury, when the claim of Rhodes' brother Henry appeared before the commission, the government rewarded Henry's loyalty while simultaneously disparaging Frederick: "Claimant was undoubtedly a loyal man. Has more language than his brother Frederick S. Rhodes, and is freer spoken."[27]

[26] *UCWE*: I, 337, Daniel Sluss Claim #16946; *UCWE*: V, 816, Samuel Hartman Claim #21857.
[27] *UCWE*: I, 264-68, Frederick S. Rhodes Claim #21837; Ibid., 278, Henry L. Rhodes Claim #21836.

In characterizing a vote against secession or public expression of Union sympathy as essential demonstrations of loyalty, claims commissioners clung largely to Civil War understandings of manliness. Historian James McPherson argues that, in Victorian America, masculinity was inseparable from duty and honor, and military service provided the ideal testing ground for valorous men. McPherson relies on primary sources penned by soldiers themselves to validate this, including the Confederate fighter who wrote, "I would be less than a man if in any way I fell short of the discharge of duty at my country's call." Within such a conceptual framework, cowardice, apart from being a prime motivator of military courage, stood as the antithesis of duty as well as fighting. In their deliberations, claims commissioners transferred this understanding of manliness from the battlefield to civilian life. If countless thousands held their ground and continued fighting for the Union amidst the bloody carnage of Antietam and Gettysburg, certainly nonresistants could stand up to ragtag Confederates and voice their Union support. By avoiding conflict, commissioners reasoned, nonresistant males failed both their gender and their nation.[28]

For the Southern Claims Commission, designating men as disloyal proved relatively simple. "Obscure quiet" men such as Frederick Rhodes voted for secession and offered no tangible vocal proof of Union support (at least, if witness Henry Early is correct, not until after the death of his secessionist wife). Establishing the loyalty of nonresistant women, however, tended to be a more complex matter. In an era before women's suffrage when community norms placed females outside the sphere of political activity, substantiating female fidelity to the state

[28] James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 25-26, 77-78.

became an ambiguous enterprise. The testimonies of three Rockingham County Mennonite women demonstrate the contradictions present in commission gender assumptions.

Margaret H. Rhodes (no relation to Frederick) became a widow on the passing of her husband Henry in July 1864. In testimony before the commission in 1871, Rhodes recounted how she employed both her domestic abilities and her available housing for the good of the United States government: "I baked bread for the Union soldiers during the war, and harbored Confederate soldiers seeking to get into the Union lines to get away from the Confederate Army…From the beginning of the rebellion to the end there of (*sic*) I was willing and ready to do all a woman could do for the Union cause and its supporters." The Rhodes house was equipped with "a place fixed under the floor…where refugees could be concealed" and the widow provided extended sanctuary to numerous individuals: "…many times they came and staid (*sic*) at our place five or six together at a time and would stay sometimes several days waiting for the guides to take them through the mountains…Our house is in a secluded place and very favorably situated for concealing persons." Rhodes also aided the Northern cause outside of her homestead by serving as a Union "postmistress": "I was one of the postmasters of the underground R.R. route. I distributed a good many letters in this way. I have gone a distance of six miles myself to deliver letters sometimes, leaving my five children with my mother in law." Declaring Rhodes' loyalty "fully proved," commissioners found the widow's actions to be exemplary.[29]

When Mary Brenneman, another Mennonite widow, first gave testimony to the commission in 1872, her loyalty appeared less than awe-inspiring: "At the beginning of the

[29] *UCWE:* III, 697, 703-04, 713, Margaret H. Rhodes Claim #9527. The commission awarded Rhodes $519.25 of a $1049 claim.

rebellion I did not sympathize much with either side, I was opposed to secession. I did not vote and did not expect any influence. After the ordinance of secession was adopted, I did not take any part in sympathy either way." A deposition submitted by Brenneman to the same commission five years later, however, sounded a more patriotic note: "I was in favor of the union all the time. I was opposed to slavery always and sympathized with the Union party. We [Mary and her late husband Peter] were both Mennonites and our church don't believe in slavery, disunion nor war." Eventually the commission disallowed Brenneman's claim of four-hundred fifty-five dollars. Perhaps commissioners punished Brenneman for Peter Brenneman's vote in favor of secession or the fact that the Brennemans' son served in the "Rebel Militia." Concluding remarks, however, placed the onus squarely on Mary Brenneman to prove her loyalty: "Her witnesses testify very faintly to her loyalty; do not recollect of hearing her express Union sentiments but say they regarded her as a Union woman and rely chiefly on the fact of her being a Mennonite to establish her loyalty." Commissioners effectually took the same tests of loyal language and exposure to violence administered to men and applied those to Mary Brenneman: "…no proof of loyal *acts* or *language* or of rebel *threats of molestation*…we do not feel satisfied of her loyalty. Loyalty not proven."[30]

If Margaret Rhodes and Mary Brenneman represented clear cut examples of loyalty and lack of Union activity respectively, the case of Rebecca Burkholder truly muddies the waters of gender presumptions. Burkholder informed commissioners, "I secreted a man to keep him out of the Confederate service. Sent my son north." Loyalty witness John Wenger corroborated Burkholder's testimony: "She kept people out of the Confederate Army and secreted them in her house." Commission Special Agent S.E. Chamberlin rendered the following half-hearted verdict

[30] *UCWE*: II, 64, 69, 73, Mary Brenneman Claim #16503, emphasis mine.

in favor of Burkholder: "Seems to have been an inoffensive old lady [Burkholder was fifty years old at the conclusion of her testimony] living near this place, whose husband was a Mennonite preacher who died before the war; her loyalty seems to be based as much upon the fact that she belongs to this Society as much as anything else. I can not find that she took an active part either way but remained in as quiet manner as possible during the war." Two things remain puzzling about the commission's ruling on Burkholder in comparison to Mary Brenneman. First, while membership in the Mennonite society is not considered sufficient grounds for validating Brenneman's claim to loyalty, Mennonite identity confirms Unionist reliability in the case of Burkholder. Secondly, while it is true that no mention is made of explicit Union activity conducted by Brenneman, commissioners held her to "masculine" standards of loyal behavior (loyal acts, loyal language, threats of molestation) while Burkholder was rewarded for passive and quiet loyalty. Such inconsistencies suggest that commissioners struggled with a proper definition of loyalty for nonresistant women, a group lacking access to the masculine world of political life.[31]

As commissioners pondered the difference in standards of loyalty between men and women, they also initiated a discussion about religious pacifism during wartime which would reverberate into the twentieth century. The question of the relationship between religious scruples and civil requirements occurred regularly throughout claims hearings, and a consensus that conscientious objection stands in a strained compatibility with (if not direct opposition to) "good citizenship" began to form. Government representatives concluded that nonresistance and its natural aversion to violence carried the potential for disloyal behavior. A series of cross-

[31]*UCWE*: III, 608, 611-12, Rebecca Burkholder Claim #9730. The commission awarded Burkholder $244.25 of a claim worth $529.35.

examination questions posed by government counsel James Tanner in the 1896 hearing of John W. Driver illustrates the concerns of the Court of Claims regarding nonresistant allegiance:

> Q: The Dunkards (Brethren) are opposed to the side or section or cause that force a war. Are they not?
> Q: They (Brethren) are opposed to any country which undertakes to conquer a country or section of a country?
> Q: Who brought on the late war? If the North had not undertaken to conquer the South and force her back in the Union, don't you know there would have been no war?
> Q: Claimant then was just as much opposed to the Federal army fighting the South as he was opposed to the Confederate army fighting the North, was he not?

Opposition to any and all war rendered nonresistants incapable of sympathizing with the Union side over the Confederacy. John W. Click, testifying on behalf of his father Joseph in 1896, called his father's house "a place or a resort for men or persons arranging to pass through the lines." Government lawyers soon suspected, however, that some of those eager to "pass through the lines" may have been Union soldiers seeking to escape the grisly realities of wartime. The government attorney grilled John Click in an attempt to establish nonresistance as a misplaced loyalty:

> Q: Your father, the Claimant, being opposed to war as you say was helping these men for the purpose of keeping them out of the war, and from fighting on either side, and not because he wanted them to go to fight in the armies of the North. Am I right?
> Q: Did those men who you say he aided intend to do anything but shirk the responsibilities of citizens of their state, and acting the coward seek to hide themselves, and avoid fighting of all character?
> Q: Then it would be a part of a Dunkard's creed to assist people in getting out of or in keeping out of war, no matter on which side it was necessary (to) throw ones influence and assistance?

Government lawyers thus distinguished between opposition to "the war," which could point a finger of blame directly at the Confederacy, and opposition to "war," which sought to alleviate the sufferings of combatants on both sides.[32]

[32] *UCWE:* IV, 742, John W. Driver Claim #8155; *UCWE:* III, 51-57, Joseph Click Claim #2522.

The teaching of Jesus to "turn the other cheek" refers to the refusal to answer one act of evil with another act of evil, and Mennonites and Brethren maintained this nonresistant stance before the SCC. In their government testimony, Rockingham County nonresistants portrayed themselves as devout Unionists who nevertheless strove not to contribute to the already significant amount of bloodshed caused by the evil of warfare. Claims commissioners, on the other hand, viewed the nonresistant position as one of avoiding violence altogether. When Mennonites spoke in hushed tones about Union allegiance or Brethren stayed home rather than voting against secession, they were not having their cheek slapped; they were keeping their cheeks out of slapping position in the first place. The same question confronting conscientious objectors in other generations dogged Civil War nonresistants of the Shenandoah Valley as well: Were these individuals to be admired for their religious resolve to uphold peace, or were these people simple self-preservationists unconcerned with the larger political ramifications of their spiritual actions? The desire of nonresistants to be meek and lowly disciples of peace resulted in actions the SCC deemed considerably below the standard of "a life of treason to the Confederacy."

At the 1896 hearing of Mennonite Isaac Wenger, Assistant Attorney Ben Carter dismissed nonresistant belief as hypocritical pretext for economic opportunism: "He would stay and sell to both combatants at their need, and, when his property was taken without the formality of a bargain, get vouchers and pay from the takers, whether these be union or disunion forces… He had mere thrift, it seems, more than religion or loyalty." Wenger's attorney, Gilbert Moyers, vehemently denied the government's accusations:"…the proof shows that what the Confederates got from him they took, and that he did not furnish it…That they took a large amount of property

from him. That they never paid him for." In his response to Moyers, Carter reaffirmed the notion that conscientious objectors were suspicious and spineless swindlers:

> Claimant, of course, could have gone out of reach of Confederate process, as according to the testimony, many of his neighbors did, and by so doing, if he were loyal, he would have made sure that, if compelled to fight, he should fight for the government to which he gave allegiance. But he was neither so scrupulous nor so loyal as that. He was just scrupulous enough to send a Confederate substitute to the front, and remain himself where he not only would be safe from Federal bullets, but would be able to prosecute remunerative trade.[33]

For Ben Carter and countless other Americans, the equation seemed simple enough: to prove one's loyalty to the United States, one must be willing to fight for it or accept the consequences. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, both the Southern Claims Commission and the Court of Claims engaged in a crucial discussion with religious noncombatants regarding where the latter fit in a democracy that highly values military service. At one level, this dialogue between nonresistants and the state was a forward-looking conversation anticipating the concerns of World War I. Between 1917 and 1920, in the quest to "make the world safe for democracy," the American state enforced loyalty and conformity, equated war support with patriotism, and rejected the legitimacy of conscience of many Christian nonresistants. Southern Claims Commission testimony also, however, represented a clash between contending Civil War memories. The conceptualization of nonresistants as Civil War peace heroes played out before a civil audience, and the reviews were frequently less than favorable. [34]

Mennonites, Brethren, and their peace compatriots in the Society of Friends established nonresistance as the fundamental action of Civil War heroism, the courage necessary to resist the

[33] *UCWE:* II, 464-69, Isaac Wenger Claim #9778. For Wenger's testimony regarding hiring a substitute, see p. 14.
[34] For more on the struggles faced by pacifists in World War I, see David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 14-15, 49-50, 163-64.

act and allurements of warfare in a militaristic society. Claims commissioners, on the other hand, brought their own historical understanding of the war to the table. For these men, property loss, economic hardships, and community intimidation did not constitute heroism; fighting did. Government attorneys gauged noble citizenship by the criteria of exposure to violence, the same evaluation used to honor the Civil War soldier in postwar America. By government definition, the heroic Unionist voted vocally against the ordinance of secession knowing a mob of rabid Confederates awaited him outside. The heroic Unionist spoke freely and openly about devotion to the United States in all quarters of the community knowing that reprisal could be swift and severe. The heroic Unionist was a real man (or a woman exhibiting masculine behavior): active, outspoken, free from fear of injuries, threats, or molestations. In sum, the great Union citizen, whether a fallen soldier, honored veteran or outspoken noncombatant, showed himself willing to lay his life on the line when and where national duty demanded. Those who chose to be quiet and passive (by hiring substitutes before commutation fees were available or voting secession under general duress) were branded spiritual or political outsiders by commissioners; nonresistants were viewed as individuals standing far outside the accepted cultural definition of fearless heroism. The historical lesson learned from the commission and the claims court was clear; avoiding military service in the Civil War did not mean exemption from violence. Indeed, the heroic citizen went looking for it.

Epilogue

Around 1903, a group of former Union soldiers who had once comprised the 107th New York Regiment gathered together for a reunion near Elmira, New York. Forty years earlier, the regiment experienced Civil War fighting in all its gruesome reality at the battle of Antietam. As ex-combatants renewed wartime acquaintances and remembered past gallantry at this bittersweet gathering, they learned that the widow of one of their former comrades, Sgt. Nathan Dykman, held in her possession a "stoutly built, leather covered and fairly well preserved Bible" taken from the Dunker Brethren meetinghouse at Antietam in September 1862. Regiment survivors paid the widow ten dollars for her souvenir, and then sought to return the Bible to the war-ravaged meetinghouse. Scouring the region for an adherent of the Brethren faith who would convey the Bible back to the "little old church," the surviving soldiers eventually found one authentic "Dunker": John T. Lewis, a freeman who emigrated from Maryland to the Elmira area around 1864 and still maintained formal membership in a Maryland Brethren congregation. Lewis shipped the Bible back to its Sharpsburg home, all the while acknowledging "the generous veterans of the 107th," for restoring the book back to its rightful owners. The incident only confirmed what Elmira-area acquaintances already knew to be true about Lewis. A 1903 article in the *Elmira Telegram* praised the "sturdy old gentleman" for his "genial disposition" and "unusual share of intelligence"; in short, Lewis belonged "in the ranks of the best citizens of his race." [1]

Brethren fascination with John Lewis grew out of more than his Dunker identification, his successful delivery of the Antietam meetinghouse Bible, or the "perils and perplexities" of

[1] *The Elmira Telegram,* 13 December 1903, reprinted in *The Inglenook* 8:18, 1 May 1906, 413-15.

his odyssey north from slaveholding Maryland to New York. Lewis apparently enjoyed a long-lasting personal friendship with the most famous resident of Elmira: Samuel Langhorne Clemens. One day in the summer of 1877, Lewis, then a struggling farmer deep in debt, was returning home from a trip into town when he witnessed a scared horse wildly dragging a carriage down a steep, hilly roadway. Giving no thought to his personal safety, Lewis jumped from his own wagon, ran down the horse, and corralled the frightened beast by grabbing his bridle. The split-second display of courage by Lewis saved the lives of three individuals in the carriage: Ida Langdon (Clemens' sister-in-law), her daughter Julia, and a family nurse. For his act of bravery, the Langdon family repaid Lewis with gifts of cash, a gold watch, a set of Mark Twain books personally inscribed by the author, and years of admiration. Early in the twentieth century, Mark Twain paid a moving tribute to his "Dunker friend": "Twenty-seven years ago, by the prompt and intelligent exercise of his courage, presence of mind and extraordinary strength, (Lewis) saved the lives of relatives of mine, whom a runaway horse was hurrying to destruction. Naturally I hold him in high and grateful regard." One author claimed that, as a result of the runaway horse incident, Lewis "found more sunshine in life." In 1903, Lewis still owned a sixty-four acre farm, but old age and ill health hindered his personal agricultural labors. Sounding like an antebellum proponent of agrarian "free labor" caught helplessly in an industrial age, Lewis, through a reporter, lamented as "one of the griefs of his life that he cannot find men of his race willing to do farm work. It grieves him greatly to think that they prefer a poorer life in the city than the able-bodied could secure on the farm."[2]

[2] Ibid. One of the most recent attempts at a comprehensive biography of Mark Twain refers to both the "runaway carriage" incident and the subsequent Twain-Lewis friendship as significant contributions to the "de-Southernization" of Twain. See Ron Powers, *Mark Twain: A Life* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 407. Some claim that Lewis served as an inspiration for the character of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn.* See, for example, Kermon Thomasson,

John Lewis died on July 23, 1906. Battling dropsy in the months immediately preceding his death, Lewis made arrangements for his own impending funeral, including a request for a Brethren elder to officiate the ceremony. At the moment of Lewis's death, the Brethren minister stationed closest to Elmira was traveling in Iowa, and telegram delays prevented other pastors from fulfilling Lewis's funerary wishes. When Lewis was laid to rest on July 25, the wife of the undertaker stood over the grave reading words written by the freeman-turned-peace church hero himself: "I have tried to live faithful to the New Testament and order of the Brethren. Though separated from them here, I hope to meet them above, where parting will be no more. When I am gone, if no brother can be obtained to preach my funeral, I request to be laid away without any ceremony, as I recognize none as true Christians who refuse to teach the whole Gospel." Despite the lack of participation in a local congregation for over four decades, John T. Lewis professed fidelity to the Brethren faith to his dying day.[3]

For their part, the Brethren wrote pleasant-sounding eulogies for Lewis, referring to "this aged colored brother" as "a veritable father in Israel." *The Gospel Messenger,* a Brethren periodical, relied on community opinion to establish the reputation of Lewis because Brethren themselves knew so little of the man: "He was very highly respected, and for very good reasons, by the best people of Elmira, where he lived for many years." In their own subdued manner, then, Brethren placed John Lewis in the pantheon of Civil War heroes, regarding him as a hard-

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"Mark Twain and His Dunker Friend," *The Messenger,* October 1985, 16-21. For more on the clash between an agriculturally-based "free labor" political economy and an opposing concept emphasizing the class struggle of industrialization, and how this conflict affected perceptions of Southern African-Americans in the postbellum North, see Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[3] *Gospel Messenger* 45:35, 1 September 1906, 551. The grave of John Lewis remained unmarked until 2000, when the Brethren Historical Committee purchased a headstone to mark the spot. See Frank Ramirez, *Brethren Brush with Greatness* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 2008), 36.

working, respectable social exemplar who returned a valuable relic to a cherished historical site. The life and death of Lewis, however, did little to significantly alter larger Brethren racial attitudes. Glowing accolades directed towards John Lewis masked a reticence to minister to the needs of African-Americans or welcome them into the Brethren fold. Writing about Lewis in 1988, Brethren author Kermon Thomasson characterized the post-Civil War attitude of Brethren towards African-Americans as "lukewarm at best" and added the additional commentary, "Even today the Brethren have nothing to boast about in their reaching out to blacks in their midst." Brethren thus valued Lewis as a conduit figure, an intermediary used to gain access to cultural celebrities and prized artifacts. According to Thomasson, two things alone secured Lewis a permanent place in Brethren history: his friendship with Mark Twain and his return of the Antietam Bible. There is a certain incongruence in a group trusting in "no creed but the Bible" broadcasting its association with an individual who, if not a full-fledged skeptic, exhibited substantial irreverence towards organized Christianity and its beliefs, but the allure of celebrity, of rubbing shoulders with one of the great American literary figures, proved irresistible to a group struggling to find its own way in American culture. Likewise, Lewis' link to the Antietam Bible solidified his historical stature among Brethren. When a Brethren periodical reprinted a lengthy article about the life and heroic exploits of John Lewis, it nevertheless ignored the man himself in the title "The Tale of a Dunkard Bible Gone Astray." A headline announcing Lewis' death in an Elmira newspaper thus accurately mirrored Brethren perceptions of John Lewis: "JOHN T. LEWIS, COLORED HERO, DIES ON WAY TO HOSPITAL. Mark Twain's Warm Friend and the Man Who Saved the Lives of Mrs. Charles J. Langdon and Mrs. E.E. Loomis Passes Away in Ambulance—Only Dunkard in Vicinity." When Brethren remembered John Lewis as a Civil War hero, the power of his spiritual testimony and the potentiality his example

held for deepened racial understanding went largely unnoticed; what was noticed was his "brushes with greatness" based on the fates of time and space.[4]

In Brethren imagination, John Lewis ascended to the rank of Civil War hero, but in Brethren reality, he remained something of a "token black," a peculiarity in an otherwise racially homogenous religious society. Of course, the gulf between the idealized and the actual found in the story of John Lewis is not uncommon in the historical arena. When history is remembered at the collective level, myth frequently butts heads with unpleasant reality, and in the American experience, nothing exemplifies this more than the Civil War. In his latest work *American Oracle,* David Blight examines the literary contributions of four Cold War-era authors (Robert Penn Warren, Bruce Catton, Edmund Wilson, and James Baldwin) to show how their works carried a "tragic sensibility," an attempt in some measure to peel back the "protective shells of sentimentalism, romance, and pathos" surrounding the Civil War to uncover the unsettling actualities hidden within. In the early 1960s, as the nation grappled with how to observe the Centennial of the Civil War, "a story of the mutual valor of the Blue and Gray" appealed to the popular consciousness much more than "the troublesome, disruptive problem of black and white." Fifty years later, Blight argues, a tragic historical understanding still serves as a

[4] *Gospel Messenger* 45:35, 1 September 1906, 551; Kermon Thomasson, "Being Black and Brethren," *The Messenger,* June 1988, 17-18; *The Inglenook* 8:18, 1 May 1906, 413; *Elmira Gazette and Free Press,* 23 July 1906.

necessary corrective to the sanitized and whitewashed Civil War narrative steeped in American (or Confederate) exceptionalism preferred by many.[5]

American Oracle convincingly reminds the reader of the amnesia present in popular historical imagination, but it also demonstrates the tendency of historians to create a sharp dichotomy between "triumphalist" and tragic Civil War memory. Even the most self-assured and buoyant retellings of the war contained tragic undertones lurking close beneath the surface. Antebellum expectations and wartime achievements encountered postbellum disappointments, and this created fertile ground for a post-war public memory celebrating the war years as a "golden age" of heroism. Those who remembered the war as the great event which preserved the vaunted Union watched as the romanticized America of small shop proprietors and independent farmers gave way to a closed frontier, an industrial landscape controlled by ruthless tycoons, and constant labor unrest. Southern advocates of the "Lost Cause" who praised the spiritual and chivalric superiority of the Confederate fighter nevertheless suffered from the pillaging of formerly fruitful land, intense demographic loss (260,000 soldiers killed along with approximately 50,000 civilians), and the psychic disillusionment associated with losing a war. The bravery shown by African-American soldiers and the revolutionary potential of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments captivated those clinging to the "emancipationist vision" for America, but political opportunism and deep-seated racism quickly turned back those advances towards equality made during Reconstruction. For all Civil War narrative constructers, then, for every piece of ground gained and recognition attained during the war, something precious was lost, sometimes irretrievably. Any triumphalist reading of the Civil War, any

[5] David W. Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2011), 6, 3, 22-27. For all the book's virtues, Blight gives a fairly obtuse definition of tragedy, describing it as a "cathartic" but not necessarily pessimistic conception of history. See Blight, *Oracle,* 23-25.

glowing account of what the war gave to a nation, section, race, or religious society, could not be easily separated from (and may have been consciously rooted in) a realization of what the war took away.[6]

At first glance, the Civil War memory of the peace churches deserves the "triumphalist" designation. While many nonresistants suffered and a few died for their convictions, the narrative emerging after the war stressed victorious wartime heroism, a pacifistic imprint indelibly stamped on American culture. Their steadfast commitment to noncombatant principles during the war allowed nonresistants to expose the contaminating effects of the war on American moral life and the violence of militaristic interpretations of American history without hypocrisy. Nonresistants met with Abraham Lincoln, inspired him, gained his approval, and drove him to tears in their presence. The powerful words and courageous examples of noncombatants silenced high-ranking military officials and disarmed the weapons poised to kill them for their refusal to serve as conscripts. In published stories and personal reminiscences, peace church heroes functioned as pacifistic war veterans, Christian soldiers who fought the good fight without carnal weapons and left the postwar generation a legacy of honor not easily replicable.

For all its exultation over a mythic past, however, the nonresistant Civil War narrative contained its own tragic sensibilities. First, the heroic conceptualization of nonresistants ironically required a war. In the closing months of the "deplorable civil war," *The Friend* found appalling the number of former slaves transferred from "the hard servitude in which they were born and have lived" to a newer servitude where they were "taken into the army, subjected to the slavery of military discipline and law, and obliged to take part in the sanguinary contest waged between the government and the rebels." The editorial especially resented "the assertion that

[6] For Confederate casualty numbers, see McPherson, *Battle Cry,* 619 (note 53), 854.

military life and drill would remove the long enforced sense of inferiority" among former slaves and concluded that war, despite its apparent ameliorative social effect on the freedman, remained "irreconcilable with the heavenly principles and spirit of the gospel, and abhorrent to all the finer feelings of humanity." As nonresistants objected to the role of the war in providing proof of manliness and the right to citizenship for formerly enslaved African-American males, they simultaneously (and, perhaps, contradictorily) used the war to prove their own mettle as American heroes. Theoretical pacifism could not demonstrate courage and conviction maintained by nonresistants under the fire of persecution, the acknowledgment (and occasional acceptance) of pacifism by those in the political, military, and religious centers of power in American life, or the moral high ground occupied at war's end by those who refused to engage in fighting. The interpretation of a pacifistic past as heroic necessitated the lived-out historical experience of conscientious objection, and only a bloody war reaching deep into civilian life could provide such an experience. For nonresistants, heroism came at a costly national price.[7]

The passage of time added an additional sense of tragedy to the peace church Civil War narrative. For all their heroic posturing, postbellum nonresistants certainly envisioned the Civil War as an unfortunate historical concurrence of "political hatred, selfish prejudices, military tyranny and pure maliciousness" never to be repeated or desired in America again. Five decades later, however, nonresistants relived the trauma of their Civil War experience. World War I brought to the process of conscription a compulsion unseen and unparalleled in the War Between the States. Conscientious objectors could no longer pay a fee to gain exemption from the military; the state now required alternative noncombatant service. The intimacy of an accessible federal government and the romanticized figure of Abraham Lincoln listening to nonresistant

[7] *The Friend* 38:29, 18 March 1865, 231.

appeals gave way to a highly bureaucratized state headed by Woodrow Wilson, characterized by one author as "either too busy or too little interested in the question of conscience to attend to the problem personally." Familiar motifs of personal suffering by conscripts returned, including "the taunts and reproaches of soldiers, the social segregation in camps, and the uncertainty of treatment." More extreme cases of brutality also arose including forced labor, exposure to cold temperatures, withholding food, intimidation with loaded weapons, and soldier hazing. In a time of heightened concern for shows of American loyalty, nonresistants found their patriotism questioned and their reputation lumped together with other "slackers" perceived as withholding support for the war effort.[8]

Numerous theories may explain why Christian nonresistants found themselves unprepared for the harrowing ordeal of World War I. Peace historian Peter Brock cites both a lack of leadership and relevance to explain the "standstill" of pacifism in the years between 1865 and 1914: "No outstanding leader—or even any person of middling stature—arose to challenge the surrounding apathy of an age of materialism." Within the peace churches, the influences of evangelicalism and (in some Quaker circles) modernism eroded the traditional commitment to pacifism. If the peace churches did not abandon nonresistant principles altogether, it was still difficult to resist the allure of the spirit of optimism present in the first decade of the twentieth century. In a September 1914 issue, *The American Friend* admitted that the outbreak of World War I arrived as a shock to many within the peace denominations: "Few men could believe that our twentieth century civilization had within it any possibility of a gigantic bloody strife." Valid

[8]Cartland, *Southern Heroes,* xxvii; Wright, *Conscientious Objectors,* 225, 235, 241-43.

as all these reasons may be, another factor also helps explain the trauma of the nonresistant World War I experience: faulty Civil War narratives.[9]

Peace church memory of the Civil War contained its share of exceptionalism, the belief that a few brave outsiders stood as authentic custodians of the gospel of Christ while the majority compromised Christian teachings concerning violence and warfare. This memory, however, also assumed that nonresistants had, to a large extent, validated themselves and their beliefs to American onlookers during the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln tearfully acknowledged the peace churches as vital participants in the nation's religious and political life. Military personnel rejecting pacifist beliefs still remained impressed by quiet nonresistant fortitude. Soldiers charged with executing nonresistants lowered their guns when seeing a pure example of Christ-like words and behavior acted out in front of them. The moral struggles America wrestled with in the years after the war confirmed that nonresistants understood the connection between the ethical maladies of the nation and warfare better than other intellectuals, reformers, or theologians. So went peace church Civil War memory. Late in the nineteenth century, a new generation of writers including Twain, Ambrose Bierce, and Stephen Crane confirmed nonresistant historical interpretation by backing away from "nostalgic and nationalistic expressions" of the war, offering instead gritty assessments of the violence and tragedy present in the conflict. According to literary scholar Randall Fuller, however, this Civil War "literary realism," similar to the peace church reconceptualization of the war, remained "a minority view." World War I proved that nonresistance was still an American anomaly, that the Civil War had not integrated Christian pacifism into the cultural mainstream as desired, and that the peace hero

[9] Brock, *Pacifism,* 869; *American Friend* 2:38, 17 September 1914, 595.

was still largely an isolated figure challenging the indomitable military establishment. In a genuinely tragic sense, the Civil War peace hero fought a grueling and occasionally fatal fight in vain for a truly "Lost Cause."[10]

The tale of a peace church family confronting the challenges of the Civil War came to the silver screen in 1956. *Friendly Persuasion,* based on a popular collection of short stories written by Jessamyn West (a second cousin of Richard Nixon), pictured the disruptive influence of the war upon one Quaker family living in southern Indiana. Gary Cooper, the gunslinger of numerous Hollywood westerns, played family patriarch Jess Birdwell, a Friend frequently tempted by "worldly" pursuits such as purchasing an organ and racing horses on the way to Sunday meeting. The oldest Birdwell son, Josh (played in a pre-*Psycho* role by Anthony Perkins), undergoes a crisis of conscience when he senses that other young men in the community are shouldering his responsibilities by fighting for the Union. In West's novel, Josh wonders aloud if his faith is only pretext for outright cowardice: "I don't even know if I could kill anyone if I tried. But I got to try, as long as people around me have to. I'm no better'n they are. I can't be separated from them." Both father and son eventually abandon pacifist principles, and in the film's climactic moment, the Gary Cooper character utters the line, "A man's life ain't worth a hill of beans except he lives up to his own conscience."[11]

[10] Randall Fuller, *From Battlefields Rising: How the Civil War Transformed American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 221-22.

[11] Jessamyn West, *The Friendly Persuasion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company: 1945), 68-69; *Friendly Persuasion,* dir. William Wyler, 137 min., Allied Artists, 1956, DVD. In West's novel, Jess Birdwell never says the "hill of beans" quote.

While Civil War nonresistants would have wholly agreed with the literality of this statement regarding individual conscience, Jess Birdwell uses this line to affirm his son's entry into military service, not as a pacifistic declaration. The film version of *Friendly Persuasion* originated in a Cold War context where Quakers were portrayed as admirably idealistic but ultimately naïve dreamers who learned the hard way that violence occasionally offers the only means to counter impending evil. In the motion picture, the Birdwell family appears charmingly archaic with their plain dress and their use of "thee"s and "thou"s, but at the critical juncture, the youthful protagonist submits to the larger cultural definition of heroism and enters into warfare. Today, as the nation marks the Sesquicentennial of the war, nonresistance looks incongruent with most Civil War memory. It is tempting to write off the nonresistants as irrelevant anachronisms standing on the sidelines clinging to misty beliefs while others settled the weighty issues of Union preservation, Southern independence, emancipation, and even validation of manliness. If David Blight is correct, and public imagination frequently reduces the social, racial, and political complexities of the Civil War into reenactments and battlefield tours, the fighters and the fighting still comprise the bulk of the national lore surrounding the war. For both popular and academic audiences, however, the nonresistant story represents a Civil War complexity worth scrutinizing. Their saga raises questions about how Americans define greatness, exemplifies the tension present between individual conscience and national demands, and adds insightful perspective on the unprecedented tragedy that was the American Civil War.[12]

[12] James Emmett Ryan, *Imaginary Friends: Representing Quakers in American Culture, 1650-1950* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009). In chapter 6, "Staging Quakerism: Theater and Cinema," Ryan references *Friendly Persuasion,* along with *High Noon* and the 1947 John Wayne film *Angel and the Badman* as examples of motion pictures portraying the Quaker as "a relatively unattractive and socially disabled human being, albeit one whose values are estimable" (p. 191).

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Tilghman Vestal Documents

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Josiah Leeds Scrapbooks, MS Coll. 1102.
Sharpless-Kite Family Papers, MS Coll. 1111.
William H.S. Wood Collection, MS Coll. 1026.

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Vita

Aaron Jerviss was born in Bellefontaine, Ohio, the son of Larry and Phyllis Jerviss. In 1988, he graduated from Indian Lake High School, located near Lewistown, Ohio. He then attended Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1992. After graduating from college, Aaron worked as an air personality in radio broadcasting for several years before returning to academic studies. In 2004, he acquired a Master of Arts degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, also in Ashland, Ohio. In 2005, Aaron, along with his wife Amanda, moved to Knoxville, Tennessee in order to enroll in the doctoral program in history at the University of Tennessee. Fellowships offered by Haverford College and Guilford College helped make Aaron's dissertation research possible. In 2013, he graduated with a Ph.D. in History, earned under the supervision of Dr. Ernest Freeberg. While a graduate student at Tennessee, Aaron taught upper-level courses in American Religious History and won the Susan Becker and Thomas and Kathryn Shelton Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award for the 2012-13 academic year.