

TRANSCENDENT REFORM: QUAKER WOMEN AND SOCIAL REFORM
DURING THE HICKSITE SCHISM

by

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the role of Quaker women in social reform during the period from 1790-1920, particularly among the leading female reformers of the Northeast, focusing especially on the reforms of abolition, women's rights and peace witness. Nancy Hewitt's question is addressed; did the Hicksite schism lead to liberal reform among women? That is, were there positive repercussions from the Hicksite schism for women in the sense that the Hicksite schism became the platform for the women's movement, or that Hicksite Quaker women were far more involved in liberal social reforms than their Orthodox Quaker counterparts?¹

The study concludes that Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker women were equally involved in liberal social reform and activism, but that they differed primarily in the expression of their theological beliefs and hermeneutics. Certain radical theological beliefs of the Hicksites may have caused some historians to make assumptions that the Hicksites were more "liberal" in every way than the Orthodox, but in the core Quaker values which unite them in reform—their belief in peace, human equality and social justice, they were actually similar. As for the

¹ The Quaker denomination split in 1828 into two divisions, Hicksite and Orthodox, and did not officially reunite until 1955. Nancy Hewitt is one of the only historians who suggests there might have been one positive outcome to the schism: women's reform.

creation of the woman's rights movement, the study charts two theories of the creation of the women's movement—One that begins in Seneca Falls with the Women's Rights Convention of 1848 which involves predominantly Hicksite Quakers, and the second which sees the creation of the American women's rights movement evolving from the work of female abolitionists. This second theory focuses largely on Orthodox Quaker women.

The study also describes how the creation of the American Friends Service Committee in the early 20th century, as a merger of Hicksites and Orthodox Quakers concerned with peace and international humanitarian reform, served as an early healing of the Hicksite schism and symbolized the core Quaker values that characterized the denomination and united the reformers in their activities throughout the centuries.

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***Transcendent Reform: Quaker Women and Social Reform
During the Hicksite Schism***

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“The infidel Hicksite principles that shocked Christendom are now the corner-stones of the liberal religious movement in this country...”²

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis began with a focus on the Hicksite schism, the major split that rent the Quaker denomination in 1827 and was not completely healed until 1955. The schism occurred among all groups within the Society of Friends, a religious denomination who hold peace and religious consensus as two of their most sacred values. I had always admired the Quakers for their advances in social reform, and the stories of the schism were fascinating to me because some of them involved Friends acting in most “un-Friendly” ways-- fighting over the keys to the meeting houses, entrance to the sacred burial grounds, and even resorting on occasion to fisticuffs. I wanted to learn more.

When I started looking into the schism I went to a Quaker bookstore and said I was looking for books on the division, and in particular would love to see children’s books made for the sabbath day schools that were intended to explain the schism to Quaker children. The salesman came closer and lowered his voice to a whisper, explaining to me that this was something “a lot of Friends don’t feel comfortable talking about,” and therefore he doubted that there were any such books. This was consistent with the kind of language I saw used by many Quaker historians to describe the schism-- indicating that this was not just an event in history but a very regrettable event that could and should have been

² Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eulogy at the Memorial Services held in Washington by the National Woman Suffrage Association for Lucretia Mott on January 19, 1881, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage, Volume I, 1848-1861* (Rochester, N.Y.: Charles Mann, 1889), 429.

avoided. Quaker historian Hugh Barbour, for example, called it “the most traumatic event in Quaker history”.³ Others called it “a tragedy”⁴, “tragic and irrevocable”⁵, “a sorrowful schism”⁶. Perhaps this point is related to the failure of the Quakers to reach their own theological ideal of consensus in this case. Few historians have suggested that there may have been positive outcomes to the Hicksite schism as well as negative ones.

It was the same way that some of my colleagues in the Methodist ministry discussed the potential for our denomination to split during the present century over the controversial issue of homosexuality in the Church. As I am of the opinion that schism might be a necessary solution to our problem--- as it might make a strong statement that some of us believe that the exclusion of some members from our body of Christ because of their sexual orientation is totally unacceptable—I could see some real positive effects of church schism. For example, when the Methodist denomination split over the issue of racism and abolition in 1844, contemporary Methodists do not look back and say it was an unfortunate event. It was a part of our history, and while a split in a church is never a happy thing, I look back at the split of 1844 as making a positive

³ Hugh Barbour, and Thomas Bassett, Christopher Densmore, H. Larry Ingle, Alson D. Van Wagner, “The Orthodox-Hicksite Separation,” in *Quaker Crosscurrents: Three Hundred Years of Friends in the New York Yearly Meetings*, Eds. Hugh Barbour, Christopher Densmore, Elizabeth H. Moger, Nancy C. Sorel, Alson D. Van Wagner, and Arthur J. Worrall, 100-130 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 100.

⁴ H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1998), preface.

⁵ Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 19.

⁶ Thomas Willis, Editor, “The Answers, By Elias Hicks to the Six Queries Addressed to Him, With His Declarations Upon the Same Points, On Other Occasions, Contrasted With Each other, and With the Doctrines of the Society of Friends” (New York: Mahlon Day, 376 Pearl-Street, 1831), Long Island Studies Collection, under “A Sermon Delivered at Friends Meeting-House, Rose-Street”, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY, Preface.

statement about how strongly many Methodists objected to slavery and racial hatred during that time. It is also a key event in the “family history” of the Quaker denomination, although it is a piece of history that seems to come with a value judgment attached to it. It is telling whenever historians decide to assign a value judgment to an event in history rather than merely reporting that it happened. For example, calling World War II “the good war,” or calling this denominational break “the awful schism”.

Therefore, Nancy Hewitt’s article on the Hicksite schism caught my attention. It was the only one I have ever seen which suggests that there might have been some “positive value” to the split. Hewitt posited the following hypothesis about the Hicksite schism:

“If upheaval that blurred the boundaries of women’s role fostered female Quaker’s activism, and if a strain of that activism then led to some Friends’ advocacy of feminism, and if feminist Friends formed the core of the nineteenth-century woman’s rights movement, and if that movement initiated transformations that began to reshape gender roles in more egalitarian ways, then the fragmentation of Friends was not a tragedy for Quaker women, but a triumph for us all. That is a prospect worth exploring.”⁷

If Hewitt’s hypothesis was correct, then I had yet one more reason to investigate the Hicksite schism, as it may have had, in some way, a direct effect on the nineteenth century female Quaker reformers who changed the face of American history with their social reform-- women like Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul. I wanted to see if the hypothesis was true that Hicksite Quaker women were more involved in liberal social reform in America than their

⁷ Nancy Hewitt, “The Fragmentation of Friends: the Consequences for Quaker Women in Antebellum America,” in *Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women Over Three Centuries*, Eds.

Orthodox Quaker counterparts, especially in relationship to the founding of the women's rights movement.

I examined the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, the equivalent of the American women's Declaration of Independence, with the help of Judith Wellman's tremendous study,⁸ and discovered that female Hicksites were everywhere in it, and were crucial at the tea party that created the Seneca Falls Convention.

Next, I came across Elizabeth Cady Stanton's eulogy for fellow feminist Lucretia Mott, in which Stanton declared in 1881 that "the infidel Hicksite principles that shocked Christendom are now the cornerstones of the liberal religious movement in this country..."⁹ Now I was hooked. Was it possible that Hicksite Quakers were the key to the 19th century wave of liberal Protestant social activism I had been following for so long? I decided to find out.

It was not to be as easy a task as I had hoped. There are no master lists of Hicksites and Orthodox Quakers, which can be cross-referenced against the list of signers of the Declaration of Sentiments, for example. If you want to find out whether someone was a Hicksite Quaker you need to see where she lived, try to find her name in local meeting records, and then identify whether that local meeting had "gone Hicksite" or Orthodox. Or, you can check *Quaker Necrology*. If she is listed there, you can see whether she was eulogized in the Hicksite or

Elizabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard, 93-119 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 106.

⁸ Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eulogy at the Memorial Services held in Washington by the National Woman Suffrage Association, for Lucretia Mott, on January 19, 1881, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

the Orthodox publications after her death. A large-scale statistical study of the type I would like to do was going to be impossible.

In keeping with Catherine Brekus' call for more studies in women's religious history,¹⁰ I decided to focus on the effects of the schism on women reformers (most studies of the Hicksite schism have been centered almost exclusively on feuding men). I limited my study to Quaker women of the Northeast, focusing especially on the areas of Boston, New York and Philadelphia. I centered my study on three of the major reform movements in which Friends were involved in the 19th century, abolition, women's rights, and peace activism, and I went from the top down, focusing on the female leaders of these movements. I searched the membership lists of the major abolitionist, women's, and peace societies of the century, especially for women in positions of leadership. Because so much material is available on these women, I was pleased to find I could do a detailed analysis of the Hicksite-Orthodox issue for these women as well as look into their reform philosophies and personal lives. Whenever possible, I made use of diaries, biographies, memoirs, letters, and sermons. I examined the female reform leaders' early religious development as Quakers, the place of the Society in the lives of their families of origin, and what they and their families specifically had to say about the schism. I looked at the types of reform they were involved in, the methods they used, and their willingness to break with female societal roles in order to achieve their reform

Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage, Volume I, 1848-1861* (Rochester, N.Y.: Charles Mann, 1889), 429

goals. I also looked at their personal lives, their families and their marriages. The advantage of my study is that I could focus on a small group of significant Quaker women leaders and analyze their reform lives in detail. The disadvantage is that I was not able to survey large numbers of Quaker women, or to focus on the lesser-known Quaker women. Here, I was fortunate to have studies like Debra Gold Hansen's in-depth look at the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, *Strained Sisterhood*, Carolyn Lawes' study of Worcester women's sewing circles, *Women and Reform in a New England Community 1815-1816*, Amy Swerdlow's study of "Abolition's Conservative Sisters", and Carol D. Spencer's study of Evangelical Quakers, "Evangelism, Feminism and Social Reform," all of which focus on smaller groups of lesser known women, and all support the thesis that Hicksite and Orthodox women were equally and jointly involved in liberal social reform during this period, as much as or more so than their other Christian sisters. These studies also allowed some of the women who had not written memoirs, sermons, or published letters, to be counted.¹¹ I also had Sandra Stanley Holton's 2007 study of Quaker women in Britain from 1780-1930 to compare and contrast with my own. Holton's study was similar to mine in many of its parameters, and she found many similar trends among British

¹⁰ Catherine A. Brekus, "Searching for Women's Narratives in American Religious History", in Catherine Brekus, Editor, *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past*, Ed. Catherine Brekus, 1-50 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹¹ See Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Carolyn J. Lawes, *Women and Reform in a New England Community, 1815-1860* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000); Amy Swerdlow, "Abolition's Conservative Sisters: The Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Societies, 1834-184," in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, Editors, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Carole D. Spencer, "Evangelism, Feminism and Social Reform: The Quaker Woman Minister and the Holiness Revival," *Quaker History*, Vol. 80:1 Spring 1991.

women of the same time period. In this case, she was discussing what we must presume to be “Orthodox” women, who showed many striking similarities to the American women reformers in my study, and indicate that the outstanding characteristics of these female Quaker reformers were neither Hicksite nor Orthodox (and neither British nor American) but Quaker¹².

In addition to spanning a broad territory I chose a large span of time to cover. I began my study in 1790 with Quaker minister Hannah Barnard, who along with Quaker Isaac Shackleton first introduced the Biblical issues of the Hicksite schism. I end it with the termination of the schism, which I claim happened informally in 1917 with the creation of the American Friends Service Committee, and which happened formally in 1955. There are, of course, difficulties involved with spanning such an extended period of time, as much detail may be missed. Yet, the advantage of this great expanse of time is that I was able to include a great variety of Quaker reformers over time and show some important common threads. I was also able to detect the evolution of the denomination over the 19th century from a group tempted to withdraw from the world to protect its unique values to one that decided to make a place in the world for its beliefs.

There are other procedural issues that make this study a difficult one. The theological and ideological questions around the schism are some of the most compelling ones. However, it turns out that whether a Quaker attended a Hicksite or Orthodox meeting did not necessarily reflect only or even primarily his

¹² Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (London: Routledge, 2007).

or her ideological leaning. At the time of the split, divisions were made and some entire demographic areas went in one direction or the other. So, for example, in an area like Philadelphia where the split began, Hicksite and Orthodox meetings existed side by side and individuals had the continuing ability to choose one or the other according to their own leaning. Long Island was similar to Philadelphia, but in New England; by contrast, the entire territory with the exception of Nantucket “went Orthodox”. Upstate New York was largely Hicksite. So, when we chart a feminist movement that began in the burned-over district of upstate New York and included almost exclusively Hicksite women, or a feminist movement in New England including almost exclusively Orthodox women, it may not be the conscious theological choice of the women involved that we are observing, but merely the “lay of the land” in the area where those Friends happened to reside.

This demographic reality calls into question the entire enterprise of analyzing an individual Quaker’s belief or philosophy based on her Orthodox or Hicksite status *alone*. To say that a woman “chose” to be a Hicksite or Orthodox may make sense in a place like Long Island or Philadelphia, because if a woman felt strongly about the theology or philosophy of the party she could easily travel a short distance to join the other side. In the middle of New England, by contrast, the question of “choice” becomes more problematic. Many women may have been Hicksite or Orthodox as much by geographical default or convenience as by deep conviction.

Also, there are other issues that may have been more important to some people than the theological or geographical ones. For example, when the Grimke sisters decided to convert to Quakerism, they may not have made the choice to convert to Orthodox Quakerism for theological reasons alone; they may have also been joining the same group of people who had been so kind and caring to their father during his long, fatal illness in Philadelphia.

There were also further Quaker schisms after the Hicksite schism. In 1845, the Orthodox group underwent a further split into two more groups, Wilburite and Gurneyite, and these schisms did not result in the women from one sect or the other having a monopoly on reform. (Wilburites put the focus on “the ancient tradition of waiting in silence for the leadings of the Spirit,” and Gurneyites “felt it was more important to return to the biblical basics....”)¹³ But for the purposes of this study the women reformers have been divided into only two subgroups. The Wilburites and Gurneyites are considered under the umbrella of Orthodox Quakers, and the Progressive Quakers, an offshoot of Hicksites, are considered part of the Hicksite group.

The results of my study show that Elizabeth Cady Stanton overstated her case back in 1881 at Hicksite Lucretia Mott’s funeral when she gave the Hicksites credit for the entirety of liberal Protestant social reform in America during this time. I discovered instead that the Orthodox women reformers were as active as the Hicksites, and as liberal (with liberal reform defined by the willingness of the reformer to defy societal and gender stereotypes in pursuit of

¹³ David E.W. Holden, *Friends Divided; Conflict and Division in the Society of Friends* (Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 1988), 83, 90.

their reform goals). As traumatic as the schism obviously was for Friends in so many ways, it was not a dividing line for the denomination when it came to abolition, women's rights, or peace activism.

Thomas Hamm noted in his study of Orthodox Quakers that "Unlike Hicksite Quaker women who during this time [mid 19th century] were battling their way into pursuits hitherto exclusively male, Orthodox women were content to fill socially acceptable roles."¹⁴ The female reform leaders in this study did not follow that pattern.

Hicksite and Orthodox women reformers often engaged in the very same techniques of abolition reform, women's rights activity and peace activism. Often they participated in these activities together, as friends and colleagues. Hicksite and Orthodox women got together routinely for meetings, conventions, and anti-slavery fairs. They shared the same reform ideals and were even willing to risk danger to themselves and their families in the process of defending those ideals.

Why didn't the Hicksite schism split the women reformers? My study shows that the Hicksites and Orthodox Quakers shared certain core Quaker theological values that were not affected by the schism, particularly, the belief in the "inner light", or that "there is that of God in every one", belief in the equality of all people, and in witnessing to peace. These united all Quakers, so that even when Quakers disagreed over ideas like the trinity or the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, the virgin birth or the role of the Bible, the core theology that supported their social activism remained untouched. Larry Ingle titles the first chapter of his

¹⁴Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 47.

classic on the schism “The Roots of Separation Go Deep,” but in this case I think the roots of unity ran deeper still.¹⁵

The one issue on which they differed besides secondary theology was hermeneutics. Chapter three details these differences in the way the women reformers interpreted the Bible or regarded it in relation to their reforms. Yet these differences did not change the methods, types, or strengths of the reforms themselves.

Reading about the lives and thoughts of these Quaker women reformers I was struck not by the differences between them but by the similarities. It became clear in studying these women’s lives why Orthodox and Hicksite women showed up repeatedly in bold leadership positions of American social reform movements. Like Betty Friedan’s “red diaper babies” they were nurtured from childhood with common values, community and family support, and a powerful set of ideals that often served as an alternative to the prevailing attitudes of society.

Carol and John Stoneburner, in their extensive study of Quaker women note that “of the 1,359 women included in *The Dictionary of Notable Women 1607-1950*, 85 were Quakers, or 6.3%”, whereas Friends constituted less than one percent of the American population at the height of their popularity in the colonial period and have been declining in numbers ever since.¹⁶ This study builds on the work of the Stoneburners, Margaret Bacon¹⁷ and others, by focusing intensively on the reform activities, reform philosophies, and training of

¹⁵ Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*.

¹⁶ Carol and John Stoneburner, Eds. *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies* (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), Preface, xv.

the female Quaker leaders of the three major reform movements in the Northeast, to bring answers to the question scholars have long raised: “Why these women?”, and “How, if at all, did the Hicksite schism influence this prominent group of reformers?” Lori Ginzberg, in her extensive work on American women and benevolence/reform deals with many of the same issues as my study, and the reform leaders from my study figure prominently in her book, yet she dealt almost entirely with issues of class, and did not raise the question of how the Quaker beliefs and communities of Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Abby Kelley Foster, and Sarah Pugh affected the work they chose and the way they chose to do it.¹⁸

In addition to pointing to the importance of Quaker family and community as key supports for these reformers, my study points to the existence in the nineteenth century of a strong multid denominational Protestant reform group which seemed to appear for multiple different reforms. In my study this seemed to culminate with the creation of an interdenominational dynasty of reform families, when Martha Wright’s daughter, Marianna, married Lucretia Mott’s son, Thomas, daughter Ellen married William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., son Willy married Flora McMartin, niece to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and son Frank married Fanny Rosalie Pell, first cousin to Unitarian clergyman William Ellery Channing. It is particularly important to note that this took place against the background of Elias Hicks’ explicit prohibitions against mixing with outsiders, his major objections to

¹⁷ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1986).

¹⁸ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

any cooperation with ordained clergy, and the Quaker prohibitions against marriage outside of Friends. None of the female Quaker reformers in this study seemed to have had any difficulty “mixing” with other reformers of different denominations, clergy or lay. This offers credence to Robert Abzug’s theory that these reform movements, abolition, women’s rights, and peace witness, were almost religions unto themselves.¹⁹

In terms of the development of the women’s movement, further study shows that there are two ways to understand the genesis of the American women’s movement—one is, indeed, by looking at the Hicksite women in Seneca Falls, and the other is by studying abolitionist reformers whose struggle evolved into a feminist one. Most of the latter Quaker women reformers were Orthodox Quakers. These movements are covered in chapters five and six.

Focusing on the schism and the three major reform movements, a third development appeared. With the coming of World War I and the creation of what was to become the American Friends Service Committee, the Orthodox and Hicksite reformers made a conscious choice to unite henceforth in their reform activities of peace activism and social justice. Hence, in the area of social reform, through the values on which Friends had never separated, they acknowledged their common ground and dedicated themselves deliberately to united work. Thus, as far as reform was concerned, the Hicksite schism if it occurred for the reformers at all, was healed a full thirty-five years before the rest

¹⁹ Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Sandra Holton notes a similar phenomenon with the British Quakers and the Americans, citing the intermarriage of the Bright and Clark families in England

of the denomination would formally unite. It is not a coincidence that the reformers united the Quakers first. They were acting out core foundational values that Friends on both sides of the Schism had shared all along.

In the layout of this study, chapter two describes the kind of early training and background that characterized most of the Quaker reformers, both Hicksite and Orthodox. A close look at these early experiences makes it clear that women on both sides of the divide learned and internalized similar values, which placed them on common ground as reformers. They also shared some other religious influences that may have put them “ahead” of women raised in the Puritan traditions. Barry Levy in his detailed study of Quaker families in early America noted that the founder of Quakerism, George Fox, “effected his most radical, fateful accomplishment in reorganizing the Anglo-American family: the encouragement and empowerment of spiritualized mothers as institutionalized in holy women’s meetings”.²⁰ Bruce Dorsey in his study on *Reforming Men and Women*, notes that the structure and polity of the Quaker women’s meetings ultimately influenced the shape of non-Quaker benevolence societies in the early republic as well, as multidenominational women’s benevolence societies in Philadelphia “borrowed many of their organizational techniques from the [Quaker] women’s meetings.”²¹

with the Garrison family in America, and its ongoing reform influence against the practice of lynching in America, Holton, *Quaker Women*, 190, 223, 228.

²⁰ Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 78.

²¹ Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 48.

Almost all of the Quaker reformers in this study came from backgrounds with generations of ancestors of Friends who shared common theological values of social justice, peace, and equality, and the belief that the inner light was in everyone, male or female, black or white. Levy points out that George Fox and the female co-founder of the Society of Friends, Margaret Fell, intended from the early days of the Society that women should “occupy a powerful place” in the Quaker denomination. “They wanted women to be spiritually equal with men, to have nearly a co-equal role in ruling the Society, to speak in worship meeting as recognized ministers, to exercise authority over men and women through their monthly meetings, and to hold full authority over ‘women’s matters.’”²² In keeping with the Quaker emphasis on the egalitarianism of man and woman, most of the women in this study were brought up with the expectation that women can minister, contribute, and suffer as well and as often as men. Almost all were brought up from birth with schooling that included instilling key moral values, particularly the idea that “there is that of God in everyone”, and the willingness to suffer, even to the point of death, for one’s religious beliefs. Every Quaker is familiar with the “book of sufferings” which names those members of the meeting who have been honored by suffering for the sake of their faith, for refusing to pay war taxes, for example, to fight in war or to swear oaths to civil authorities. Books of sufferings were known to the Quakers of the 17th century and are still familiar to contemporary Quakers today. Almost all were brought up with the expectation that one’s obligations to contribute to society could begin as early as childhood. As noted, these factors apply to almost all the women in this

²² Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 193.

study except in some cases for the Grimke sisters, as they came to the Quaker faith and life as adults, by conviction (conversion).

From the time these women were girls the expectations for them were clear. If these expectations ran contrary to those of the “greater society”, they were still promised the support of several groups possibly more important to them in the end—their families, their extended families, their friends and church, and the husband who (ideally) had been brought up in exactly the same way.

Children growing up in this fold had the experience of regular exposure to their parents’ support network of rebels and friends. This is not to minimize the risks the reformers took or to lessen the credit they deserve for their courage, but it is to say that the Society of Friends created over the centuries a carefully constructed web of care and support that enabled its members to be able to take big risks over and over again, and to encourage one another to do so.

Chapter three briefly outlines the history and causes of the Hicksite schism. It describes the one issue which did differentiate the Hicksite and Orthodox reformers in this study: their use and treatment of the Bible in their reforms. Both groups held the Bible as key to their faith, but the Hicksites were willing to put the Inner Light first. As a result, Hicksite reformers’ treatment of the Bible could range from the extremely creative to the almost cavalier, while the Orthodox women’s reactions ranged from blind obedience to literal scripture to deep immersion in the original Biblical languages. This chapter also highlights the story of Quaker minister Hannah Barnard, who raised “Hicksite” questions

about scripture and theology over twenty years before Elias Hicks did, and yet has gone largely unnoticed in history.

I argue, however, that the difference in their hermeneutics did not show itself as a difference in reform activity either in type of activity, level of involvement, or willingness to challenge traditional gender and social boundaries to pursue their reform activities. I believe this is because while the theological issues raised by the schism (issues like the existence of the Trinity, the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, or the need for a denominational creed) might separate them, they were still united in the core Quaker theological beliefs in human equality, peace witness, and social justice which acted as a foundation for their social reform activities.

Chapter four covers the abolitionist movement for Hicksite and Orthodox women. It gives cases of particular women, provides evidence that Hicksite and Orthodox women employed the same techniques of reform, often together, and that the techniques they employed were liberal to radical (as defined by the willingness to challenge societal expectations for social and gender behavior). This chapter also discusses the complexity of the issue of race for the Quakers during this time.

Despite tremendous strides, ahead of any other Protestant denomination in the quest for racial equality and peace during this time, my study shows that the Quaker denomination was not without its struggles over the issues of slavery and racism.

It is difficult to discuss “enduring core values” for any group over a large span of history because of the problem of generalizing the complex history of issues and individuals and trying to make it fit simply into one or two words. The Quakers’ history with race, abolition, and the values of social equality raises one obvious example here. This study shows that the Quakers, like every other denomination did struggle with racism during this period. However, even in cases where Quakers showed their “clay feet” (for example in cases where Quakers were slow to embrace abolition or to be willing to sit next to black Friends as equals in meeting) there were others to remind them about the inner light in every one. There was a century long tradition of the acceptance of other races as equal, evidenced in the Quakers’ treatment of native Americans, for example. Prejudice was experienced, but the ideal eventually prevailed. (There is perhaps a special spiritual grace in the fact that it was newcomers Angelina and Sarah Grimke who got to remind some “lifelong” Quakers about the inner light in the Douglass family, evidence that the Quaker ideals are larger than any of the individuals who carry them on.)²³

One advantage of a study like this one, which covers a broad expanse of time, is that certain developments become obvious that do not show up in more limited studies. In this case, watching the Quakers working over the span of the 19th century paints a complex picture of a denomination struggling to decide whether they would be a group that would separate itself from the evil in the

²³ Angelina and Sarah Grimke, as converts to Quakerism were relatively new to the faith, and it was they who especially worked for the African American family of Grace Douglass to be welcomed into Quaker meeting, in the face of racial prejudice. See Margaret Hope Bacon, *Sarah*

world, as a way to avoid it, or cast themselves into the midst of the fray and try to change the outside world in keeping with their own values of peace, social justice and equality. They needed to decide, for example, whether they would punish members for mixing and working side by side with outsiders in reform causes. They needed to decide whether they would allow their meetinghouses to be used for purposes other than sacred worship (such as abolitionist lectures). By the end of the Civil War, the denomination seems to have chosen the path of political and social involvement. Unfortunately, by that time, many of the greatest leaders of abolitionist reform, Hicksite or Orthodox, had been disowned or had voluntarily withdrawn from their Society during the controversies of the century. Yet even many of these would retain a sense of identification with Friends after the formal tie was broken.

Chapters five and six discuss the creation of the American women's movement. Hewitt's hypothesis about the Hicksite schism is one that calls out for further scrutiny. She raises the idea that the revolutionary nature of the Hicksite schism may have inspired the women who participated in it to have the courage to create a gender revolution of their own, just as many historians hypothesize that the American Revolution inspired untold other revolutions in its wake. The fact that the majority of the organizers of the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention were Hicksite looks at first glance like serious evidence that the Hicksite schism may have led to the women's movement in America. Certainly,

Mapps Douglass, Faithful Attender of Quaker Meeting: View From the Back Bench (Philadelphia: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 2003).

Elizabeth Cady Stanton could not have created the Seneca Falls Convention without her Hicksite colleagues.

However, an equally strong argument can be made that the women's rights movement began with abolitionists whose struggle evolved into a feminist one. A great number of these abolitionists were Orthodox Quakers, notably the Grimke sisters, Abby Kelley Foster, and the women of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and the Worcester societies. An argument could be made about "derivative feminism." That is, that many of the Orthodox Quakers began their feminist quest not on womankind's own behalf but in defense of the cause of the slave, with their feminism occurring as a secondary step. Yet the eloquence, the ferocity and magnificence of Orthodox leaders like Abby Kelley Foster and the Grimkes defy those who would question the depth or quality of their feminism.

In either case, Quaker women were on the forefront of the American women's movement--and notably, Lucretia Mott figures in both creation stories.

Chapter seven discusses the third major reform movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries, peace activism. Here again, the Hicksite and Orthodox shared their Quaker belief in nonviolence as a foundational belief of Friends. This chapter discusses the early efforts of the New England Peace Society, the struggle of Quaker women reformers with the peace testimony during the slavery crisis of the 19th century. In the early 20th century, with the struggles of black and female suffrage resolved, Quakers on both sides of the schism faced the crisis of an impending World War. Reformers from both sides formally joined for the first time since the schism in what would become the American Friends Service

Committee. I argue that with the denomination's decision to institutionalize this committee in 1920, Quaker reformers healed the Hicksite schism in terms of reform a full thirty-five years before the formal end of the schism would occur in 1955. It is no coincidence that the activist, reforming branch of the Quakers was the first to re-unite, because in one sense, when it came to reform the Quakers had never split.

This study will also address and clarify the stereotype which some historians have adopted that Hicksites are more "liberal" than their Orthodox counterparts. Above all, my study shows that the meaning of Hicksite "liberalism" is very complex.

Hicksites espoused some theological ideas relative to Jesus Christ, and launched some hermeneutical challenges that could be considered liberal or even radical by contemporary Christian definitions. Yet, the Hicksite and Orthodox reform record and values, at least as far as the most active Quaker women in this study were concerned, were relatively equal.

Certainly history shows broad-minded and narrow-minded individuals on both sides of the divide. Elias Hicks himself was progressive on slavery yet he was against the progress of modern technology and higher education.

I do not think it is accurate or helpful, for example, when Gerda Lerner²⁴ and biographer Katharine Lumpkin²⁵ imply that the Grimke sisters might have been better off if they had joined the Hicksite side. Nor do I believe there is

²⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters From South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman's Rights and Abolition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 193.

²⁵ Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 59.

evidence to support Penney and Livingston's assertion that the Hicksites favored abolition in the 19th century more than Orthodox Quakers did²⁶. It also seems to me, in light of the women reformers I studied, that historians assume too often that any progressive reform that occurred in America during the period must have been due to the "Hicksite influence". For example, in her classic work, *Feminism and Suffrage: the Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America 1848-1868*, Ellen Carol DuBois gives significant coverage to the Grimke sisters for their roles in both the abolition and the women's rights struggles. She goes to the trouble to note that Hicksite Quakers were attracted to Garrisonian abolition strategies, and suggests that Sarah Grimke's "belief in sex equality took added strength from Hicksite Quaker doctrine and practices."²⁷ Yet she never tells the reader that Grimke was actually an Orthodox Quaker. These issues will be discussed further in Appendix II.

In summary, my study provides evidence that Orthodox and Hicksite Quaker women worked together and in parallel for liberal social reform in America. As reformers, Hicksite and Orthodox women were more alike than different in important areas. They shared common early childhood experience and social religious values, and differed, if at all, only in some less central theological beliefs and in their treatment of the Bible. As far as reform was concerned, they worked as one, and the common causes of abolition, women's

²⁶ Sherry H. Penney and James D. Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman: Martha Wright and Women's Rights* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 38.

²⁷ Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: the Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America 1848-1869* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 31-36.

rights and pacifism joined them together across the lines of schism and even joined them with men and women of non-Quaker faiths as well.

For that matter, their identity as reformers around the issues of peace and social justice also regularly took these women across denominational boundaries, where they worshipped, worked and socialized with Protestants of all denominations on a regular basis. Sometimes they married other Protestant reformers, even at the cost of disownment from the Quakers for “marrying out.” Quaker women took a leading role in American social reform history, but the Hicksite and Orthodox women shared that mantle relatively equally and seemed more empowered by their common Friends heritage than by the particulars of Hicksitism or Orthodoxy.

Sometimes these Quaker women, Hicksites and Orthodox alike, moved “ahead” of their own denominations, being disowned by their local Quaker groups for taking their abolitionist activity “too far” for some Friends. There is a great irony in these cases, as it seems clear that the reformers involved derived their ideals of racial and social equality from the very Society that would later disown them for their reform activities. In most cases, even after a Quaker had been disowned or chose to attend worship in another denomination, her sense of Quaker self-identity remained very strong, as did other people’s image of her as a Quaker. These women often continued to be considered Quakers by those outside the community, and to espouse the kind of Quaker theologies and reformist values that influenced their early development.

The individual women's cases also provide evidence that women on both sides of the schism struggled with the requirements of their faith, particularly the witness to peace in the midst of Civil War. They also show that there are times when both Hicksite and Orthodox women found themselves supported and aided by their faith communities in making their social witness, and times when they experienced their faith communities as interfering with the full practice of their faith and religious values.

While other studies have argued that certain changes were wrought by the Hicksite schism, this study is about what was *not* affected by the Hicksite schism: liberal social reform among women of the Northeast. These activities continued in very similar fashion on both sides of the schism throughout its duration, with a great deal of cross-schism cooperation and influence. This cooperation and influence reached a peak in the issue of peace witness in the early twentieth century when Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers joined together to form what became the American Friends Service Committee. The culmination of the denomination's choice to involve itself in the issues of the world was in the creation of the American Friends' Service Committee. In this organization their values of peace and justice would enable Hicksite and Orthodox women to unite in important international works of service for thirty-seven years before the schism formally worked itself out on an organizational level in 1955. This evidence is provided in chapter seven.

One of the major arguments of this thesis is that the transcendence of reform activity across and through the split shows at least three of the enduring

core values of the Society of Friends that even the schism could not alter. It stands as testimony that in such a major split important aspects of the enduring character of a denomination may yet thrive and prevail, in this case the Quakers' concerns for peace, human equality and social justice, often at great personal sacrifice to members' own lives and those of their families.

The study also shows the evolution of a denomination over a century of determining its own identity. By the end of this period the Society of Friends had come to a decision. They would not protect their own values within a closed, sacred community, but would join the world. They decided to risk losing their unique religious heritage in order to join with others in the good works that reflected their ideals of equality, peace and social justice. The women reformers featured in this study played a large part in acting out that decision. And the creation of the American Friends Service Committee in 1920 marks the culmination of two movements that had been going on for nearly a century-- the movement of Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker reformers over the divide for a common cause, and the denomination's decision to immerse itself in the world, and join with others of different faiths in common works of reform and social justice.

“For there is no better influence toward the building up of a strong virtuous manhood and womanhood, than the espousal in early life of some great humanitarian cause as a foundation.... It is too late to become an Abolitionist now but in the process of overthrowing one great wrong there is always laid bare some other wrong, which requires for its removal the same self-sacrificing spirit, the same consecration to duty, as accomplished the preceding reform....”²⁸

Chapter 2: Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker Girls: Training for Reform Leadership

Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker girls shared much in common in terms of their early background and training. There are significant similarities in their early schooling with moral reform values, and with the support of generations of extended family.²⁹ The girls were specifically taught at a young age the value of religious persecution for a righteous cause and this was reinforced by both their school lessons and family influences³⁰. All shared a common class background

²⁸ Elizabeth Buffum Chace, “Too Late to Become An Abolitionist Now” [From *Two Quaker Sisters*], in Jessamyn West, Ed., *The Quaker Reader* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1992), 354.

²⁹ The notable exceptions here were the Grimke sisters who made a conscious decision as adults to adopt the value system of the Quakers, in this case specifically in contrast to the value system in which they had been raised by their families.

³⁰ Like other Protestants, Quakers at least in the early generations would have been familiar with books like John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, “a history of the lives, sufferings and triumphant deaths

of relative wealth along with the taught presumption that it was their responsibility to live simply and to help those in need.

When these women decided to step outside the usual boundaries of society to perform acts of goodness or justice according to their moral and religious values, they never did so alone. They acted with the support network of their families and sometimes generations of the Society of Friends. When they decided to act it was also not a new idea. These reform movements were outgrowths of Quaker values that had existed for over one hundred years. That is not to say that it was easy for any individual reformer. Nor is it to deny the many times that the Society of Friends itself was not of one accord on these social values or their behavioral counterparts. But it explains why Quaker women, Hicksite and Orthodox, appeared so often in the leadership positions of the key American social reform movements of abolition, women's rights, and peace activism.

EARLY TRAINING AND INFLUENCES:

All the girls were instilled from birth with three core values: the belief in the equality of all people, the peace testimony, and the belief in social justice. According to Quaker theologian Howard Brinton, "equality was the earliest Quaker social testimony." This is defined as "the equality of respect and the resulting absence of all words and behavior based on class, racial or social

of the early Christian and the Protestant Martyrs." *Byberry Library Company Check-Out Book 1794ff* and *Catalogue of the Three Monthly Meetings of Philadelphia* (1813), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania; *The Reformed Reader*, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs", <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/foxe/born/about.htm> (accessed October 3, 2009) ; Francis Urquhart, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs", <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02681a.htm> (accessed October 3, 2009); "Fox's Book of Martyrs", <http://www.ccel.org/f/foxe/martyrs/home.html> (accessed October 3, 2009).

distinctions.” Friends also practiced the equality of gender. From the founding of the denomination by George Fox and Margaret Fell, men and women had equal opportunities to speak in worship and to be designated as “recorded ministers” the Quakers’ alternative to ordained clergy.³¹ The decision of the denomination to stand and witness for peace was made in 1661, and has been held consistently ever since, often putting Quakers at odds with their neighbors and their nation, and subjecting them to repeated persecution for the refusal to bear arms.³² These three core values are foundational to being a Quaker and were established in the Society generations before anyone ever heard of “Hicksite” or “Orthodox”. All are inextricably linked to the belief that “there is that of God in every one.”³³

So these girls’ preparation for a life of reform activism began early. First, many of them were born into Quaker families, which often had rich long histories of social protest.

As a member of a multi-generational Quaker family, Hicksite Lucretia Mott had a head start thinking about issues of human equality and social reform. Born on January 3, 1793 in Nantucket, Massachusetts, her parents were Thomas Coffin and Anna Folger, “both consistent members of the Society of Friends, as

³¹ Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 159-160.

³² Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 194.

³³ One of the common ways in which Quakers describe “the light within” comes from George Fox’s *Collection of...Epistles to Friends ...of Jesus Christ*, Number 182, in which the disciple is advised to “do the work of the Lord faithfully; and ye will feel it prosper, answering that of God in everyone.” Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 25-26. George Fox, *A Collection of Many Select and Christian Epistles, Letters and Testimonies, Written on Sundry Occasions, By That Ancient, Eminent, and Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, George Fox* (Philadelphia: Marcus T. Gould; New York: Isaac T. Hopper, 1831), in *Works of George Fox (Volume 7 & 8)*, Earlham School of Religion Digital Quaker Collection, [url:http://esr.earlham.edu/dqc/765-983-1423](http://esr.earlham.edu/dqc/765-983-1423) (accessed 12/14/09).

their fathers had been before them for several generations.”³⁴ Helen LaKelly Hunt notes that “the Quakers of Nantucket recorded their opposition to slavery in 1716.”³⁵

Orthodox Quaker Elizabeth Buffum Chace can trace her ancestral family’s background to an early time that included slaveholding, but she had an abolitionist Quaker ancestry as well. She noted in her reminiscences, “I am ashamed to say...” that her earliest Quaker ancestors in Newport, Rhode Island did participate in the slave trade. “Early in the history of Newport and Rhode Island, however, our family, the Goulds and the Coggeshalls, all Quakers, gave up this business and frowned on the continued dealing in humans....”³⁶ Chace’s great-grandfather Joseph was also a member of the Society of Friends³⁷ and a member of the Rhode Island Society for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery. When her father, Arnold Buffum was a child, his parents’ house was “a refuge for fugitive slaves from New York, slavery having been abolished in Rhode Island in 1784.”³⁸ Chace notes, “my father’s clear head, his tender heart, and his unshrinking conscience, embraced, without doubt or question, the principles of the Garrisonian anti-slavery movement.” Buffum served as the first president of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, “and he lived and labored in and for the cause for the rest of his life, though obloquy and persecution pursued and

³⁴ Anna Davis Hallowell, Editor, *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters* (Boston: The Riverside Press/Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896), 18, 25.

³⁵ Helen LaKelly Hunt, *Faith and Feminism: A Holy Alliance: Five Spirited and Spiritual Women Throughout History* (New York: Atria Books, 2004), 71.

³⁶ Elizabeth Buffum Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences, written in 1891”, in *Virtuous Lives: Four Quaker Sisters Remember Family Life, Abolitionism, and Women’s Suffrage*, Eds. Lucille Salitan and Eve Lewis Perera, 93-116 (New York: Continuum, 1994), 93-94.

³⁷ Elizabeth Buffum Chace, “Reminiscences of Childhood, written in 1897”, in *Virtuous Lives*, Eds. Salitan and Perera, 17-48, (New York: Continuum, 1994), 18.

assailed him therefore. Thus was I born and baptized into the anti-slavery spirit. Our family were all Abolitionists....”³⁹. Arnold Buffum was an Orthodox Quaker hat manufacturer who took up the abolitionist struggle with William Lloyd Garrison and became the “aggressive” first president of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832.⁴⁰ He and his wife Rebecca also brought up a family of abolitionists and reformers, including their five daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Lucy, Rebecca, and Lydia.⁴¹ Elizabeth Chace remembers: “Never, in our large household, do I recall one word short of condemnation of the vile system. In our minds there were no palliating circumstances.... When I married Samuel B. Chace, and I called his attention to the question, he soon accepted the anti-slavery principles, and remained faithful thereto during his life.”⁴²

Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley was born on January 15, 1811, in Pelham, Massachusetts. Her mother Diana was a “birthright Quaker”, and “the strictest of Orthodox Friends” who “insisted on Quaker dress, which shunned new fashions and banned bright colors and such adornments as ribbons and bows.” To this day, Quakers hold a belief in the importance of simplicity, a “testimony...against superfluity in dress, speech, and behavior.”⁴³ In Abby’s growing up, scripture was read every morning, and the principles of Friends were “carefully expounded”.

³⁸ EB Chace, “Reminiscences of Childhood,” 22.

³⁹ EB Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 95.

⁴⁰ Henry Mayer, *All On Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 128, 130-131.

⁴¹ Lucille Salitan and Eve Lewis Perera, Editors, *Virtuous Lives: Four Quaker Sisters Remember Family Life, Abolitionism, and Women’s Suffrage* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 14, 177.

⁴² EB Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 96.

⁴³ Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 163.

Kelley was also taught the central theological concept of Quakerism, that “the ‘inner light’ was the key to salvation.”⁴⁴

Rachael Hicks, a Hicksite minister whose parents chose the Orthodox side⁴⁵, was “carefully educated in the principles of Friends, by my religiously concerned parents, Gideon and Elizabeth Seamon,” and notes that her father “in early life...was closely united in spirit with those who had become uneasy with the holding of slaves by Friends.” Gideon Seamon was among those who “felt a concern to remunerate those who had labored for their former owners” after they were liberated, and was also “concerned and careful to avoid using the produce of slave labor—thus bearing a faithful and consistent testimony against this great and crying evil.”⁴⁶

Hicksite Susan B. Anthony’s father was influential in his Quaker community, and a “convinced abolitionist” who tried in his cotton mill to avoid the use of slave-related product.⁴⁷

Orthodox New England Quaker Sarah H. Southwick was born in Maine in 1821, and notes that “when the first number of the ‘Liberator’ was issued, I was ten years old. My father subscribed for it from the beginning, and I very well remember seeing one of the early copies, with the slave auction as the heading,

⁴⁴ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991) 14-17.

⁴⁵ Note: The Schism did sometimes split families and it was not unusual for an adult child to choose a different side from her parents, especially if spouses were involved. See Rachael Hicks, *A Memoir of Rachael Hicks, Written by Herself, Late of Westbury, Long Island, A Minister in the Society of Friends, Together with Some Letters and a Memorial of Westbury Monthly Meeting* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1880), Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY, 31.

⁴⁶ Rachael Hicks, *Memoir*, 2, 21-23.

⁴⁷ Rheta Childe Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony: The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 11,15-16.

and my mother's explaining it to my sisters and myself." Sarah's father Joseph was a delegate to the American Anti-Slavery Society Convention in Philadelphia in 1833, and her grandfather Samuel Hussey, also a Friend, was part of the movement to "abolish the African slave trade."⁴⁸

Hicksite Quaker Sarah Pugh was born "the sixth of the Tenth month, 1800", to Quakers Jesse and Catherine Pugh, in Alexandria, Virginia. Sarah's grandparents were Friends as well, and her grandfather, Isaac Jackson, had "labored actively to procure the manumission of the slaves throughout the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia," Isaac's home.⁴⁹ Sarah would later move to Pennsylvania with her mother after her father died, and became a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Female Anti-Slavery Societies in Philadelphia.⁵⁰

Orthodox Quaker Eliza Earle writes to her friend Abby Kelley, "...I have been an abolitionist, from the hour when, in earliest childhood, I learned from Father to lisp, 'Forced from home and all its pleasures,' up to the present time; yet every day awakens in my heart as new interest for the oppressed, and for suffering humanity, wherever it is found—"⁵¹

The Grimke sisters are the exception to the rule in this case. They were not born into the Society of Friends. Unlike most of the other women in this study, these sister reformers joined the Friends as adults "by conviction"

⁴⁸ Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days* (Macon, GA: The Kingsley Press, 1893), 5-6.

⁴⁹ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh: A Tribute of Respect From Her Cousins* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1888), 9-10.

⁵⁰ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 9, 15.

⁵¹ Eliza Earle to Abby Kelley, February 28, 1837. Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

(conversion). Sarah and Angelina Grimke were born on November 26, 1792 and February 20, 1805, respectively, in Charleston, South Carolina. They were two of fourteen children. Their father was John Fauchereau Grimke, who had distinguished himself as an officer in the Revolutionary War and a judge in the Supreme Court of the State of South Carolina. While most of the other Quaker women in this study were born to families with generations of Quaker ancestors and the Quaker witness to simplicity, "Judge Grimke's position, character, and wealth placed his family among the leaders of the very exclusive society of Charleston. His children were accustomed to luxury and display, to the service of slaves, and to the indulgence of every selfish whim...."⁵²

This background could have caused Sarah and Angelina to become spoiled Southern belles, but the effects of their growing up were quite the opposite. Observing the institution of slavery up close made them detest it. Angelina writes in her diary: "O who could paint the horrors of slavery & yet so hard is the natural heart that I am continually told that their situation is very good much better than that of their owners, how strange that any one should believe such an absurdity...." She describes the pain she felt in empathy listening to her brother Henry flogging his slave John: "...indeed that night was a night of agony for me it was not only dreadful to hear him beating him but the oaths and curses

⁵² Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimke Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimke: The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1885 & 1970), 4-7.

he uttered went like daggers to my heart--& this was done too in the house of one who is regarded as a light in the Church.”⁵³

Elder sister Sarah was no more cooperative with the slave system than Angelina. A girl herself, yet given another little girl to serve her, Sarah was more comfortable teaching her personal slave to read and write than ordering her around: “I took an almost malicious satisfaction in teaching my little waiting-maid at night, when she was supposed to be occupied in coming and brushing my long locks. The light was put out, the key-hole screened, and flat on our stomachs before the fire, with the spelling-book under our eyes, we defied the laws of South Carolina.”⁵⁴

The sisters rebelled against living a life of luxury as well. During her adolescence, when Judge Grimke fell seriously ill, Sarah brought him north to Philadelphia in search of medical help. He was not to recover from his illness, but during their time in Philadelphia Sarah was deeply influenced by the spirit and values of the Quakers with whom she stayed.⁵⁵ While the sisters had been brought up as “high-church Episcopalians, tenacious of every dogma, and severe upon any neglect of the religious forms of church or household worship,”⁵⁶ Sarah felt a draw toward the Quaker simplicity she had experienced among the Arch Street Quakers of the North. Using the Friends’ form of naming the days of the week, Sarah wrote in her diary: “On last Fifth Day I changed my dress for the

⁵³ Angelina Grimke, Diary, February 6, 1829, in Charles Wilbanks, Editor, *Walking by Faith: The Diary of Angelina Grimke 1828-1835* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 37-38.

⁵⁴ Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimke Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimke: The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman’s Rights* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1885 & 1970), 12.

⁵⁵ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 22.

more plain one of the Quakers, not because I think making my clothes in their peculiar manner makes me any better, but because I believe it was laid upon me, seeing that my natural will revolted from the idea of assuming this garb. I trust I have made this change in a right spirit, and with a single eye to my dear Redeemer. It was accompanied by a feeling of much peace.”⁵⁷

Angelina, who had converted first to Presbyterianism,⁵⁸ followed her older sister to the Society of Friends and the path of anti-slavery and personal sacrifice. She writes in her diary: “1828, January 10 Today I have torn up my novels.... My hat also I untrimmed & have just nothing but a band of ribbon round it & taken the lace out of the inside. I do want if I am a Christian to look like one.”⁵⁹

On May 29, 1823, Sarah was accepted into the Philadelphia Friends’ Meeting of Fourth and Arch Street.⁶⁰ Once converted, Angelina felt hard-pressed to follow. Feeling trapped now in the South, Angelina could not wait to escape. “None but those who learn from experience what it is to live in a land of Bondage can form any idea of the weight of exercise which is endured by those whose eyes are open to the enormities of Slavery & whose hearts are tendered so as to feel for these miserable creatures....” Yet, she also felt that she was catching a glimpse of God’s calling for her, “as tho’ the very exercise I was suffering under,

⁵⁶ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 11.

⁵⁷ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 36-37.

⁵⁸ Wilbanks, *Diary of Angelina Grimke*, xxi, and Angelina Grimke, April 27, 1829 in same, 61.

⁵⁹ Angelina Grimke, *Diary*, January 10, 1828, in Wilbanks, *Walking By Faith*, 2.

⁶⁰ Minutes, Monthly Meetings of Friends of Philadelphia, Fourth & Arch Street Meeting, 1823, 31 (The Arch Street Center, The Society of Friends, Philadelphia, PA), in Gerda Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman’s Rights and Abolition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 45.

was preparing me for future usefulness...&...my very soul trembled at the solemn tho't of such a work being placed in my feeble & unworthy hands....”⁶¹

SCHOOLS

Many of the girls' parents, Orthodox and Hicksite, sent them to schools, some of them Quaker schools, which taught them not only the basics of mathematics and reading and so on, but social and moral values. Like British parents Helen and William Clark in Sandra Holton's study, American Quaker parents chose a school for their children, which would create “a sheltered environment that upheld the religious values of Friends.”⁶² There, the children learned about their place in a complex world in which all people were equal and in which every person no matter what his or her origin or color was born with the inner light of God.

Lucretia Mott remembered reading in one of her schoolbooks a “description of the horrors of the ‘middle passage’” which “ended with the words ‘Humanity shudders at your account.’”⁶³ When Lucretia was 11, Thomas Mott's mercantile business brought the family to Boston, and he decided that his children would attend public school there, because of his expressed desire that they should “mingle with all classes without distinction.” Lucretia later credited her father's decision with giving her a “feeling of sympathy for the patient and struggling poor, which, but for this experience, I might never have known.” At thirteen, like many of the other Quaker reformers, Lucretia was sent to a Quaker

⁶¹ Angelina Grimke, Diary, April 23, 1829, in Wilbanks, *Walking By Faith*, 57-58.

⁶² Holton, *Quaker Women*, 164.

⁶³ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 31.

school, Nine Partners in New York.⁶⁴ Biographer Dorothy Sterling notes that the Quaker school would provide a more egalitarian education for girls at this time than the public school in Boston.⁶⁵

Lucretia's sister Martha Coffin, born on Christmas Day in Boston, 1806⁶⁶, who, like Lucretia favored the Hicksite side, received some of her education at a Quaker boarding school in Philadelphia called Westtown School.⁶⁷ Her biographers note that here, "because of the Quaker emphasis on the individual...Quaker girls had more exposure to education than most other girls in early nineteenth century America," and that Martha "could learn about slavery from *A Poetical Epistle to the Enslaved Africans, Cause of the Negroes*, and *Considerations on Keeping Negroes* and about American Indians from *Mission to the Indians of North America* and *Account of a Visit to the Quakers by Pompoonaah an Indian Chief*." One of Martha's teachers, Enoch Lewis, created the *African Observer*, one of the first abolitionist newsletters in the United States.⁶⁸

Hicksite Margaret Elizabeth Chandler and her three siblings all attended Quaker schools, and her biographer notes that "Quakerism's influences made Margaret Elizabeth Chandler acutely aware of the social ills of the day, about

⁶⁴ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 35.

⁶⁵ Dorothy Sterling, *Lucretia Mott* (New York: Feminist Press, 1999), 42.

⁶⁶ Sherry H. Penney and James D. Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman: Martha Wright and Women's Rights* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 7.

⁶⁷ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 13.

⁶⁸ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 14.

which she became concerned at a very young age and wrote passionately until her death.”⁶⁹

As a teenager, Hicksite Susan B. Anthony’s parents sent her to school at Deborah Moulson’s Select Seminary for Females, in Pennsylvania, where “the austere Deborah devoted so much time and attention to Morality, Humility and the Love of Virtue that her pupils were given scant opportunity to learn anything else,” and where students would be seriously faulted “if they forgot to address each other with thee and thou...”⁷⁰

When these girls became parents, they, in turn, brought their daughters up from an early age with a sense of compassion and social conscience.

In a diary excerpt from August 6, 1842, Orthodox Quaker Lucy Buffum Lovell, another daughter of abolitionist Arnold Buffum, discusses the life and death of her five-year-old daughter Caroline. Lucy and her husband started very early to expose their children to key social issues: “Many a time has [Caroline] wept bitterly over the Temperance Lecturer and American Anti-Slavery Almanac, merely from having of her own accord studied the pictures, till her soul seemed to be filled with their meaning.” Upset by how much their daughter was affected, the couple began to store the publication away from their five-year-old’s reach: “But she had a heart ‘to feel for others’ woe’ and if she lived would doubtless have suffered much from sympathy.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Marcia J. Heringa, editor, *Remember the Distance That Divides Us: The Family Letters of Philadelphia Quaker Abolitionist and Michigan Pioneer Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, 1830-1842* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004), xx.

⁷⁰ Rheta Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 21-23.

⁷¹ Lucy Buffum Lovell, “Diary Exerpts by Lucy Buffum Lovell, 1840-1843”, in Salitan and Perera, *Virtuous Lives*, Eds. Salitan and Perera, 53-92 (New York: Continuum), 80.

Orthodox Elizabeth Chace and her family were involved in the Underground Railroad, often helping slaves escape by disguising them in Quaker costume.⁷² Elizabeth discussed how they involved their children in this struggle. It was dangerous business, and the parents carefully prepared the children for their part in it. They told their children, “all at that time under fourteen years of age”, that if they should be caught by the authorities smuggling slaves in their home there would be a fine of one thousand dollars and a six month prison sentence for their parents, as “we should refuse to give these poor people up”, and the children “heroically planned, how, in such an event, they would take care of everything; and, especially, that they would be good, and do just as we wished, during our absence.” She concluded: “All these experiences were an important feature in the education of our children of which... I would by no means have deprived them. For there is no better influence toward the building up of a strong virtuous manhood and womanhood, than the espousal in early life of some great humanitarian cause as a foundation.”⁷³

These Quakers were also taught that it was their responsibility to do right, and that they come from a long history of elders who expected to be persecuted for following the inner light. It was their history, their expectation, and their legacy.

When Orthodox Quaker Elizabeth Chace was ten years old she recalled going to a public school in Connecticut and being discriminated against as a Quaker. In this instance, the students were all taught to bow or curtsy to the

⁷² EB Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 105-106, 108.

⁷³ EB Chace “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 115.

teacher or to visitors as a show of manners. However, this custom violated the Friends' custom of treating all people as equals: "Our father had instructed us that all such obeisance to human beings was contrary to the spirit and teachings of Christ, who had forbidden his disciples to call any man Master, and we were cautioned not to comply with any such custom." The girls' father came in the next day to explain to their teacher, "...but it did not save us from much jeering and insult from our schoolmates, and I presume, some disrepute among our teachers." But the girls were prepared for this kind of reaction.".... We were, even at that early age, familiar with persecutions of the Quakers, both in Old and New England, and we felt in our little hearts that we were right." The girls continued as their parents had taught them...."And when they threw our little plain bonnets on the floor and stamped them out of shape, uttering the opprobrious name 'Quaker' in our ears, I cannot recollect any sorrow beyond that for the spoiling of the bonnets."⁷⁴

Chace also recalled an instance in which she and her sisters had joined some other girls in forming a local "Female Mutual Improvement Society". As part of its activities her elder sister Sarah "wrote a paper which she dated in the twentieth century in which she pictured the Negroes as in possession of the government and at the head of society; and she stated in it that great consternation existed at the capital because the daughter of the President of the United States had married a white man!" Elizabeth noted that the paper was not

⁷⁴ EB Chace, "Reminiscences of Childhood," I 30-31. David Holden writes that as early as the 1600s, "the rude egalitarian ways of Quakers were frightfully annoying. Friends refused to take their hats off to their betters. They used 'thee' and 'thou', terms then only used toward social inferiors, close friends and relatives, in a most unbecoming way." (Holden, *Friends Divided*, 11)

well-received by some of the members—"but Sarah lived to do valiant service long afterwards as the wife of Nathaniel B. Borden of Fall River, Massachusetts, in the Anti-Slavery Movement and the protection of fugitive slaves."⁷⁵

Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley would be one of Elizabeth's good friends and schoolmates at the same Quaker boarding school, New England Friends Boarding School in Providence, Rhode Island. Kelley's biographer notes that "because the school committee wanted its pupils to stand apart from American society and, if occasion required, bear witness against it," Abby and Elizabeth were taught at school about Quaker martyr Mary Dyer who died defending her Quaker beliefs against the Puritan hierarchy of Massachusetts in 1660, and was hung on the Boston Common. She and Elizabeth would also have read there about "Friends' testimony against war, which had rendered them unpopular during the Revolution," and shared in the Friends' "pride in the fact that they had been the first religious group in America to free their slaves."⁷⁶

Orthodox Lydia Buffum Read (sister to Elizabeth and Rebecca Buffum) remembers creating an abolitionist society as part of her early childhood play. In her "infant school" the girls decided "to petition congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and the Territories." ... "What a sight of ignorance we found, many thinking there were no slaves in the country.... We were never mobbed but sometimes we had threats."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ EB Chace, "Reminiscences of Childhood," 37.

⁷⁶ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 19-20, 23.

⁷⁷ Lydia Buffum Read, "Some Recollections of Her Girlhood, Written in 1892", in Lucille Salitan and Eve Lewis Perera, Editors, *Virtuous Lives: Four Quaker Sisters Remember Family Life, Abolitionism, and Women's Suffrage*, 49-52 (New York: Continuum, 1994), 52.

MARRIAGE, HOME, AND FAMILY:

Quaker girls were uniquely raised in a home and family situation which mixed the public and private spheres, immediate blood family with extended and “reform family”, and in which men and women shared both domestic and public duties.

Sandra Holton describes this within one of the English Quaker clans she studied, saying “the Priestman-Brightman circle extended beyond the emotional life of its members: it also created, preserved and extended a ‘networked family’”. This group could “variously serve the pursuit of business interests, humanitarian campaigns, the reform of the Society of Friends, and middle-class radical politics that...included the campaign for women’s rights.”⁷⁸ Similarly, in Lucretia and James Mott’s home, in Martha Wright’s or in the Grimkes’, children would find themselves elbow to elbow with a combination of relatives and fellow reformers, discussing not only the personal matters of the day, but matters of import to the greater world as well.

Marriage in the Quaker meeting was a spiritual and a community process. Prospective couples first obtained permission from parents and from the Quaker mens’ and women’s monthly meetings.⁷⁹ Levy notes that Fox’s requirement for the potential grooms to undergo the scrutiny and approval of the women’s meeting met with great opposition from the men since its inception, but considers this practice key in understanding the relative power of Quaker women as

⁷⁸ Holton, *Quaker Women*, 2.

⁷⁹ Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 132-133.

opposed to Puritan women.⁸⁰ He contends that the consistency of authority granted to the Quaker woman (as opposed to the Puritan) actually helped her to avoid the “discordant social roles” described in Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *Good Wives*, as the Quaker women “harmonized the roles of wife, minister, and mother into an influential feminine mystique”.⁸¹ According to the ritual prescribed by Quaker originators George Fox and Margaret Fell, if the couple passed all this scrutiny, they “could then be married by their own words of the spirit at a worship meeting attended by at least twelve older Friends.”⁸²

Elizabeth Buffum Chace remembers the vows at her first Quaker wedding, when the groom announced “In the presence of this assembly I take this, my friend, Ann L. Sheldon, to be my wife, promising, through Divine assistance, to be unto her a true and affectionate husband until by death we are separated,” and the groom, William Buffum, took the same vow in reverse.⁸³ Sandra Holton notes that “the notion of friendship...was central to Quaker ideals of marriage.”⁸⁴

Fellow abolitionist Lydia Maria Child wrote to Abby Kelley Foster regarding the newly married Grimke couple, “....I have had a letter from Angelina, giving a charming picture of their happy domestic life, ‘serving one another in love,’ and dispensing altogether with hired service.”⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 79-80

⁸¹ Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 196.

⁸² Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 73.

⁸³ Elizabeth Buffum Chace, “Reminiscences of Childhood”, 43.

⁸⁴ Sandra Holton, *Quaker Women*, 50.

⁸⁵ Lydia Maria Child to Abby Kelley, October 1, 1838, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Box 1 Folder 4, Worcester, Mass.

British scholar Sheila Wright discussed “the relatively egalitarian nature of Quaker marriage,”⁸⁶ and Helen Plant in her studies of Quaker marriage in Britain during the early nineteenth century found “that the integration of domestic responsibilities and religious authority in the lives of Quaker women created more fluid notions of gender difference among Friends than was general among the middle classes.”⁸⁷ This held true for the couples in my study as well, with husbands often doing their share of the childrearing duties particularly if the wife was a traveling minister. Many of Stephen Foster’s most poignant letters to Abby Kelley Foster and were written when husband and wife were separated from each other and Stephen was taking on the role of primary parent and keeper of the home. On the occasion of daughter Alla’s sixteenth year of life, it is her father who wrote to celebrate that special rite of passage in his daughter’s growing up: “My dear daughter....You are now just stepping from the platform of youth to womanhood & the passing months will each leave a marker and permanent impress upon your future character and destinies...”⁸⁸

Sandra Holton even notes that in Britain “Quakers as a general rule rejected traditional attitudes regarding primogeniture, and the men [among the kinship circle she studied] sometimes expressly stated that no such principle had shaped their legacies.” She continued to explain that in the family circle she studied boys would usually inherit more from their fathers than the girls, and the

⁸⁶ Sheila Wright, *Friends in York. The dynamics of Quaker revival, 1780-1860*, Keele: Keele University Press, 1995, esp. pp.51-67, quoted in Holton, *Quaker Women*, 53, 243.

⁸⁷ Helen Plant, “Gender and the Aristocracy of Dissent: a comparative study of the beliefs, status and roles of women in Quaker and Unitarian Communities, 1770-1830, with particular reference to Yorkshire,” unpublished DPhil thesis, York University, 2000, p. 45, 61, 199-24, quoted in Holton, *Quaker Women*, 53, 243.

girls inherit more from their mothers than the boys! Barry Levy noted no such pattern, however, among the American Quaker families he studied⁸⁹, nor did this issue emerge during my study.

CLASS

The girls and women in this study, Orthodox and Hicksite, also shared middle to upper class backgrounds and the values which often accompanied them. Even African American reformer Sarah Mapps Douglass was an educator, and her mother Grace ran her own millinery shop in Philadelphia⁹⁰. The women who took the forefront in the reforms of abolition, women's rights and peace were for the most part brought up in privilege. They did not need to worry about where their next meal was coming from, and they shared a worldview, which told them that as privileged women it was their responsibility to share with the oppressed. They also shared a set of values that did not necessarily question the class structure of American society. In Abby Kelley Foster's effects in the Worcester Historical Society is one of her abolition tracts clearly intended to bring children into the cause. A passage from chapter one supports the middle classes' rights to hired help and reinforces stereotypes of the Irish at the same time that it draws clear distinctions between slavery and hired help. A child asks, "Is Biddy a slave then? She does just what you and father tell her. She never goes out without your consent, and in every thing waits for your orders. Does this make her a slave?" The parent responds with an emphatic "Oh, no!" Biddy is not a slave,

⁸⁸ Stephen S. to Alla W. Foster, January 1, 1864, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Box 2, folder 19.

⁸⁹ Levy, *Quaker Families*, see details on women and inheritance p. 198-205.

because servants, unlike slaves, are “[paid] well for their services.” In addition, “Biddy is free to leave us and seek another home whenever she likes; and besides, she spends a great deal of time in reading, and writes to all her friends in old Ireland....”⁹¹

It seems some of the abolitionists of this era who worked so valiantly for the rights of black men and women could not extend their egalitarian instincts to the Irish. In Boston Orthodox Quaker abolitionist Sarah Southwick’s memoirs, she remembers that in childhood “we had two servants: one a trusted colored woman, Phillis Salem, who lived with us twenty-five years; the other a stupid Irish girl....”⁹² Orthodox Abby Kelley and her husband Stephen Foster did no better, despite the fact that Abby’s father, Wing Kelley, was of Irish descent.⁹³ Sterling notes that Abby Kelley “spoke admiringly of the ‘Irish heart,’ as exemplified by her genial, even-tempered father,” and that she “was proud of her Irish descent and aware of the growing prejudice against the Irish immigrants.”⁹⁴ Yet, when it came to hiring servants at their own farm, Stephen wrote Abby that he was having difficulty finding good men, and was “afraid I shall have to take up with Irish at last.” He had wanted to join Abby at the upcoming Rochester meeting; “Had Bratly and Batchelder come to work for me, I might perhaps have arranged to go, but the prospect now is that I can get nothing but Irish help, & I don’t like to

⁹⁰ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglas, Faithful Attender of Quaker Meeting: View From the Back Bench* (Philadelphia: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 2003), 1-3.

⁹¹ J. Elizabeth Jones, *The Young Abolitionists; Or Conversations on Slavery* (Boston: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, 1848), 4, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, Worcester Historical Museum Library.

⁹² Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days* (Macon: The Kingsley Press, 1893), 11.

⁹³ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 14.

⁹⁴ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 270.

be absent so long at this important season, with only such hands to depend upon—⁹⁵ Likewise when it came to hiring female servants for indoor help, Stephen wrote Abby: "...the house is filled with dirt in every part. I shall have it cleaned if possible, but it troubles me to think of having an Irish woman touch it without some person of taste & order to oversee...."⁹⁶

An advertisement in *The Liberator* for the Boston Women's Anti-Slavery Society Fair indicates that the goods sold for the cause were far from modest or simple, and both drew from and geared themselves toward an audience including the upper class. They boasted:...“among those just received from friends in England are most exquisitely wrought bags ...combining elegance and simplicity: --some very costly, of Cashmere wrought with the most exquisite silk braids, intermingled with gold and silver thread....rose-wood and mahogany desks and boxes..” and for refreshments “coffee, cake blanc-mange,&c.” carefully prepared with only free sugar.⁹⁷

The female reformers on both sides of the Quaker schism had more in common in their early influences than they had to differentiate them. Like the “red diaper babies” discussed by feminist Betty Friedan, these women were nurtured and trained for their leadership roles in society from childhood, by their families and religious communities.

Their schooling began at a young age and taught compassion, responsibility, and social justice as well as math and English. Their families and

⁹⁵ Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Worcester, April 27, 1852, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁹⁶ Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Worcester, April 16, 1854, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, AAS.

church communities led them to expect that standing up for their ideals would bring them suffering but that they would have the greater support of the people who were closest and most important to them. They emphasized the pride and religious values of their own heritage both as families and as a Society of Friends, creating a counterculture in some cases to the predominant society and its values and mores. All of these dynamics went deeper than the distinction of Hicksite or Orthodox, giving all the reformers the strength and motivation they needed to carry out their reform work even in the most difficult or controversial of circumstances.

⁹⁷ "Ladies Antislavery Fair," *The Liberator*, Friday December 15, 1837.

“... The Lord is graciously willing to reveal himself as fully to the children of men in this day as in any day of the world....”⁹⁸

Chapter 3: The Hicksite Schism and the Women Reformers

This chapter will argue the crucial role of schism to American religious identity. It will briefly outline the history and reasons for the Hicksite schism. It will argue that for the leading reform women of this study, the schism affected only one factor relevant to social reform: their treatment of the Bible. But it will also show that these differences did not affect their techniques as reformers, their abilities to perform effectively, their willingness to challenge societal or gender boundaries in pursuit of their calling, or their ability or willingness to cross boundaries to work with women from the other side.

This is because the theological values raised by the schism—issues like the doctrine of the Trinity and the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, or the need for a creed may have divided these reformers, but they remained united in the core Quaker theological beliefs in peace, human equality and social justice which served as the foundation for their social reform.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Elias Hicks, “Letters of Elias Hicks, Including Also a Few Short Essays Written on Several Occasions, Mostly Illustrative of His Doctrinal Views” (New York: Isaac T. Hopper, 1834), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, PA., 49.

⁹⁹ Note: Many of the mainline Protestant churches were focused on these more practical, social aspects of ministry during the middle of the nineteenth century. See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), “The High Tide of Humanitarian Reform,” 637-647.

American religious and reform history, is, above all, the history of schism. There is, in fact, something very American about the process of religious schism. When Americans can't come to agreement with others about points of theology or doctrine or practice (Who is God? What does God expect of people? What is the role of the Bible in the life of the believer? What is proper behavior for a person who claims to be following God?) They often start a new religion or denomination of their own. It is the "American way," and the vast majority of American Protestant denominations have experienced at least one religious schism in the course of their history. R. Laurence Moore notes that "American religious sects are a species of faction.... I am intrigued by the way in which the American experiment encouraged people to express their most cherished convictions in the language of dissent."¹⁰⁰

Nathan Hatch's book, *The Democratizing of American Christianity*, describes a powerful populizing movement that took place in American churches during the period from 1780-1830. I argue that Hatch's description of this populizing movement, below, bears some striking resemblances to what was happening to Friends during the Hicksite schism of 1828: "First, they called for a revolution within the church to place laity and clergy on an equal footing...." The Quakers had no clergy to begin with, and in the case of the Hicksite schism, Elias Hicks and his followers challenged the power claimed by the established elders in Philadelphia. "Second, they rejected the traditions of learned theology altogether.... Finally, they called for a populist hermeneutic premised on the

¹⁰⁰ R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), xi, x.

inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself.”¹⁰¹ Hatch also mentions that many members of the vital, “democratizing churches” that thrived during this period also “refused to adhere to creeds as tests of fellowship, to undergo theological examinations, or to offer a confession of faith upon joining a church.”¹⁰²

The Hicksite schism did not occur in a vacuum, nor does it have relevance only to Quaker history. It is part of that special period of the Second Great Awakening which left its “indelible...imprint upon the structures of American Christianity as it did upon those of American life.” The Hicksite movement was an expression of the very kind of “religious populism” which “has been a residual agent of change in America over the last two centuries.”¹⁰³ And schism itself? Hatch takes a page from English sociologist David Martin, who asserts that, contrary to the fears of most church historians, the “fragmentation” of American churches is neither a “besetting sin” nor a “crippling weakness”. Rather, “the vitality of American religion is in precise correlation with the degree of pluralism and dissent present here.”¹⁰⁴

The Hicksite Schism:

The first concept to grasp about the schism is that it was not a monolithic event. It was a series of events, which occurred over years in a variety of different locations with different Meetings. It was a particularly long-lasting

¹⁰¹ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 6, 71, 73.

¹⁰² Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 78.

¹⁰³ Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 5, 8.

schism, because in the New York yearly meeting, for example, the schism began in 1828 and was not to be “healed” until 1955. Even today, bringing up the issue of the Hicksite schism to contemporary Quakers can arouse strong feelings, and Barbour et. al note that “the division of New York Yearly Meeting...was part of a much deeper cleavage that still divides American Friends over doctrine and authority.”¹⁰⁵ It was also a demographically widespread schism. It was precipitated in Philadelphia by Elias Hicks, and it spread from there to New York, New England, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Canada.¹⁰⁶

In a way unique to their denomination, Quakers have a theological belief in the importance of decisions by consensus. This is part of a spiritual, organic method of decision-making that attempts to see that the power of “truth itself in the body, may reign, not persons nor forms.”¹⁰⁷ Whereas methods like voting take the opinion of the winning majority, consensus attempts to move all the members of the body to an organic decision, which in the end pleases all members and leaves no one out. This method was also used by societies like the Cree Indians and the people of the northern dales in England, where Fox may have first seen it in practice.¹⁰⁸ So for this denomination to split over disagreement is very uncharacteristic of Friends’ own ideals as a religious

¹⁰⁴ Hatch paraphrases the argument of David Martin from *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York, 1978), 30, 36, in *Democratization of American Christianity*, 224.

¹⁰⁵ Hugh Barbour and Thomas Bassett, Christopher Densmore, H. Larry Ingle, Alson D. Wagner, “The Orthodox-Hicksite Separation,” In *Quaker Crosscurrents: Three Hundred Years of Friends in the New York Yearly Meetings*, eds. Hugh Barbour, Christopher Densmore, Elizabeth H. Moger, Nancy C. Sorel, Alson D. Van Wagner, and Arthur J. Worrall, 100-130 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 122.

¹⁰⁶ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism, The Story of Quaker Women in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), 92-93.

¹⁰⁷ *Letters Etc. of Early Friends*, edited by Abram Rawlinson Barclay, 1841, 289, quoted in Howard H. Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2002), 123.

community.¹⁰⁹ Women's organizations in the 19th century also put a high value on consensus, even on unanimity, as reflected in the written records of their organizations.¹¹⁰

Robert Doherty writes that "as early as 1822 the question 'is thee a Hicksite or anti-Hicksite?' was being discussed. Nevertheless, no clear lines of division appeared until after the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting split in April of 1827. Even then, some Meetings remained together until the spring of 1828."¹¹¹ Doherty noted that "to be sure, some families and friends were split by the Separation but the percentage thus affected was extremely small."¹¹² Hamm, who wrote, "the separation traumatized a generation of Orthodox Friends", contradicts this. English Quaker Hannah Backhouse who was visiting Long Island Quakers at the time said that "there was 'hardly a family in which some of them didn't go to a different Meeting house—husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters separated from each other.'"¹¹³

The British Friends also played a role. The Society of Friends originated in Britain, and ties between Friends in England and the United States have always been close. In Britain, the work of John Wesley and George Whitefield caused an evangelical stir among the British Friends.¹¹⁴ Their version of the Hicksite schism, the "Beaconite Separation," did not split the English Quakers the

¹⁰⁸ David E. W. Holden, *Friends Divided: Conflict and Division in the Society of Friends* (Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 1988), 7.

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of the role of consensus in Quaker decision-making, see Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 11, 85, 97.

¹¹⁰ Barbara Welter, personal correspondence, November 2008.

¹¹¹ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 51.

¹¹² Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 79.

¹¹³ Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 18.

way that the Hicksite schism divided America. When the Americans split, the British Friends allied firmly with the Orthodox. Robert Doherty goes so far as to venture that “it seems likely that the primary source of Orthodox sentiment was English Quakerism.”¹¹⁵ Elias Hicks himself blamed the British. In his *Journal*, he discusses Friends from England who had “come over on a visit to Friends in this country...blew up the fire of discord, until they brought about a division in our once peaceful society....”¹¹⁶

The schism has three basic causes, all of which had parallel roots in other social and political conflicts in the new nation. The first is the “populist” struggle of early nineteenth century America to which Nathan Hatch refers, between rural and urban Quakers, between people who earn their living from farming and those beginning to take advantage of the benefits of technology or high finance, between those with life knowledge and those with university educations, between separatism and cosmopolitanism, between individualism and collectivism, all embodied in Elias Hicks and the Quaker elders of Philadelphia.

Second, it was a power and a personal struggle between recorded minister Elias Hicks and the elders of the Philadelphia Arch Street Meeting, including particular individuals such as Jonathan Evans.

¹¹⁴ Holden, *Friends Divided*, 37.

¹¹⁵ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 73.

¹¹⁶ Elias Hicks, *Journal of the Life and Religious Labours of Elias Hicks* (Earlham School of Religion: Digital Quaker Collection), [url:http://esr.earlham.edu/dqc/765-983-1423](http://esr.earlham.edu/dqc/765-983-1423) (accessed 12/28/2007), 409. Also note that Sandra Holton's description of Quaker women in Britain paints an impression much more varied than some other accounts. In her descriptions of Quaker women, the kinds of issues that created the schism in America were alive and well in Britain, alliances within the English Quaker community were not so firm, and the Beaconite controversy was not to be so easily dismissed. See Holton, *Quaker Women* 45-46, 61-62.

Third, it was a theological struggle between individualists and those who wished Quakers to adhere to some kind of creedal standard, between traditional “quietists” and those who had been positively influenced by the evangelical worship fervor of the Second Great Awakening, all represented in the conflicts between traditional quietist Elias Hicks and the elders of the Philadelphia meeting. Included in this controversy was a disagreement over the place of the Bible. Both sides valued the Bible as central to their religious belief, but Hicksites felt that in cases of conflict between the Bible and the inner light the inner light must prevail, whereas the Orthodox placed nothing before the primacy of Holy Scripture.

First causes:

Bliss Forbush includes the following “aside” in his biography of Elias Hicks: “Elias could hardly believe that all the stir and confusion among Friends was the result of ‘a little difference of opinion on abstract subjects.’ These difficulties seemed more like a judgment of God upon the Quakers, sent because so many were ‘glutting themselves with the fruits of slave labor....’”¹¹⁷

Elias Hicks was a man who would have been much happier talking about the evils of partaking of slave produce than the fine points of systematic theology-- and in that sense there is a certain irony that a theological revolution crystallized around him and took his name. Part of the problem was that he was too forthright about some things—Some believed he “preach[ed] many things that were better not said.”¹¹⁸ James Mott once advised Elias to learn to criticize

¹¹⁷ Bliss Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 248.

¹¹⁸ Gideon Seaman to Elias Hicks, quoted in Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 204.

bad theological doctrines, rather than the people who held them, but he did not listen to that advice either.¹¹⁹ A diplomat or a politician he was not, and some have ventured that he actually enjoyed using inflammatory language.¹²⁰ He considered himself a simple Long Island farmer and a “recorded minister” in the oldest traditions of the Society of Friends. His opposition, the Orthodox, would call him and those who followed him “deceivers,” “false prophets,” “evil men and seducers.”¹²¹

Hicks was born on March 19, 1748 in the Hempstead Plains of Long Island, New York. His father John had joined the Friends by conviction (conversion) and was a member of the Westbury Monthly Meeting on Long Island. Elias’ mother Martha attended no particular religious group but was a “Woman of Strict Morality.”

Elias first stood up to speak in Meeting for Worship in 1775.¹²² This would begin a lifetime of leadership for Hicks in the Society of Friends, and three years later he would be officially recognized as a “recorded minister,”¹²³ the Quaker alternative to ordained ministry, which recognizes that God has gifted a Friend with the ability to bestow wisdom by sharing at the Meeting for Worship. Quaker ministers are not paid and administer no sacraments.

He considered himself a simple man of the country, and a man of the soil—“With a touch of scorn which the man who works with his hands from sun-up to sun-down has for the soft clasp of the clerk or city man, Elias believed that

¹¹⁹ Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 139.

¹²⁰ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 77.

¹²¹ Hamm, *The Transformation of Quakerism*, 17-18.

¹²² Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 27.

those who left Queens County for Brooklyn or New York City did so primarily to avoid honest toil.” He scorned big business and “refused to make money by speculation.”¹²⁴

Hicks lived at what would turn out to be a crucial time for Quakers in their history, where they were forced to decide who they would be in relation to the outside world. The idea of Christians separating themselves from the “real world” has deep roots in Christian history. In the New Testament, II Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul quotes God warning the early Christians that they dare not “match” themselves or have “fellowship” with unbelievers, because it will threaten their own Christian faith. Therefore, “come out from them and be separate from them says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean....”¹²⁵ Would the Quakers, in the words of the New Testament, come out and be separate, protecting themselves from the evil influences of the world and maintaining their principles in clarity and virtue? Or would they decide to mix freely with the outside world and try to make their imprint on it at the risk of losing their individuality and purity? Some, like Elias Hicks, and his rural Long Island peers, wished to take the former path, much as the Amish decided to stay apart.

But in a bustling, quickly developing nineteenth century America many Quakers chose the opposite philosophy. The middle and upper class Quakers, who often worked as merchants in the society, felt that becoming part of the greater social fabric was the better way. Some of these Quakers also found

¹²³ Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 39.

¹²⁴ Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 20-21.

themselves attracted to churches with a more evangelical theology than traditional Quaker quietism. These Quakers will be referred to interchangeably in this study as Orthodox or evangelical.

Robert Doherty's sociological study of the Hicksite schism provides interesting economic and demographic information about the major players in the Philadelphia schism (Doherty limits himself to this geographical area). Among the Philadelphia Quakers "the Orthodox were more inclined to be engaged in occupations which would bring them both status and wealth."¹²⁶ In addition, his examination of the wills of the Orthodox showed that "more than 70 per cent of them had sizable holdings in stocks and bonds."¹²⁷ The Hicksites, by contrast, were less wealthy than the Orthodox, although Doherty also says that for the Hicksite group "the data reveal no consistent socioeconomic characteristics."¹²⁸ Within urban areas "Hicksites were strongly supported by people whose occupations and incomes placed them in middle and lower positions in society.... In all, some 40 per cent of Philadelphia Hicksites were artisans."¹²⁹

The families of the Orthodox elders were engaged in the New World of capitalism and technological progress and they saw its benefits in their own lives and jobs. They were more comfortable than rural Quakers in mixing with the world and were also having experience with the powerful events of the 2nd Great Awakening.

¹²⁵ II Corinthians 6:14-18, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹²⁶ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 46.

¹²⁷ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 67.

¹²⁸ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 42-43.

¹²⁹ Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation*, 81.

Then there is the matter of wealth. Since the beginning of the Society of Friends the denomination has had a complex relationship with the concepts of wealth and simplicity. While American Quakers were often successful in business, Barbour and Frost note that “the Quaker reformers in England and America did not attack wealth but its fruits.”¹³⁰ It is in this context, in the quickly changing times of early nineteenth century urban Philadelphia, that farmer and minister Elias Hicks criticized the elders of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and put special emphasis on the need to boycott slave produce. Ingles notes that “Hicks’s vehemence against the use of such products, as well as his attacks on usury and wealth, called into question the kind of life urban Quakers had come to accept as a matter of course.”¹³¹

In a sermon at North Meeting-House in Philadelphia, Hicks asked, “Can slaveholders, mercenaries, and hirelings, who look for their gain from this quarter, can they promote the religion of Jesus Christ? No, they are the cause of its reproach, for they are the cause of making unbelievers.”¹³²

Elias Hicks was also a man who favored neither technological progress nor higher education: “...he saw little good in the kind of economic development that others praised and promoted. He flat-out opposed the Erie Canal, observing that if God had wanted internal waterways, ‘he would have placed them there,

¹³⁰ Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 129. See also Frederick B. Tolles, *Meetinghouse and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1948).

¹³¹ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 86.

¹³² Elias Hicks, “Sermon II, Delivered at Friends’ North Meeting-House in the City of Philadelphia, on third day, 16th of eleventh month, 1824”, in Elias Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses*, Delivered in the Several Meetings of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, Germantown, Abingdon, Byberry, Newtown, Falls, and Trenton, taken in shorthand by M.T.C.

and there would be a river flowing through central New York.” Hicks called the construction of railroads “business that principally belongs to men of this world, but not the children of light...”¹³³

Hicks was also strongly opposed to higher education of every kind, especially for ministers, who in other denominations he referred to disparagingly as “hireling priests.” In a sermon at the Western Meeting-House in Philadelphia, he preached, “Let us turn our back upon all letter religion—turn right about: for those who are seeking religion out of books, in colleges and schools, they are antipodes—in direct opposition to God Almighty, and his ways.... The way is plain and simple, we don’t want to go to colleges, to schools, to books, or to men.”¹³⁴ Of the sciences, he said, “Oh! That men of science might be aware what a curse they are to inhabitants of the earth; what a great curse.”¹³⁵

Consequently, when the Orthodox Quakers wanted to criticize the Hicksites in their pamphlet wars, they characterized them as uneducated rural illiterates. In an anti-Hicksite pamphlet, Orthodox Quaker Thomas Eddy offered the following explanation for why so many have been so “blind” as to be convinced by the “unsound doctrines” of Elias Hicks: “...The leading cause is the want of a proper or suitable education...” Eddy claimed that in Hicksite households “the writings of early Friends...are scarce and little read, all kinds of

Gould (Philadelphia: Joseph & Edward Parker, I. Ashmead & Co., Printers, 1825), Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY, 24.

¹³³ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 46.

¹³⁴ Elias Hicks, “Sermon III Delivered at Friends’ Western Meeting-House, in the City of Philadelphia, on Fourth Day, 1st of Twelfth Month, 1824”, in Elias Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses*, 48, 50.

¹³⁵ Elias Hicks, “Sermon III” in Elias Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses*, 53.

school learning...are discouraged.... To read the Scriptures daily or at fixed hours, is declared to be mere formality..."¹³⁶

H. Larry Ingle, who wrote the foremost book on the division, concluded that "the ultimate issue was a question of authority: who would determine what kind of people Quakers would be.... The feud at its essence...represented a struggle over power."¹³⁷ Ingle described the Arch Street elders of Philadelphia as wealthy and powerful men of the world who "did not necessarily oppose change—they simply wanted to be in charge of it."¹³⁸ Almost all, he notes, were either merchants or gentlemen.¹³⁹ They also tended to hold positions of power and influence in the Society of Friends. Many were members of the influential Meeting for Sufferings, which Howard Brinton explains is the "Executive Committee of the Yearly Meeting," hence, "country Friends could but seldom attend these important gatherings."¹⁴⁰ In addition, Ingle notes that at the time of the split in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the majority of members became Hicksites yet the majority of ministers and elders became Orthodox.¹⁴¹ Ingle notes: "...The question was one of authority....The Hicksite principle.... allowed

¹³⁶ "The Cabinet, or Works of Darkness Brought to Light, Being a Retrospect of the Anti-Christian conduct of some of the leading characters in the Society called FRIENDS, towards that eminent and devoted Servant of the Lord, ELIAS HICKS, when on his last visit of *Gospel Love* to the inhabitants of the City of Philadelphia..." (Philadelphia: Printed for the Compiler, 1824), in *Quaker Heritage Press Online Texts* <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/h-o/cabint.html> (accessed 12/29/2007), 7.

¹³⁷ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 79-80.

¹³⁸ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 16.

¹³⁹ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 23.

¹⁴⁰ Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 230.

¹⁴¹ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 218.

freer range to individualism and encouraged each Friend to interpret faith and practice in the light of each one's unique experience."¹⁴²

Some aspects of the conflict were concretely personal and could be traced to particular individuals and times. Some people traced the precipitating events as far back as October 27 of 1819, when Elias Hicks preached, as he often did, against slavery and the use of products gained through slavery. However, this time, in Pine Street Meeting-House, Philadelphia, Hicks preached specifically about people who refrained from the use of slave produce and then went *back* to the practice. Supposedly knowing that this described the situation of evangelical Friend Jonathan Evans in his audience, rumor was that Elias "aimed" his sermon specifically at this evangelical Quaker. Using strong language, Hicks "interpreted the traditional Quaker prohibition against buying or selling goods taken by pirates as applying to the use of sugar, cotton, rice, and molasses, since these items represented the labor of Africans, wrenched by force from their homeland. Pointedly he said that some Friends, who had previously avoided the use of these products, had changed and were now little better than thieves and murderers; 'there are some who had gone retrograde.'"¹⁴³ The angry Evans later snubbed Hicks by closing the men's meeting without waiting for his return. Now Hicks was angry and insulted. Evans tried to talk the whole issue out with Hicks later but the two could not come to a peaceful reconciliation. "The two proud men never carried on a civil conversation again."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 19.

¹⁴³ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 85.

¹⁴⁴ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 84-86.

In 1821, prominent Hicksite Isaac T. Hopper “told [Jonathan] Evans to his face that the Society might as well be ruled by a pope if it countenanced the kind of domination he exercised.”¹⁴⁵ People began lining up on their respective sides.

The rift between the two men was never healed, and seven years later, On December 10, 1826 at the Pine Street Meeting in Philadelphia, Elias Hicks and Jonathan Evans both spoke. After the Meeting, Elias reached out his hand to Evans, who refused to take it. “No, Elias, I have not unity with thee, nor with thy doctrines.”¹⁴⁶

Finally, the Hicksite schism was a theological and Biblical struggle. Nathan Hatch described the “democratizing” effect of the Second Great Awakening on Protestant churches, as Christians “refused to adhere to creeds as tests of fellowship, to undergo theological examinations, or to offer a confession of faith upon joining a church.”¹⁴⁷ The Quakers experienced this effect of the Second Great Awakening, and many more.

Evangelical Protestantism with its emphasis on charismatic preachers, Christocentric worship, and Bible holiness was visiting all corners of the United States in the early nineteenth century. In Mark Noll’s extensive analysis of religion in America he notes that: “the central religious reality for the period from the Revolution to the Civil War was the unprecedented expansion of evangelical Protestant Christianity....Protestantism boomed in the early United States, and

¹⁴⁵ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 97-105.

¹⁴⁶ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 168-169, 171. For Hicks’ encounters with women, see chapter 3 for his meeting with young Lucretia Mott p. 78, his advice to Phebe Willis p. 73 ff., and his refusal to recognize connections between himself and Hannah Barnard p. 87. Hicks had a way of acting unpredictably and often irascibly with people of both genders.

¹⁴⁷ Hatch, *Democratization of Christianity*, 78.

the Protestant bodies that led the way were the most militantly evangelical churches.”¹⁴⁸

The Society of Friends had held fast since its origins to certain principles of faith and action: they openly opposed war, they would not swear oaths, they hired no paid ordained clergy, and they believed that each person had access to the inner light of God. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and increasingly into the nineteenth century, Quakers who called themselves evangelistic or orthodox also considered it crucial for Friends to declare their belief in other Christian tenets that had been less clearly pronounced as part of the Quaker faith, if they were discussed at all. These included belief in the Trinity (God as three in one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit), the vicarious atonement of Christ (that Jesus Christ died in order that humanity’s sins would be forgiven), the infallibility of the Bible in its entirety, and the necessity of all Christians to declare their belief in all of these precepts in order to be truly Christian. Thomas Hamm notes that something new was happening to the Society of Friends. “For a century and a half Friends had eschewed systematic theological thinking. They had had no need for it. Hicks forced Friends to try to systematize their thinking about Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the Atonement, Original Sin, and the Inner Light.”¹⁴⁹ In the early 1800s, members of the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings started discussing “a uniform Discipline that would combine the world’s disparate Quakers into one unified body.” Meanwhile they rewrote their own Discipline so that any Quaker who denied “the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

¹⁴⁸ Mark Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 165-166.

the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit or the authenticity of the Scriptures” could be disowned.”¹⁵⁰

More and more, Quakers influenced by evangelical Christianity began to question whether Quakers like Hicks were “true” Friends and “true” Christians. The Hicksites, for their part, worried that “as evangelical sentiments began to spread among Friends, the distinctiveness that had characterized Quakers started to disappear.”¹⁵¹

Much of this theological wrestling took place in the form of “pamphlet wars” between the Hicksites and the Orthodox. One such pamphlet, produced by Hicksites in 1823, pointed to the Philadelphia Meeting for Suffering as the problematic organization in the controversies: “... Their secret Cabinet and Councils... [have] brought forth many noxious plants that will not bud, blossom and thrive among the trees of Gospel liberty in this American soil—hence arose this *new fangled triangular Creed*....”¹⁵² In Elias Hicks’ journal, he notes that one of the “principal requisites” to being a Christian is “a real belief in *God and Christ as one undivided essence*....”¹⁵³

Questions concerning the nature of Jesus Christ and his relationship to God the Father and to humanity were also in question. One traditional Christian theological concept with which Elias Hicks took issue, was vicarious atonement. “Propitiary or vicarious atonement” is an expression of the traditional Christian

¹⁴⁹ Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 68.

¹⁵¹ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 73.

¹⁵² “Preliminary Remarks on “Concerning the Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Published by direction of the Meeting for Sufferings held in Phil. Solomon W. Conrad, Printer, 1823, Reprinted for the Compiler, 1824, part of pamphlet “The Cabinet, or Works of Darkness”, 17.

concept, “Christ died for the sins of humanity.” In a tract written by opponents of Hicks, the “true” “doctrine of Friends” on this point was presented as follows: “...God manifested...love towards us in the sending of his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, who gave himself for us...a sacrifice to God...a sweet smelling savor...having made peace through the blood of his cross...”¹⁵⁴ In a tract produced by his own followers, Elias Hicks shared his reasoning on this theological point: “...I do not believe that God created any rational being, and sent him into the world to suffer death for other men, because they were wicked, and he was righteous.”¹⁵⁵ In Hicks’ opinion, this particular theological concept was not gospel truth, but “*a vulgar error, that came in with the apostacy from primitive Christianity.*”¹⁵⁶

Many of these theological and liturgical issues echo some of the ideas being forged in the burgeoning Unitarian Church, which emphasized “trust in reason instead of the practice of enthusiasm, belief in salvation by moral amelioration instead of by a bloody sacrifice, hope for the universal salvation of all people instead of a craven fear of hell, God as benevolent creator instead of a providential meddler, and, ultimately, the rational clarity of a unified God instead

¹⁵³ Elias Hicks, *Journal of the Life*, 355.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Willis, Editor., “The Answers, By Elias Hicks, to the Six Queries Addressed to Him, With His Declarations Upon the Same Points, On Other Occasions, Contrasted With Each other, and With the Doctrines of the Society of Friends” (New York: Mahlon Day, 1831), Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY, under “A Sermon Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House Rose-Street, New York”, 28-29.

¹⁵⁵ Elias Hicks, “A Doctrinal Epistle, Written by Elias Hicks, of Jericho, on Long Island, in the Year 1820, Purporting to Be an Exposition of Christian Doctrine Respecting the Nature and Office of Jesus Christ. With references to Those Texts of Scripture by Which its Truth, or Fallacy, May Be Readily Tested”(Philadelphia: S. Potter & Co.; New York: Bliss & White; Baltimore: E.J. Coale, MDCCCXXIV), Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY, 14.

¹⁵⁶ Elias Hicks, “A Doctrinal Epistle,” 10.

of the recondite mysteries of the Trinity.”¹⁵⁷ In 1819, influential pastor William Ellery Channing delivered his famous sermon “Unitarian Christianity” which held that the Trinity was “the most unintelligible [doctrine] about which Christians ever disputed,” and claimed that “the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason....Recollect the declarations of Christ, that he came not to send peace but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother...”¹⁵⁸

Questions were also raised about Elias Hicks’ beliefs concerning the divinity of Christ and the virgin birth. The evangelicals opposing Hicks published a tract declaring that the Society of Friends have always believed in the scriptural accounts of “...the miraculous conception of our Lord Jesus Christ...the life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection and ascension of Christ; so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it...yea, we believe it were damnable unbelief not to believe it...’—Barclays’ Apol. Page 141.”¹⁵⁹ Hicks’ published position on the divinity of Christ was that “Jesus Christ...was fully swallowed up into the divine nature, and complete divinity of his heavenly Father.... he was truly the Son of God, imbued with power from on high....”¹⁶⁰

When Thomas Willis wrote a tract opposing Hicks, he printed Hicks’ official position, as well as others he had collected, including the following: “as

¹⁵⁷ Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards*,” 284-285.

¹⁵⁸ Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, 30-32.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Willis, “The Answers By Elias Hicks”, 10.

¹⁶⁰ Elias Hicks, in T Willis, “The Answers By Elias Hicks,” 2.

far as he (Jesus Christ) had of the divine nature in him, so far he was divine and no farther; and so of every other man'—Sermon at Jericho, 6th month, 1821".¹⁶¹

...."He was begotten as every other man that ever came into the world was begotten. The Almighty performs a miracle whenever a human being is conceived.'—*Sermon at Flushing*."¹⁶²

Differences between Hicksites and evangelicals also involved the liturgical nature of the Quakers' worship service. Elias Hicks represented the old tradition of Quietism in the Society of Friends. Barbour and Frost describe the traditional Quaker worship service, in which "...worship services began with a period of silence..." Quakers believed that "worship occurred during periods of quietness or during the prayers or sermons of the ministers"...When Friends spoke in meeting it was because they were "guided by the Holy Spirit", and "Quietism dominated the practice of the ministry."¹⁶³

Hicks' Journal entry concerning a Meeting for Worship at Monkton, Vermont describes clearly what it was like for a quietist Quaker minister to encounter a congregation which had apparently become used to an enthusiastic, evangelical style of worship. He notes that they held a meeting in Monkton at the

¹⁶¹ Elias Hicks in T. Willis, "The Answers By Elias Hicks", 11-12.

¹⁶² Hicks, in Willis, "The Answers By Elias Hicks", 1-3. Finally, in a detailed argument, Hicks discussed the evidence for and against the idea that Joseph was the father of Jesus, concluded that whether he agreed with his fellow Christians on this point or not did not affect the "flow of love and unity" that he shared with them, and that it was one of several non-essential issues: "...in regard to our salvation...I may further say, that I believe it would be a much greater sin in me, to smoke tobacco that was the produce of the labour of slaves, than it would be to believe either of these positions.'—Extract from E.H.'s letter to Thos. Willis, 10th month, 1821."¹⁶²

¹⁶³ Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 100, 101.

home of Stephen Haight, but there was a problem in what was supposed to be the silent part of the meeting, as these Quakers did not understand the proper nature of worship, “being brought up and educated in the belief that, unless they are engaged in some bodily exercise, such as outward and vocal singing, praying, preaching, and the like, there is no meeting;” These evangelicals, Hicks complained, “ being so instructed by their teachers, it is very difficult to get them into stillness, or into any right condition to hear. “ This merely complicated the work of the “true gospel minister, whose labour and travail is to get into, and bring others into, a state of true solemn silence; that he may therefore become baptized into the state of the people, and be qualified to administer to their real conditions; for otherwise preaching is vain....”¹⁶⁴

At this time when evangelical Quakers were influenced by a more programmed form of worship, Hicks preached “...the Lord is calling us to come out of Babylon, and all dependence upon external things; come out of all ordinances, ceremonies, prayers, and whatever stands in the invention of the creature. They are an abomination in the sight of God.”¹⁶⁵ In his *Journal*, Hicks wrote that “all ceremonial religion in the observation of days, and complying with outward ordinances...do not in the least tend to make the comers thereunto a whit the better.... But lead the observers thereof into a form, without the power.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Elias Hicks, *Journal of the Life*, 360.

¹⁶⁵ Elias Hicks, “Sermon V: Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House, Germantown, in Philadelphia County, on First Day Morning, Fifth of Twelfth Month, 1824”, in Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses*, 104.

¹⁶⁶ Elias Hicks, *Journal of the Life*, 386.

For their part, Orthodox Quakers also felt it was time for Friends to rally to some sort of a standard—a statement of doctrine or creed on which all Quakers could agree and to which all Friends would be willing to pledge, which would clarify their faith, promote unity and also connect them with other Christian bodies. The creed penned by Jonathan Evans would be one example: “We have always believed that the Holy Scriptures were written by divine inspiration, that they are able to make wise unto salvation...We believe in the only wise, omnipotent and everlasting God; the Creator of all things in Heaven and earth.”¹⁶⁷, and so on. Hicksite Quakers saw serious problems with creating and holding such a creed as a Society.

While the Orthodox were moving toward a more traditional religion of creed and doctrine, Elias Hicks was insistent that this was not, and never had been, the Quaker way. In a letter to fellow Hicksite reformer William Poole, Hicks wrote “...A blind adherence to any doctrines, whether true or false, generates darkness; and the adoption of unintelligible dogmas gives a doubtful character to truth itself.”¹⁶⁸ In an Address to Youth, Hicks made a prediction against creeds which in its language and format, ends ironically sounding like a creed itself: “.... The Lord I believe is about to...put an end to all man’s forms, creeds, and professions...so all may savingly come to know but one Lord... one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all.”¹⁶⁹ In a published tract written to defend Hicks after the separation, one of his supporters wrote that his

¹⁶⁷ Jonathan Evans in “The Cabinet, or Works of Darkness”, 18-19.

¹⁶⁸ Elias Hicks to William Poole, 3d mo. 26th, 1824, in Hicks, “Letters of Elias Hicks, Including Also a Few Short Essays Written on Several Occasions, Mostly Illustrative of his Doctrinal Views” (New York: Isaac T. Hopper, 1834), Friends’ Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA., 152.

detractors had “published ridiculous accounts about Elias Hicks—as upright a man as I ever was acquainted with. The Society of Friends, before that time, never had a creed...” The Friend noted that in his seventy-eight years as a Quaker, “never in my time have I known a person questioned as to his faith and belief, in any meeting of the Society of Friends...if they live up our discipline he is an upright man...”¹⁷⁰ (The Quakers were not the only Protestant denomination to argue or threaten to split over the issue of creed. The Unitarians finally adopted their version of a creed in the Winchester Profession of Faith in 1803, but this in the midst of vigorous argument over whether they should adopt a creed at all.¹⁷¹ The Presbyterians argued over the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1810 and following.¹⁷² The Congregationalists referred to the Cambridge Platform of 1648¹⁷³ and the Burial Hill Declaration of 1887, and Quakers did not produce a creed until the Richmond Declaration of Faith in 1887, which was not shared by Hicksites or Wilburite Orthodox)¹⁷⁴. In David Holden’s account of the Hicksite schism, he also describes the Keithian schism in the 1680s-1690s when prominent Quaker George Keith “became convinced that new members and young people should be required to make an open declaration of faith before they were admitted into fellowship.” Keith produced a document entitled ‘The Fundamental Truths of Christianity,’ and “wanted a Quakerism more like

¹⁶⁹ Elias Hicks, “An Address to Youth,” in Elias Hicks, *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 120.

¹⁷⁰ James Field, “James Field’s Account of the Separation of the Society of Friends, at the Yearly Meeting Held in New York, 1828,” Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, 3.

¹⁷¹ David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 343, 56-57, 57-59, 344, 123.

¹⁷² Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, Third Edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 80.

¹⁷³ J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 339.

¹⁷⁴ Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 214.

orthodox Christian groups.”¹⁷⁵ Quakers in America divided between those who supported Keith on this and an assortment of complex issues. In the end, Keith was disowned and was welcomed into the Anglican Church. Holden points to this as the first American schism among Friends.¹⁷⁶

Another major aspect of the schism was a difference between Hicks and the Orthodox regarding the treatment of scripture. The Bible was central to Protestants in the early nineteenth century. The American Bible Society was founded in 1816, the American Tract Society in 1823, and these groups and local Bible societies produced millions of Bibles by 1830.¹⁷⁷

Reading the Bible was the bedrock of evangelical religion, and the democratizing revolution required “a populist hermeneutic premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him or herself.”¹⁷⁸ Elias Hicks was more revolutionary than that. He called every person to read the Bible for him or herself. But in addition he reminded them that the newest testament was being written at this moment and that God is speaking to them right now as surely as God spoke to the people recorded in the Bible, if they will only attend the inner light.

One of the exchanges which would be most discussed in the Hicksite controversy were Hicks’ letters to Phebe Willis early in the nineteenth century concerning the proper use of the Bible. Willis was a fellow Long Island Quaker

¹⁷⁵ David E.W. Holden, *Friends Divided: Conflict and Division in the Society of Friends* (Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 1988), 28,29.

¹⁷⁶ Holden, *Friends Divided*, 30-33.

¹⁷⁷ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 278.

¹⁷⁸ Hatch, *The Democratization of Christianity*, 6, 71, 73.

and friend to Elias Hicks, but because of her beliefs concerning scripture and other key theological issues she and her husband would later choose to join the Orthodox minority in their local meeting.

Hicks opened his letter to Willis in 1818 by embracing the very pragmatic view that each person's faith depended on his or her own experience as revealed by God: "Dear Friend...I have...been led to see the necessity of investigating for myself all customs and doctrines... and not to sit down satisfied with any thing but the plain, clear, demonstrative testimony of the spirit and word of life and light in my own heart and conscience...."¹⁷⁹ Hicks made what would later become one of his most controversial observations, that "the book called the Scriptures ...appears ...to have been the cause of four-fold more harm than good to Christendom, since the apostles' days...."¹⁸⁰ He accused the "professors of Christianity" of "[holding] the Scriptures, or their interpretations of them, as their chief idol...such was their veneration for them, that for anyone to hold up any thing else as a rule, he was immediately pronounced a heretic or schismatic, and not fit to company or associate with in any way...."¹⁸¹ "For is it possible that men can be guilty of greater idolatry, than to esteem and hold the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, by which they place them in the very seat of God and worship them as God?"¹⁸² Hicks cited this practice as a direct contradiction to the beliefs of Quaker founder George Fox, who "[bore] testimony to the light and spirit of truth in the hearts and consciences of men and women, as the only

¹⁷⁹ Elias Hicks to Phebe Willis, Jericho, 5th month 19th day, 1818, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 43.

¹⁸⁰ Elias Hicks, Jericho, 5th month 19th day, 1818, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 44.

¹⁸¹ Elias Hicks, Jericho 5th month 19th day, 1818, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 46.

¹⁸² Elias Hicks, New York, 9th month 23rd, 1820, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 64.

sure rule of faith and practice...complete and sufficient, without the aid of books or men....”¹⁸³

Hicks reminded Willis that “...the Lord is graciously willing to reveal himself as fully to the children of men in this day as in any day of the world...” and concluded, “...we are all, or have been, so bound down by tradition, being taught from the cradle to venerate the Scriptures, and people generally considering them so sacred as not be to investigated...hence we have all been more or less, dupes to tradition and error.”¹⁸⁴

Hicks was not alone in encouraging Quakers to rely on their own resources to evaluate scripture. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century many Americans were influenced by mistrust for intellectual authorities and the belief that each person was capable of making his or her judgments without the help of “outside experts”. This was the time of the movement of “common sense realism” sparked by Scottish philosophers like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart.¹⁸⁵ The schism also took place within the time of Emerson and the Transcendentalist movement, with its emphasis on the importance of the individual intuition as guide.

Elias Hicks’ position was that the Bible was of great importance and he knew it well. However, to him it was one of several key resources, and to Hicks his ultimate guide was the inner light of Christ as revealed to him. Hicks

¹⁸³ Elias Hicks, Jericho, 5th month 19th day, 1818, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 45. It is also important to note in these interchanges Hicks’ treatment of Willis as an equal in the Quaker faith. He does not patronize her, he does not refer her to any human authority for guidance, and he reiterates Fox’s belief that the inner light is revealed equally to the “hearts and consciences of men and women.”

¹⁸⁴ Elias Hicks, Jericho 5th month 19th day, 1818, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 49.

describes the place of the Bible in a letter to a fellow Quaker: "...The letter...killeth. And it is of no avail who wrote the letter, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or George Fox, or Penn, or Barclay, or any other man...." Hicks replaces the letter with the "spirit of truth...as it dwelleth with and is in every believer."¹⁸⁶

Hicks' response to Phebe Willis caused fireworks among orthodox Friends (letter in which Hicks notes that "the Bible has caused four-fold more harm than good....") Here, the evangelicals were not only offended by Hicks' treatment of scripture as secondary to the Holy Spirit, but concerned about the implications of Hicks' thought concerning the problem of authority. Ingle notes, "Hicks and his followers might asseverate that Friends' only true guide was the inward one, but the way the Society had developed required some body to decide whether the leadings of this guide were legitimate or not."¹⁸⁷

Here is the crux of the Hicksite problem from the Orthodox point of view: What check is there on these people, if they deny the authority of scripture, tradition, creed, and community in the form of people like the elders of Philadelphia? What is to keep people from just creating any individual religion they wish and calling it Quakerism? Phrased in a different way, but applying to the Hicksites' dislike for creed and doctrine, and their freedom with scripture, one Orthodox Quaker responded: "we have...conclusive testimony from...our Saviour...that a belief in the doctrines of that gospel which he sealed with his

¹⁸⁵ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 275, 353-356.

¹⁸⁶ Elias Hicks to J. Wilson Moore, Philadelphia, Jericho, 3rd mo. 26th, 1823, in *Letters of Elias Hicks*, 122.

blood, is...necessary to our salvation. Let us not...deceive ourselves...that we...are at liberty to choose and carve for ourselves, and say we will believe a part and deny a part."¹⁸⁸

When an Orthodox Quaker criticized a new volume of Hicks' sermons in the Orthodox publication *The Friend*, he characterizes Hicks' objectives as: "To destroy all faith in Jesus Christ as the saviour of the world, to degrade him to the level of a mere man, and totally to lay waste the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures."¹⁸⁹

As described, the causes of the Hicksite schism are complex, but when examined separately they show little relevance to issues of social reform. The differences outlined may have separated some Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers and produced conflict between them, but they did not cause any significant conflict between the women reformers featured in this study. First, in terms of class struggle or rural versus urban concerns, the women reformers all tended to come from the middle to upper classes, even the Hicksites like Lucretia Mott. They were as likely as not to be sophisticated and many were familiar with urban life even if they did not live in cities. It is not a surprise that there was no great culture clash between these Hicksite and Orthodox women.

¹⁸⁷ Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 83.

¹⁸⁸ Anna Braithwaite, "A Letter from Anna Braithwaite to Elias Hicks, on the Nature of His Doctrines. Being a Reply to His Letter to Dr. Edwin A Atlee; Together With Notes and Observations" (Philadelphia, 1825), in *Quaker Heritage Press Online Texts*, <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/h-o/cabnt.html> (accessed 12/29/2007), under "Two Anonymous Pamphlets from Shortly Before the 1827 Hicksite-Orthodox Separation Illustrating the Tensions Among Philadelphia Quakers, Edited for Quaker Heritage Press by Larry Kuenning," 8.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Smith, Editor, *The Friend: Religious and Literary Journal*, Volume I (Philadelphia, Published by John Richardson, Adam Waldie and Co., Printers, 1828), C.W. Post College Collection, LI, NY, 285.

In keeping with their middle to upper class backgrounds most of the women reformers in the study were also very well educated. We know of at least one Hicksite reformer who had trouble with Elias Hicks' repressive ideas about higher education. Lucretia Mott related an incident in which Elias Hicks was a special visitor to Nine Partners School and listened to her recite in geography class. When Mott proudly produced the facts about the height of Mount Chimborazo, Elias "sharply criticized the waste of time in teaching girls such useless things. Teach them something that will be useful to them in after life," said he."¹⁹⁰

And of course, if Elias Hicks preached about the need to take a hard line on slave produce when these women reformers were in the audience, Hicksite or Orthodox, he would have been speaking to a sympathetic audience.

The aspect of the schism that could have been the most relevant to the women reformers was the issue of Hicksite separatism. Hicks did not like Quakers mixing with members of other churches, particularly if ordained clergy might be involved.¹⁹¹ He writes in his *Journal* about the problem of: "Members of our society mixing in with the associations of other people, in their governments and politics, their Bible and Missionary societies...leading them to assimilate with

¹⁹⁰ Anna Hallowell Davis, *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1884), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA, 17.

¹⁹¹ It should be noted that occasionally Orthodox Quakers were advised toward separatism as well. Gerda Lerner notes that when Angelina Grimke wanted to return for another year of study at Catherine Beecher's Female Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, the Quaker elders of Philadelphia disapproved and "Jane Bettie tried to discourage her from going by the earnest suggestion that 'it might be dangerous for her there among so many Presbyterians.'" Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters*, 76.

the spirit of the world..." Hicks was particularly concerned that Quakers would lose "simplicity...as it regards plainness of speech, deportment, and apparel."¹⁹²

If the Hicksite women reformers had heeded Elias' warning it would have severely curtailed their reform activities and the history of American reform would have been totally different. But most of the Hicksite women paid this advice very little heed. They mixed freely with Orthodox women, with lay people and clergy of all different denominations, and often even attended lectures and sermons at other Protestant churches. When Hicksite Sarah Pugh visited the World Anti-Slavery Convention she reflected on the whole question of staying separate or mixing with others, an issue which would also come to have great meaning within the abolitionist community as to how best to influence those still not working for abolition. She disagreed with those who were absolutists about separatism: "The article in the last 'Standard,' stating that the principle of 'come-outism' is to withdraw from all political, religious, or *social* connection with wrong-doers is not true." Pugh drew a distinction between joining with others for political, religious, and social reasons, indicating that each had its place, but unlike Elias Hicks, she did not seem frightened at the prospect of mixing: "Pray not to be taken out of the world, but to be preserved from the evil that is in the world....Active benevolence among evil-doers does not require us to support their iniquity. I go into a tavern and mingle with its inmates, but I need not buy a glass of rum to help in its support." At another point she notes: ".... Verily,

¹⁹² Elias Hicks, *Journal of the Life*, 383.

abolition makes *extremes* meet, and good is done by this mingling of opposites, this amalgamation.”¹⁹³

How did the particular personal and interpersonal power struggles of the Hicksite schism affect social reform or the women reformers? Not at all. None of the women reformers were key players in the power struggle in Philadelphia.

What effect did the Hicksite theological and scriptural conflicts have on social reform and on the women reformers? They had little effect on the reforms except inasmuch as the women may have been inspired by their own particular beliefs, but the divisive questions broke down over issues of doctrine and creed, and not social action. While Orthodox and Hicksite women reformers may have differed in their theology or the type of worship they preferred, their activities in reform were the same. The one difference is that the two groups treated the Bible differently in the course of their reform, but it did not make Hicksites or Orthodox more effective or active reformers, it only changed the ways in which the women understood the relationship between the Bible and their calling to reform. This evidence is presented here:

“...While reading and studying the Scriptures...[make] due allowance for the time and circumstances in which they were written; but do not puzzle and perplex thy mind with inference from isolated passages here and there, which are contrary to the spirit of the whole, and do violence to the noble gift of reason, divinely bestowed upon us....”

--Lucretia Mott¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh: A Tribute of Respect From Her Cousins* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1888), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA, 34-35.

¹⁹⁴ Lucretia Mott to J.M.McKim, 1st mo. 1st, 1834, Philadelphia, in Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 117-118.

The treatment of scripture is a key issue for Protestants in nineteenth century America, particularly for reformers and for women. Since the Bible was central to this era and to the question of social reform, it was often employed as a weapon in passionate arguments by advocates on both sides of the same debate-- "Slaves, be obedient to your masters" vs. "setting the captives free"... "Women should be silent in the churches" vs. "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy".... "An eye for an eye" vs. "Thou shalt not kill".... The reformers needed to decide on a strategy and a hermeneutic for their use of the Bible. In addition, the Bible was often at the center of the "why" of what they were doing in their reform—how they explained their calling to speak out for the slave or for women's rights, what made them willing to cross normal boundaries of gender or societal propriety to speak in public or put their safety, even their lives at risk.

The nineteenth century was a time of particular creativity in Americans' interpretation of the Bible. It is a time when in the words of Nathan Hatch Americans claimed the "inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself."¹⁹⁵ It is a time when American Protestants laid claim to the entirety of the Bible and declared it was their own book, their heritage, their religious birthright as Christians, regardless of race, gender, class or economic group. Reformers took the opportunity during this time to claim for slaves and women both the Bible itself and the right to interpret it, sometimes resulting in radical experiments like Hicksite scriptural interpretation, Stanton's *Woman's Bible*, and Transcendentalism.

This study shows that the way in which the women reformers saw and used the Bible and what hermeneutics they chose differed between the Hicksite and Orthodox reformers. It is one of the only aspects of the Hicksite schism in which the women reformers in this study differed across the schism. The differences did not make one group or the other better or more active reformers, nor did they affect the techniques of reform they employed for abolition, women's rights or peace activism.

However, in keeping with a different set of beliefs about the Bible and a different hermeneutic, Hicksite women were more comfortable questioning scripture, criticizing it, and considering it as one among many other sources. Orthodox women were more likely to consider the Bible absolutely central to their arguments, to avoid questioning it, and to reverence the scripture in a way that their Hicksite sisters did not.

Hannah Barnard, a Quaker minister from New York raised "Hicksite scriptural issues" in Europe and America long before Elias Hicks. Barnard caused a furor in the British Isles and was even disowned from her local meeting in New York as a result of her radical beliefs. Yet she has gone relatively unnoticed in history and Elias Hicks' name has been attached to the radical perspective that when there is a conflict between the inner light Quakers believe is in each of us and the scripture, the priority must be given to the inner light.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Hatch, *Democratization of Christianity*, 6, 71, 73.

¹⁹⁶ Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost also note the case of Abraham Shackleton, Irish Quaker and clerk of the Carlow Monthly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, who expressed "doubts whether God had commanded the wars in the Old Testament. Early Friends, he claimed, had emphasized the primacy of the experience of the Light of God and had used Scriptures in a secondary role." Shackleton was disowned in 1801, and some of his friends in the Society withdrew in protest. Barbour, Hugh, and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood

Barnard's contribution is a significant one that should be recognized, and her story, had it been taken seriously, could have served as a bellwether of the Hicksite controversy to come.

Hannah Jenkins Barnard (c.1754-1825) was a "recognized minister" in the Society of Friends. (This is the Quakers' alternative to ordained ministry, and indicates that the gifts of this particular Friend have been recognized and acknowledged by her local society.) She was a married woman from Hudson, New York and she and her husband Peter, who worked as a carter¹⁹⁷, had three children.¹⁹⁸ Hannah was born a Baptist, and became a Quaker "by convincement"¹⁹⁹ at around the age of eighteen.²⁰⁰ Barnard received recognition as a minister prior to 1793, and in 1797 received a certificate to visit England and Ireland, where she met New Light, or rationalistic Quakers who shared her rejection of those Old Testament scriptures which implied that God sanctioned war.²⁰¹ Barnard believed that "armed conflict was morally evil and therefore God could not have commanded the Hebrew people to make wars on other people or to utterly destroy the inhabitants of Jericho."²⁰² Barnard's ideas on the Holy Scripture upset Quakers in Europe and as a result, in 1801 the London Yearly

Press, 1988), 170. Also see Rufus Jones, *Later Periods of Quakerism* (London, 1921), I, 293-311 and William Rathbone, *A Narrative of Events That Have Lately Taken Place in Ireland Among the Society Called Quakers* (London, 1804).

¹⁹⁷ Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 289.

¹⁹⁸ David W. Maxey, "New Light on Hannah Barnard, a Quaker 'Heretic'", *Quaker History: The Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* volume 78, No. 2 (Fall 1989): 71.

¹⁹⁹ Convincement is a stage of the conversion process, in this case, from another faith—Howard H. Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years: The History and Beliefs of the Society of Friends Since George Fox Started the Quaker Movement* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2002), 9.

²⁰⁰ Maxey, "New Light on Hannah Barnard," 70.

²⁰¹ Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 170, 289.

²⁰² Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal*, 118-119.

Meeting decided to interview Hannah in a series of sessions, to see whether, in their judgment, her “beliefs were those of Friends.”²⁰³

We know most of what we do about Barnard and her case because the controversy reached such heights that detailed tracts on both sides of the debate were published in Europe, including accounts by Thomas Foster and William Matthews, who defended Barnard and warned of the dangers of setting up this type of hearing as practice within the Society.

Barnard objected to the passages in the Old Testament implying that God had commanded warfare, asserting her conviction that “...war is, in my full belief, a moral evil, which man has created for himself, by the misapplication of his powers, or, in other words, by the abuse of his free agency...”²⁰⁴ On the place of scriptures to the faith, Barnard noted her longstanding belief that the Society of Friends did not consider the scriptures the “the primary, the infallible rule of faith and life, but that this title belongs only to the holy spirit, inwardly communicated..., and that the scriptures themselves are...only rightly understood through its divine illuminations.” To this the elders affirmed, “So do we.” Barnard continued that she accepted no doctrine which “does not appear

²⁰³ Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 170.

The investigation which ensued bears some resemblance to the earlier trial of Anne Hutchinson in New England. Anne Hutchinson was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638 after an elaborate inquisition with Puritan elders over theological and political issues that included the treatment of scripture. One of the points for which she was excommunicated was her insistence that holy scripture was an event that required both scripture and the spiritual experience of the reader; that is, “only the saints who received an immediate witness of the Spirit could discern the true meaning of the Biblical text....She implicitly subordinated Scripture to the Spirit....” Following an extended trial in which she “engaged the ministers in intricate exegetical arguments about the soul, mortality, and the resurrection,” Hutchinson was banished to Rhode Island with other spiritual dissidents. (Holifield, *Era of Persuasion*, 116-117).

²⁰⁴ Thomas Foster, *An Appeal to the Society of Friends, On the Primitive Simplicity of Their Christian Principles and Church Discipline: And on Some Recent Proceedings in the Said Society*

rationaly consistent, and plain to me.”²⁰⁵ At one point Barnard defended herself by comparison to Robert Barclay²⁰⁶, “for he made use of learned and logical arguments, that I was not mistress of; and had also laid it down, as a certain maxim, *that the Spirit of God never contradicts right reason.*”²⁰⁷ On the infallibility of scripture, Barnard warned of “...the baneful effects of attaching divine infallibility to that book.”

In the end, after multiple meetings with Barnard, the elders decided that Hannah “holds sentiments concerning some parts of the Old Testament contrary to the belief of the society...” It was accordingly the determination of the meeting “that she has separated herself from them, and consequently it is highly improper that she should travel in the capacity of a minister among them; and it is this meeting’s advice to her to return home.”²⁰⁸

Returning to America, Barnard tried to seek justice and a fair hearing from her home meeting in New York. Not only would they refuse to question the London elders’ treatment of Barnard and their revocation of Barnard’s license to minister in Europe, but they took the further steps of revoking her license to minister in the United States, and accused her of “promoting a disbelief of some parts of the scriptures of the Old Testament, particularly those which assert, that the Almighty commanded the Israelites, to make war upon other nations”, as well

(London: Printed at the Philanthropic Reform, St. George’s Fields and Sold by J. Johnson, St. Paul’s Church-Yard, 1801), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA, 116.

²⁰⁵ Foster, *An Appeal to the Society of Friends*, 54-60.

²⁰⁶ Barclay was a contemporary of William Penn and Quaker founder George Fox, and the “outstanding theologian of early Friends....His *Apology* became the normative statement of Quaker beliefs from the 1690s to the present.” (Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 288, 289).

²⁰⁷ Foster, *An Appeal to the Society of Friends*, 159.

²⁰⁸ Foster, *An Appeal to the Society of Friends*, 48.

as the sections of the New “relating to the miraculous conception, and miracles of Christ....”²⁰⁹

On June 22, 1802, Barnard received notice of her disownment from the Society of Friends. The wording of Hannah’s disownment papers is strikingly gender-specific: “had she continued...in that humility, meekness, and self-denial, that beautifies, and ever should adorn, a minister of Christ...she might, have been eminently useful; but unhappily, by giving way to an aspiring, exalted mind, she hath so far become clouded....” Barnard is accused of “calling to question the authenticity” of “scriptures of truth” which “we have always acknowledged, to be of divine authority”, mentioning particularly the passages about the miracles and conception of Christ.²¹⁰

Hannah Barnard’s case is a significant one, and had it been taken seriously by American Quakers it might have served as a warning of the Hicksite schism to come. Certainly Thomas Foster thought so. If she had been male it probably would have. The evidence presented makes it clear that Hannah Barnard, as a woman and a solitary minister did everything she possibly could from a rational, legal and verbal point of view, on both shores of the ocean to force this issue to come to a head in the form of a procedural mandate or a doctrinal pronouncement for the denomination, rather than an individual censure, and she was totally frustrated at every turn. The Society of Friends withdrew her permission to preach, and even went so far as to disown her, yet they refused to

²⁰⁹ Thomas Foster, *A Narrative of the Proceedings in America, of the Society Called Quakers, in the Case of Hannah Barnard: With a Brief Review of the Previous Transactions in Great Britain and Ireland: Intended as a Sequel to An Appeal to the Society of Friends*, (London: Printed by C. Stower, 1804), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA, 41-42.

present their rationale for disowning a Quaker who does not believe God plans wars, or to take upon themselves the power to decide for other Friends what was the proper interpretation of holy scripture. Those debates would be postponed until raised by Elias Hicks.

And in the end, even Elias Hicks himself failed to acknowledge the similarities between their cases. In 1819, Hicks traveled through the Hudson area preaching, and was informed that “Hannah Barnard had been present at the second meeting on Sunday and that, much moved, she had remarked that the doctrines he put forward were identical to those for which she had been disowned.” When asked if the tenets could be the same, Hicks did not seem to believe so.²¹¹ Yet Quaker historian David Maxey comments that “it is the similarities between them, not the differences which in retrospect are striking.”²¹² Barnard died on November 27, 1825, without ever seeing the Hicksite schism. Maxey reports that in a eulogy printed in the *New York Christian Inquirer* after her death, Barnard “was pictured as steadfast in her loyalty to the Society of Friends in spite of the fact that ‘she has been stigmatized alternatively as a Unitarian, Universalist, or an infidel in disguise.’”²¹³

The nineteenth century was an exciting time for the use of the Bible in America. Hatch describes it as the time when Americans “called for a populist hermeneutic premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the

²¹⁰ Foster, *A Narrative of the Proceedings in America*, 67.

²¹¹ Maxey, “New Light on Hannah Barnard”, 83-84. Also see Elias Hicks to Isaac Hicks, February 20, 1819, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College (photostat).

²¹² Maxey, “New Light on Hannah Barnard,” 84.

²¹³ Reprinted in *Columbia Republican* (Hudson), December 13, 1825, in Maxey, “New Light on Hannah Barnard”, 73.

New Testament for him- or herself.”²¹⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, at the end of the century, would have the audacity to join with other women to criticize the Bible in the form of *The Woman’s Bible*. This “questioning of ‘the divine inspiration of the Hebrew Bible as to the position of women,’” was “her last struggle, but she was convinced, in many ways her most important.”²¹⁵

These impulses, of course, hearken all the way back to the original Protestant reformation when Martin Luther declared that the Bible belonged to the people of God, not to the clergy, and handed it back to them in their own languages, aided by the invention of the printing press. It was the original time of the “priesthood of all believers,” with the scripture at the center of it all.

Hannah Barnard and Elias Hicks were the prototypes for this type of populist hermeneutic. They believed that the Bible, though crucial, was but one source of guidance, accompanied by all-important reason, and with the inner light as the ultimate guide. The individual was the ultimate judge of what was right, and what was true.

One of the foremost Hicksite preachers was activist Lucretia Mott. Mott was an abolitionist and peace activist, and would be one of the key organizers of the Seneca Falls Women’s Convention in 1848. She will be covered in greater detail in the women’s rights chapters. In a sermon to the Cherry Street Meeting in Philadelphia in 1849, Mott redefined scripture itself, saying “...in Christendom generally it is assumed that the Bible is the word of God, while we from the earliest date of our religious society have declared and believe we have been

²¹⁴ Hatch, *Democratization of Christianity*, 6, 71, 73.

sustained by scripture testimony in the view that the word of God is a quickening spirit....”²¹⁶

Like Elias Hicks, she alluded to the “dangers” of the Bible when not used in conjunction with humanity’s ability to reason: “Is not the Bible sought from beginning to end for its isolated passages wherewith to prove the most absurd dogmas that ever were palmed off upon a credulous people; dogmas doing violence to the divine gift of reason with which man is so beautifully endowed...”²¹⁷ “Let us then my friends cherish a religion which shall be rational and which shall be reasonable in its observances and in its requirements.”²¹⁸

In the spirit of Hannah Barnard and Elias Hicks, Lucretia Mott discussed the injustices that had been visited on society by misuse of Biblical authority: “has there not been an unworthy resort to this volume to prove the rightfulness of war and slavery, and of crushing woman’s powers, the assumption of authority over her, and indeed of all the evils under which the earth, humanity has groaned from age to age?”²¹⁹

Mott’s sermon, like Elias Hicks’, echoed with the thoughts of the American renaissance, showing disdain for the reverence of the past for its own sake, and hopes for the new revelations of the future: “We are not thus to use the example

²¹⁵ Barbara Welter, *The Original Feminist Attack on the Bible (The Woman’s Bible)*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (New York: Arno Press, 1974), v.

²¹⁶ Lucretia Mott, “Abuses and Uses of the Bible,” (sermon delivered at Cherry Street Meeting, Philadelphia, November 4, 1849), in *American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King Jr.*, (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1999), 630.

²¹⁷ Mott, “Abuses and Uses of the Bible,” 631.

²¹⁸ Mott, “Abuses and Uses of the Bible,” 637.

²¹⁹ In the Seneca Falls “Declaration of Sentiment” which Mott helps to create, there are passages specifically referencing the God-given rights of women in church and state. [Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage, eds. *History of Woman Suffrage in Three Volumes*, Volume I, 1848-1861 (Rochester: Charles Mann, 1889), 71.

or practice of the ancients. It may have been well for them, coming from under the cloud of superstition formerly. They may still have needed their outward school master to bring them to a higher position, a higher sphere..." "...There is one source which is higher than this, and when we come to it we are drawn away, to some extent from all external dependences, from all outward authorities...."²²⁰

Susan B. Anthony, Hicksite activist, had an interesting set of interchanges with her partner in activism, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, considering the use of scripture. When asked whether she wished to be named on Stanton's committee for the *Woman's Bible*, she responded that she did not: "You fight that battle—and leave me to fight the secular.... I simply don't want the enemy to be diverted from *my* practical ballot fight...The religious *part* has *never been mine*..."²²¹ However, when asked to comment further on *The Woman's Bible*, Anthony offered that her understanding about scripture was influenced by her Quaker upbringing: "Friends consider the book as historical, made up of traditions, but not as a plenary inspiration." She added, "Of course people say these women are impious and presumptuous for daring to interpret the Scriptures as they understand them, but I think women have just as good a right to interpret and twist the Bible to their own advantage as men have always twisted it and turned it to theirs."²²²

Martha Coffin Wright, sister to Lucretia Mott, was a Hicksite activist in her

²²⁰ Mott, "Abuses and Uses of the Bible," 632-635.

²²¹ Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, July 24, 1895, Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Anthony Family Collection, AF 24 (2), in Lynn Sherr, *Failure Is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words* (New York: Random House, 1995), 254-255.

own right, particularly active in the struggles for women's rights and for abolition.²²³ A visiting student from the local Theological Seminary came to Wright's home to proselytize and hand out tracts and asked her, "Didn't [she] consider the Bible the only rule of faith and practice?" Her response: "By no means! I considered the old testament a very unfit book for children to read. " The theology student assumed that Wright was referring to what he called "indelicate passages." Martha quickly corrected him; what had offended her was "that while Christ commanded forgiveness to enemies, David said, 'I hate thy enemies, O Lord,' with a perfect hatred. 'O', said he, 'he meant that he hated their evil actions.' 'Then he should have said so, said I.'"²²⁴ On the origins of the Bible, Wright said, "No living mortal knows any more than you or I know. As to the teachings of the pulpit or the Bible, they come only from fallible mortals like ourselves, & their opinion is worth just as much as yours & mine—neither more nor less—less if it seems less rational...."²²⁵ Similarly, Susan B. Anthony complained: "our ranks are now so filled with young women not yet out of bondage to the idea of the infallibility of that book... Everything spoken or written by Jew or Greek, Gentile or Christian, or by any human being whomsoever, is not too sacred to be criticised by any other human being."²²⁶

²²² Susan B. Anthony, Interview, 1896, in Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 257.

²²³ Sherry H. Penney and James D. Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman: Martha Wright and Women's Rights* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 2.

²²⁴ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, January 17, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

²²⁵ Martha Coffin Wright to Ellen Wright Garrison, November 8, 1872, Garrison Family Papers, in Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 203.

²²⁶ Susan B. Anthony, in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, Including Public Addresses, Her Own Letters and Many From Her Contemporaries During Fifty Years*, Volume 2 (New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), 855.

The Orthodox female Quaker activists, while very involved in social reform, espoused a more traditional theological stance toward the Bible. Contrary to the liberal Hicksite view espoused by Barnard and others, the Orthodox believed the Bible was the ultimate source of authority for their faith. Reason was always fallible; only God in the end knew best. The individual conscience is, of course, important, but it, like reason, can also be fallible. The individual must always look back to the religious community and the tradition to maintain perspective, like the rudder that guides the boat. New England Orthodox abolitionist Lucy Buffum Lovell wrote in her diary describing her own religious teachings to her daughter Caroline. Caroline asked about the nature of God: "Mother, you said that our Saviour was God, and the Son of God too. But no! That can't be, it is not so." Lucy reprimanded her daughter, saying "it was a mystery. I could not understand it, and there were a great many things which I could not understand, but we must believe that it was so, because the Bible says so." Her daughter appears to have been satisfied by her mother's response. Lucy notes that Caroline "said nothing more against it, but seemed to receive it by faith, and implicit confidence in my word."²²⁷

Contrast the practice of Elias Hicks. He writes in one of his doctrinal epistles, "when I meet with parts or passages of Scripture, that I do not understand, I leave them, until I may arrive at a state of deeper experience. By which means I have come clearly to comprehend and understand, some things

²²⁷ Lucy Buffum Lovell, diary entry August 6, 1842, "Diary Exerpts by Lucy Buffum Lovell, 1840-1843," in L. Salitan and E. L. Perera, Eds., *Virtuous Lives: Four Quaker Sisters Remember*, 72.

that at a previous time seemed mysterious to me.”²²⁸ Hicks illustrated his point with “what Paul says of women’s keeping silence in the churches.” He allowed that “we have no right, nor reason at all” to admit the prohibition against women speaking in churches as “sound doctrine, as it contradicts a number more of [Paul’s] own doctrines, on that point, (as also the general testimonies of Scripture,) which are much more rational, clear, and plain.” Hicks provided ample evidence for this point and then concluded with his rational argument for ignoring one “Pauline” passage in favor of others: “To believe otherwise is irrational, and inconsistent with the Divine attributes; and would impeach the Almighty with partiality and injustice to one half of his rational creation.” Thus, Hicks concludes that he must dismiss the Pauline passage advocating women to keep silence “although asserted in the most plain and positive manner, by men or angels.”²²⁹

Orthodox Quaker and peace activist Hannah Johnston Bailey and her husband put a great deal of emphasis on the Bible and the study of scripture, and Hannah devoted more than one chapter of her book to this subject. Her descriptions of the nature of the scripture and proper treatment of scripture by Christians is very much in keeping with the other Orthodox Quakers examined in this study. Hannah quoted her husband: “We understand that these records were written by the inspiration of God Himself; hence we are bound to accept

²²⁸ Elias Hicks, “A Doctrinal Epistle,” 32.

²²⁹ Elias Hicks, “A Doctrinal Epistle,” 32-33.

every word as indisputably true.”²³⁰ In another section Hannah or Moses (it is not clear from the book whose voice is speaking at this time) addressed the members of the Bible School about how to handle those elements of scripture they did not understand. Hannah wrote: “In our study and contemplation of the Scriptures we shall find many things which unaided human reason cannot understand or the dim light of nature fathom. These we must accept with simple child-like faith, knowing they are true because God hath said them.”²³¹ This is a far cry from the hermeneutics of Hannah Barnard, yet both women were ardent and successful reformers for peace, suffrage and women’s rights.

An examination of the addresses of Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Orthodox Quaker activists in abolition, women’s rights, peace and peace witness, shows that the Bible was key to their arguments and that they worked extensively to remain within a Biblical context of argument. Angelina Grimke, in her *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, opened her speech with a quotation from the book of Esther, and discussed the importance of the Bible to her own beliefs: “...it may be said [that]...the Bible sanctions Slavery, and that is the highest authority. Now the Bible is my ultimate appeal in all matters of faith and practice, and it is to *this test* I am anxious to bring the subject at issue between us. Let us then begin with Adam...” Grimke points out, one step at a time, how Adam was given dominion over fish of the sea, then fowl of the air, “yet *man is never vested*

²³⁰ Moses Bailey, quoted by Hannah in Hannah Johnston Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, 5th edition (Winthrop Centre, Me.: E.R. Packard, 1896), Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore, Mass., 366-367.

²³¹ H. J. Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, 297.

with this dominion over *his fellow man*; he was never told that any of the human species were put *under his feet*....²³²

In a similar argument, Grimke went to great lengths to describe the status of slaves among the Biblical foreparents of the Old Testament. She described in detail the differences between Old Testament Jewish slavery and contemporary American slavery, declaring that there was “no likeness” between the two. Jewish law “*protected servants* in their *rights as men and women*, guarded them from oppression and defended them from wrong.” In contrast, “the Code Noir of the South *robs the slave of all his rights as a man*, reduces him to a chattel personal, and defends the *master* in the exercise of the most unnatural and unwarantable [sic] power over his slave.”²³³ She translated the Biblical reference to the word “servant”, from the original Greek and compared its uses in its various appearances in the Bible.²³⁴

Then, after summarizing her arguments, Biblical and otherwise, Grimke entreated her women listeners to realize that abolition was their task and responsibility, and in the process named a multitude of female activists in the Bible, by name and by Biblical reference.²³⁵

Similar tactics were employed by Sarah Grimke, in her *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*. She titled her first letter *The Original Equality of Woman*, and said that she would use only the Bible to argue

²³² Angelina Emily Grimke, *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, (New York: [American Anti-Slavery Society], 1836; New York: Arno and New York Times, 1969, in Larry Ceplair, Editor, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke: Selected Writings 1835-1839* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 36,38-39.

²³³ A. Grimke, *Appeal to the Christian Women*.... in Ceplair, 49-50.

²³⁴ A Grimke, *Appeal to the Christian Women*.... in Ceplair, 52.

²³⁵ A. Grimke, *Appeal to the Christian Women*...in Ceplair, 60.

for woman's sphere, " because I believe almost every thing that has been written on this subject, has been the result of a misconception of the simple truths revealed in the Scriptures, in consequence of the false translation of many passages of Holy Writ...."²³⁶

She titled her second letter *Woman Subject Only to God*, and returned to the stories of Genesis. When God brought the floods to destroy all but Noah and his family, Sarah noted, He gave Noah dominion over all the beasts and fowl.... But was woman, bearing the image of her God, placed under the dominion of her fellow man? Never! Jehovah could not surrender his authority to govern his own immortal creatures into the hands of a being, whom he knew, and whom his whole history proved, to be unworthy of a trust so sacred and important....²³⁷

Sarah Grimke's third letter was a response to an attack on the women's right to preach, by the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts. Their letter had indicated that according to the New Testament, women were to be "unobtrusive and private", their influence "mild, dependent," and "softening..." Grimke responded that, "no one can desire more earnestly than I do, that woman may move exactly in the sphere which her Creator has assigned her..." Sarah continued to explain how she believed that it was woman's displacement from her proper sphere that had "introduced confusion into the world." She agreed that she was happy to join the ministers in referring

²³⁶ Sarah M. Grimke, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*, addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Amesbury, [Mass.] 7th Mo. 11th, 1837, Letter I, "The Original Equality of Woman," in Ceplair, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke*, 204-205.

²³⁷ S. Grimke, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*, addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Newburyport, [Mass.] 7th

to the New Testament for her answers, but “must enter my protest against the false translation of some passages by the MEN who did that work, and against the perverted interpretation by the MEN who understood to write commentaries thereon. I am inclined to think, when we are admitted to the honor of studying Greek and Hebrew, we shall produce some various readings of the Bible a little different from those we now have....”²³⁸

Both Hicksite and Orthodox reformers began with a great love of God and the belief that God was perfect. From that premise the Hicksites assumed that humanity may have made some mistakes in the rendering of the Holy Writ, whereas the Orthodox believed that God wrote the Bible perfectly; it was the interpretation of humanity in which the seeming contradictions must lay.

One might expect that the Hicksite reformers, having more freedom in the area of hermeneutics, would have created the better arguments for their reforms, as they would have been less constrained by the contexts of the Bible. But here, again, the study of the actual women’s performance shows depth, eloquence, and creativity on both sides of the schism. What the Orthodox women lacked in free rein they made up for with their superb Biblical education and their insistence that those on the sides of slavery, male dominion and war would not claim the holy scripture as their own. In this case, the two groups of reformers turned out to be different but equal in effectiveness. They also point to the

mo. 17, 1837, Letter II, “Woman Subject Only to God,” in Ceplair, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke*, 207-209.

²³⁸ Sarah M. Grimke, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*, addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Haverhill, [Mass.] 7th Mo. 1837, Letter II “The Pastoral Letter of the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts,” in Ceplair, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke*, 212-213.

variety of approaches available to contemporary Christian reformers who are still addressing issues of inequality, social injustice and war.

“My sympathy was early enlisted for the poor slave
by the class-books read in our school. The unequal
condition of woman with man also early impressed
my mind.”
-Lucretia Mott²³⁹

Chapter 4: Hicksite and Orthodox Abolitionists

All of the women reformers in this study, Hicksite and Orthodox, were strong leaders in the abolitionist movement. Both sides drew on a Quaker history of opposition to slavery, and of belief in fundamental human equality. The Hicksites had a vocal spokesperson in Elias Hicks, who believed in immediate and complete abolition. However, this does not mean that Orthodox women reformers were any less committed to the abolitionist cause, nor does it imply that every single Hicksite wholeheartedly supported abolition reform. The problem of slavery and the intricacies of the abolition movement were far too complex to make sweeping generalizations. This chapter explores those intricacies and provides evidence that in the end the Hicksite and Orthodox women reformers were equally committed to abolition reform, that they employed the same techniques of reform, and that reformers from both sides encountered opposition, sometimes even from within the Society of Friends. The chapter also explores some of the complex reasons for that opposition.

The Quakers hold a unique place in American history, in that very early in their history, Friends agreed that slavery was an “immoral institution.”²⁴⁰ The

²³⁹ Dorothy Sterling, *Lucretia Mott* (New York: Feminist Press, 1999), 48.

²⁴⁰ Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 7.

Society of Friends was also the first church to make a public statement condemning slavery, and the first to require its members to divest themselves of their own slaves.²⁴¹ Abolition, for most Quakers, was very much in keeping with other Quaker values. Barbour and Frost note that, for the Quakers, “antislavery could be seen as a continuation of the peace testimony against possessing war prize goods, the need for humility in controlling others, and the desire for simplicity in standard for living.”²⁴² It was, of course, also a reflection of the Quaker belief in the equality of all people and that there is “that of God in every one,” as discussed in chapter two. In the nineteenth century, when there was also a great deal of emphasis on the importance of home, women reformers were particularly concerned with the damage which the institution of slavery did in rending the family and tearing slave children away from their mothers. Orthodox abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster would explain to her own daughter, Alla, that her ministry was to “preach to the ‘wicked’ men responsible for slavery and to ‘make them good so that they would let the poor slave mothers go home.’”²⁴³

Elias Hicks was an outspoken abolitionist. In an extemporaneous sermon at Friends’ Meeting-House, Byberry, in Philadelphia in December of 1824, Hicks said: “... Not any thing in Heaven can make it plainer than it is.... our common sense proves indubitably that slavery is the most cruel and wicked of all things.

²⁴¹ Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 119. While Friends did own slaves during the earliest years of slavery in the colonies, by the middle of the 18th century the Philadelphia Yearly meeting was convinced that slavery was a sin. In the 1770s, “yearly meetings in New England, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania came to the same decision that all slaveholders must be disowned*.” (*removed from the Quaker fellowship) J. William Frost, *The Quaker Origins of Antislavery* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1980), 12.

²⁴² Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 122.

²⁴³ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 284.

We have the most self-evident proof; and in the great day of account, we dare not make the plea, and say, the Bible did not reveal it to me.”²⁴⁴

In a sermon²⁴⁵ at the Friends’ Meeting-House, Newton, also in December of 1824, Hicks indicated clearly that he was for immediate abolition as well:

“... It is impossible for any rational soul ever to believe it is right to take away the liberty of his fellow creature.... It is in our power if we please, to cause all to be set free immediately; because a thing that is wrong, and in opposition to divine justice, and God making it manifest to us, we have no right to procrastinate till a more convenient season.”²⁴⁶

Like Quaker John Woolman before him, Hicks also preached against the consumption of any goods created by slavery: “I have no doubt that much might be done, if it were our concern, individually, to shut our mouths and palates

²⁴⁴ Elias Hicks, Sermon VII Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House, Byberry, in Philadelphia County, on Fourth Day Morning, 8th of Twelfth Month, 1824, in Elias Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses, Delivered in the Several Meetings of the Society of Friends, in Philadelphia, Germantown, Abington, Byberry, Newton Falls, and Trenton*, taken in shorthand by M.T.C. Gould, Published by Joseph and Edward Parker, No. 178 Market Street, I. Ashmead & Co. Printers, 1825, Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY., 180-181.

²⁴⁵ Preaching in the Quaker tradition has always been spontaneous and extemporaneous and is usually not recorded. Thomas Hamm notes that “the nature of Quaker preaching before 1850 is shadowy, since there were no sermon manuscripts and the various Quaker diarists usually recorded only the most cursory accounts of what Friends said or heard; many Friends adamantly opposed their transcription and publication.” In the particular case of *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses*, Bliss Forbush notes that these sermons, given when the minister was seventy-six years old, “were taken down by a stenographer and later published by Marcus T.C. Gould without Elias’ consent.” The exact accuracy of these transcripts and documents produced in similar circumstances by Quaker preachers like the Grimke sisters and Lucretia Mott must be considered in the context in which they would have been given and recorded. (Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, 106, Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, 8; Forbush, *Elias Hicks, Quaker Liberal*, 230.)

²⁴⁶ Elias Hicks, Sermon VIII Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House, Newtown, in Bucks County, on Fifth Day Morning, 9th of Twelfth Month, 1824, in *Extemporaneous Discourses*, Long Island Studies Collection, 209-211.

against the sweets of oppression; if we would not use any of the fruits of the labour of the oppressed. I see no other way to atone for this great sin....”²⁴⁷

Hicks advocated the controversial technique of removal of fellowship from all who participated in the system of slavery: “What an effect it would have, were the multitude of us to say, it is wrong, and we will have no fellowship with those who do it. What a blessed effect it would have.”²⁴⁸ Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, Orthodox Quaker abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster, and the “disunionists” would advocate this idea.

Ultimately, Elias Hicks spoke for the complete equality of the races. He spoke of God’s love as one which “does away all distinction and prejudice of education, and sets upon equal grounds all those that have equal rights....”²⁴⁹ and declared that “...those who suppose that coloured men and women are not equal to ourselves, are enemies to God and his righteousness.”²⁵⁰

Hicks also appeared to believe in the technique of abolition through legislative action, a method eschewed by abolitionists like Garrison who favored purely “moral suasion” to political action. In his *Journal*, Hicks related going to a Quaker meeting in New York, where “...in the course of the business that came before us, the meeting was led into an exercise, on behalf of that portion of the descendants of the Africans who are still held in bondage in our state. A proposition was made for addressing our state legislature on their account, in

²⁴⁷ Elias Hicks, Sermon IX Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House, Middletown, in Bucks County, on Sixth Day Morning, 10th of Twelfth Month, 1824, *Extemporaneous Discourses*, 239.

²⁴⁸ Elias Hicks, Sermon VIII, in *Extemporaneous Discourses*, 210.

²⁴⁹ Elias Hicks, “Sermon IV, Delivered at Friends’ Meeting-House, Green Street, Philadelphia, on 5th day, second of twelfth month, 1824,” in *Extemporaneous Discourses*, 79.

²⁵⁰ Elias Hicks, Sermon IX, in *Extemporaneous Discourses*, 238.

order, if possible, to obtain a law for their emancipation.... It appeared to us altogether just and consistent with the duty of the legislature, to restore to them the just right of freedom....”²⁵¹

Many, probably the majority of Orthodox Quakers, were equally against slavery during the Civil War. However, this does not mean that every person who called him or herself a “Hicksite” followed Hicks’ lead in this regard, or that all of the various techniques of abolitionist activity were agreed upon by all Quakers.

Abolition was the most divisive and controversial reform of the nineteenth century. Three of the Protestant denominations split over the area of race, and three others including Friends experienced divisions within their membership. The Methodist Church split into two branches, North and South, in 1844 over the “twin issues of slavery and episcopacy.”²⁵²

In 1861, with the creation of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, the Presbyterian denomination was divided into four parts over issues of theology, polity, and race: New School North, New School South, Old School North and Old School South.²⁵³ The divide between Northern and

²⁵¹ Elias Hicks, *Journal of Elias Hicks: Journal of the Life and Religious Labours of Elias Hicks*, 283.

²⁵² James Kirby, Russell E. Richey and Kenneth E. Rowe, *The Methodists*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 377. In addition, as early as the end of the 18th century, “the Methodist Episcopal Church leadership’s ambivalence regarding the role of the black preacher in the church—first embracing the talents of black preachers and then denying them promotion through the church hierarchy”, made black Methodists like Richard Allen “eager to escape the official dictates of the church that bound him to second-class citizenship.”[Dee Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000,) 202]. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was created in Philadelphia in 1816, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1820, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870. (Kirby, Richey and Rowe, 376-377).

²⁵³ Randall Balmer and John R. Fitzmer, *The Presbyterians* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 254, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, Third Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 103, 106-107.

Southern Presbyterians would last over a hundred years.²⁵⁴ In addition, congregations of African American Presbyterians were formed in 1822 and following.²⁵⁵

The Baptists divided into North and South over “the peculiar institution” and other issues in 1845.²⁵⁶ William Brackney states that “a noteworthy development in the family of Baptists during the mid-nineteenth century was the emergence of separate black Baptist churches and organizations”²⁵⁷ with the first association of black Baptists in Ohio in 1835.²⁵⁸ The Episcopal denomination split over slavery between 1861-1862, with the creation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America. The Northern and Southern branches were reunited in 1865.²⁵⁹

Among Congregationalists and Unitarians, the members were often strongly divided, but the denomination did not formally split over the issue of slavery. Congregationalist historian William Youngs notes, “During the 1830s and 1840s many Congregationalists embraced the abolitionist cause. Because almost all of the denomination’s members lived in the North, this did not threaten Congregational unity. But Presbyterianism stretched deep into the South, making the denomination reluctant to embrace an issue that could cause a North-South rift.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴ Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, 128-129.

²⁵⁵ Balmer and Fitzmer, *The Presbyterians*, 254.

²⁵⁶ William Henry Brackney, *The Baptists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 289.

²⁵⁷ Brackney, *Baptists*, 17.

²⁵⁸ Brackney, *Baptists*, 289.

²⁵⁹ James Thayer Addison, *The Episcopal Church in the United States 1789-1931* (North Haven, CT.: Archon Books, 1969), 196-199.

²⁶⁰ J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 123.

The Unitarian situation was complex, and I believe their case may have parallels to that of the Quakers. Unitarian historian David Robinson notes that slavery and abolition divided Unitarians as well. Some Unitarians disagreed over the issues of immediate abolition versus gradualism. “Another more cautious and conservative group also existed among the Unitarians who opposed slavery but were...reluctant to make the political commitment to stop it.” Like some of the affluent urban Quakers, “as a denomination of the more prosperous, the Unitarians had much interest in social order and stability. But the New England conscience, so much a part of the movement’s history, militated against that conservatism when it faced the repugnant immorality of slavery....”²⁶¹

Like the Unitarians, Friends represented a wide range of beliefs and positions regarding the issues of slavery and abolition, on both sides of the Hicksite schism. Martha Coffin Wright’s biographers imply, I believe mistakenly, that Hicksite Quakers were more involved in the cause of abolition than were the Orthodox: “Quakers had eliminated slavery within their own ranks in the previous century, and for most Orthodox Quakers, that was enough. Hicks, however, felt that slavery was a grievous sin, and that its presence in America should not be ignored.”²⁶² Penney and Livingston are not the only historians to assume that Hicksites were better abolitionists than Orthodox Quakers. As discussed in the introduction, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin writes in her biography of Angelina Grimke that “many Hicksites were active abolitionists; the Orthodox were more

²⁶¹ David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (Westport: Greenwood, 1985), 83-84.

²⁶² Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 38.

passive, their tones restrained.”²⁶³ Lumpkin references Rufus Jones’ *Later Periods of Quakerism*²⁶⁴, yet I was unable to find the evidence there, while Jones’ chapter on slavery liberally mentions the Hicksite and Orthodox leaders I found in my study. I am not aware of any study which focuses specifically on the involvement of Hicksites versus Orthodox in the abolitionist movement, and in my research on the leading female Quaker reformers of the Northeast, the result is not clear-cut. I found strong abolitionists on both sides of the Hicksite schism. These women, in turn, were often supported and inspired by their fellow Hicksites or Orthodox Quakers, but sometimes were not. Some are even reported as having been “disowned by the Quakers for their abolitionist activities”. The reasons for these decisions are complicated.

While some of these cases probably reveal the struggles of the denomination with the issues of race, others had to do with issues of political activism and proper behavior; for example, is it appropriate to use a Quaker Meetinghouse for an abolitionist or temperance lecture, or should these buildings be kept sacrosanct for meetings? Some of the issues related to questions that would be fundamental to the Society of Friends deciding who they were in relationship to other reformers, and to the rest of nonQuaker America. Some Quakers, for example, were upset with the violence associated with some nonQuaker abolitionists. This was a time when the Civil War and activities of violent reformers like John Brown were felt to seriously threaten the Quaker

²⁶³ Lumpkin, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke*, 59.

²⁶⁴ Lumpkin points to Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism, Volume I* (St. Martin’s St, London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1921) 461, 468-469. For Jones’ more extensive discussion of the Quakers and slavery, see Volume II, 559-596.

peace testimony. Other Quakers questioned the extent to which Quakers should be mixing with outsiders, either by joining into ecumenical reform societies like the American Anti-Slavery society, or ultimately by marriage, even to Christian reformers outside of the Quaker faith. All these questions would test the Quakers as reformers and a denomination-- did they want to be more like the Amish, standing aside from the outside world and the violence associated with it in order to make a stronger statement and maintain purity within the denomination? Would they follow reformers like William Lloyd Garrison who eschewed "political activity" for "moral suasion," hoping to change people's hearts and minds first, and then change their behavior? Would they focus on the question of each person's individual faith and purity, on the theory that if every person abstained from owning and benefiting from slavery then slavery would end? Or was it necessary to try to change the behavior of others as well? Is there any limit to the appropriateness of women speaking to mixed audiences of men and women, or engaging in reform activities which might result in pointed conflict, or even violence? Finally, what might be the role of free blacks in an emancipated society, and would the Quakers welcome black Friends into their societies without barriers? All these questions confronted the female Quakers of the Northeast, both Hicksite and Orthodox reformers, during the period from the end of the eighteenth century.

Both Hicksite and Orthodox women were committed to the abolitionist movement, and both used variations on four basic techniques of reform: moral suasion, legislation, consumer boycott and control, and miscellaneous forms of

civil disobedience. The first, well-known among the followers of William Lloyd Garrison, who advocated only moral suasion, involved changing the hearts and minds of slaveholders and others, on the theory that behavior can only be changed, at least it can only be permanently and non-violently changed, when the change begins in the heart and mind of the actor. This was a verbal method and relied on the 19th century's predominance of the word, in newspaper articles and books, speeches and broadsides. This idea of influencing by example is a kind of "gentle persuasion," often thought to be the most "womanly approach" to reform or change.²⁶⁵

Many Quaker women helped create organizations like the New York and the American Anti-Slavery Societies, which sent out speakers far and wide to convert people to the cause. In fact, it is in the latter process that some would say the American women's rights movement was first born-- when two Orthodox Quaker sisters working for the anti-slavery societies, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, were bold enough to break convention and bring their antislavery message to "promiscuous audiences", that is, of men and women together. Their account will be presented in greater detail in the women's rights chapters.

Lucretia Mott was well known as an abolitionist speaker and a Hicksite minister, and her devotion to abolishing the institution of slavery was her "first and primary commitment."²⁶⁶ In 1833, after attending a meeting of the all-male

²⁶⁵ Dee Alexander Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958).

²⁶⁶ Margaret H. Bacon, "Lucretia Mott, Holy Obedience and Human Liberation", in Carol and John Stoneburner, Editors, *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 203.

American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia,²⁶⁷ Mott created the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.²⁶⁸ In one of her speeches to the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York, she combined her religious belief with her concern for the slave:

“Let the Abolitionists, who should be as the Jesus of the present age on the Mount Zion of Freedom, continue to say: ‘Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, thou shalt treat thy slaves kindly, thou shalt prepare them for freedom at a *future* day; but I say unto you hold no slaves at all, proclaim liberty now throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof.’ Let this be the loud sounding jubilee that shall be uttered.”²⁶⁹

Mott’s daughter Anna Hallowell notes that “a majority of the members of the Female Anti-Slavery Society²⁷⁰ were members of the Society of Friends,” and membership included Sarah Pugh, one of the Quaker women who would later accompany Mott to the World Anti-Slavery Convention.²⁷¹ Pugh was a Quaker whose active interest in the abolition movement began in 1835 when she was inspired by hearing a speech by George Thompson in Philadelphia. Sarah came from two generations of Quakers, and her grandfather, Isaac Jackson, had “labored actively to procure the manumission of the slaves throughout the Yearly

²⁶⁷ Anna Davis Hallowell, Ed., *James and Lucretia Mott, Life and Letters* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA., 112.

²⁶⁸ Sterling, *Lucretia Mott*, 85-86.

²⁶⁹ Lucretia Mott, “‘Law of Progress,’ Speech Delivered at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, New York, May 9, 1848, “in Dana Greene, Editor, *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 76.

²⁷⁰ Refers to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

²⁷¹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 127.

Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia....”²⁷² Following this, she became an “earnest abolitionist,” joining the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Female Anti-slavery Society.²⁷³

There is some disagreement among scholars as to which side Pugh chose in the Hicksite schism.²⁷⁴ What seems to be clear is that Pugh was not happy about the schism or the necessity of having to choose sides at all. Her cousins indicate she was disturbed about what they referred to as “the distracting agitation which resulted in a division of the Society.” She wrote in October of 1828 that she continued to attend meetings of worship, where “I have always been accustomed to attend hoping that wherever the sincere-hearted are met, there will be a blessing.” However, she refused to attend the business meetings, “thinking they are conducted on the principles of bigoted proscription, instead of Christian love....” Pugh added, “I join not the ranks of the other party, for however much I admire some of their principles, and love many of their members, I am not a sectarian.”²⁷⁵ (Margaret Hope Bacon notes that at a later time, when the suffrage movement in which Pugh was also involved split, she “refused to take sides at all but attended the meetings of both groups.”)²⁷⁶

²⁷² *Memorial of Sarah Pugh: A Tribute of Respect from Her Cousins* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1888), Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore, PA. 9, 10.

²⁷³ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 15.

²⁷⁴ Kathryn Kish Sklar claims she was Orthodox. See Kathryn Kish Sklar, “Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation”: American and British Women Compared at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Nov., 1990), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3640236> (accessed 6/22/2009), 480. Margaret Bacon describes her as a “Hicksite schoolteacher” (*Mothers of Feminism*, 103). Information from the Fair Hill Burial Ground where Pugh is buried indicates that as a result of the schism, Pugh’s Meeting “went Orthodox” and Sarah “resigned and started her own school, which she ran for most of her life.” (“Famous People Buried at Fair Hill”, Fair Hill Burial Ground <http://www.fairhillburial.org/famous.php> (accessed June 24, 2005), 3.

²⁷⁵ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 11.

²⁷⁶ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 128.

Speaking out for the slave had an unexpected benefit for women like Pugh. In this time when middle-class women were expected to keep their “separate spheres”, Pugh declared, “Truly, this interest [anti-slavery] has been and continues to be the blessing of my life. If he who enslaves another fetters himself, may it not be as truly said, he who strives to break the chains of another loosens his own?”²⁷⁷

But speaking in the abolitionist cause would also often bring Pugh and others into situations of danger. For example, when she attended the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia in 1838. The brand new hall had been built “by the friends of freedom, to be devoted to the free discussion of slavery, and other social and moral questions.” It opened on May 14, 1838 and abolitionist David Paul Brown was scheduled to deliver a speech to a crowd that overflowed the hall into the street. But not all those on hand agreed with the abolitionist cause. In the aftermath of the speech “...a disorderly disposition was displayed, occasionally stones were thrown against the windows; those inside were protected by the heavy blinds from the rattling glass; the disturbance increased until the howling was terrific....” At one point, the mayor locked the door, “...addressed the crowd with mild advice to keep the peace, leaving the mob ‘as his police.’ At dusk the rioters broke into the building, and in less than an hour only four blackened walls remained of the beautiful hall....” The women holding their Anti-Slavery Convention in the hall at this time remained in the building “until it was consumed”. Then it was Sarah Pugh who invited the women to walk with her to

²⁷⁷ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 35.

her nearby schoolroom to continue their work. "...None knew at what minute the howling mob, composed of hundreds of infuriated men, might break in upon them, for they were racing through the streets, hunting anti-slavery victims or other objects upon which to wreak their vengeance."²⁷⁸

This was an event shared by Hicksite and Orthodox reformers alike. Orthodox Quaker Sarah Southwick recalls going with her family to Philadelphia especially for the event. It was her first visit to Philadelphia: "My principal recollection of the convention is of the howling mob which threatened us every day and evening, surrounding the doors and filling the entries for the first day or two in the daytime; all which only heightened our zeal to be present at all the meetings. I especially remember the evening meetings when, while we were seated in the audience, we saw the brickbats and rotten eggs hurled through the windows, heard the crashing of the glass, and watched the Venetian blinds as they flew inwards, when stones and other missiles were thrown against them." Southwick notes that she did not recall feeling afraid for herself: "of course our devotion and courage were raised to fever heat.... My fear was all for those on the platform."²⁷⁹

One of the people on the platform that day was Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley. In the midst of the violence and chaos she made her first speech: "I have never before addressed a promiscuous assembly.... Nor is it now the maddening rush of those voices nor the crashing of those windows, the indication of a moral earthquake, that calls me before you. No, these pass unheeded by

²⁷⁸ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 21.

me. But it is the still small voice within which may not be withstood, that bids me open my mouth for the dumb; that bids me plead the cause of God's perishing poor."²⁸⁰

Hicksite Lucretia Mott spoke at Pennsylvania Hall that day, and had her family and home threatened as a result. Her daughter Anna remembers that her mother, having been warned that an attack was planned on her own home, "made preparation for the attack by sending her younger children and some articles of clothing out of the house, and with her husband and a few friends sat in the parlor, quietly awaiting the mob."²⁸¹

Anna Hallowell describes another upsetting instance for Lucretia Mott, in which anti-abolitionists abducted one of Lucretia's colleagues, Friend Daniel Neall, to have him "answer for his disorganizing doctrines". Despite Mott's arguments that Neall was innocent in this case and that she was actually the guilty party, the group tarred and feathered the elderly man and left Mott alone. Mott was also taken to task on many occasions for her decisions to walk in public with black colleagues, to speak at black gatherings, to visit black people in their homes, and invite them into hers.²⁸²

Susan B. Anthony, another Hicksite who will be covered in more detail in the women's rights chapters, was placed in charge of the New York field of the American Anti-Slavery Society in December of 1856. There she served as a dynamic speaker and also organized other speakers such as Parker Pillsbury,

²⁷⁹ Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, (Macon, GA.: The Kingsley Press, 1893), 1971 edition, 23-24.

²⁸⁰ Abby Kelley in Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 64.

²⁸¹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 128.

Stephen and Abby Kelley Foster, and Charles and Sarah Redmond.²⁸³ In one of her own speeches she asks the question “What will you do with the Negroes?”: “Do with them precisely what you would do with the Irish, the Scotch, the Germans—Educate them.... What arrogance in *us* to put the question, what shall we do with a race of men and women who have fed, clothed and supported both themselves and their oppressors for centuries...”²⁸⁴

The pen was a powerful weapon in the abolitionist struggle, evidenced by the well known if perhaps apocryphal anecdote of Abraham Lincoln’s first meeting of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, when he said, “So you’re the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war.”²⁸⁵ Quaker women were prolific in the abolition struggle, including eloquent writers like Angelina Emily Grimke. As a woman who had grown up herself in the midst of a plantation family in the slaveholding South, Grimke knew the concerns of Southern women and could speak to them directly and with specific knowledge. Catherine Birney, a biographer who lived with the Grimke sisters for two years and remained friends with them throughout her life, recalls the morning that Angelina realized her “calling”: “...one morning Angelina entered the breakfast-room with a beaming countenance, and said: -- ‘It has all come to me; God has shown me what I can do; I can write an appeal to Southern women, one which, thus inspired, will touch their hearts, and lead them to use their influence with

²⁸² Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 132-135, and Sterling, *Lucretia Mott*, 88, 108-109.

²⁸³ Rheta Childe Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony, The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation* (New York: AMS Press, 1928), 120-121.

²⁸⁴ Susan B. Anthony, speech, 1862, quoted in Lynn Sherr, *Failure is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words* (New York Times/Random House Books, 1995), 33.

²⁸⁵ Philip Kunhardt Jr., Philip Kunhardt III, and Peter Punhardt, *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography* (New York: Random House, 1992), 235.

their husbands and brothers....²⁸⁶ The piece that resulted from that calling was *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, published by the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York in 1836. It was a brilliant and extensive work that attacked the problem of slavery from every possible angle. She addressed her appeal to all the women of the South, “Sisters in Christ”...“It is true, I am going to tell you unwelcome truths, but I mean to speak those *truths in love*, and remember Solomon says, ‘faithful are the *wounds* of a friend....’²⁸⁷. She attacked, in exquisite exegetical detail, the logic of the arguments that the Bible sanctioned slavery.²⁸⁸ Next, she called the women to action. “...If you really suppose you can do nothing to overthrow slavery, you are greatly mistaken.... You can read.... Pray over ...act on this subject.” Angelina Grimke went on to encourage the women of the South not only to convince their husbands and brothers and sons of the sin of slavery, but to set their slaves free. If they could not set their slaves free they could at least teach them to read the Bible. If the law says not to teach your slaves, “such wicked laws ought to be no barrier in the way of your duty” because we have an entire Biblical heritage of faithful women and men who have shown us the “doctrine of obeying God rather than man.”²⁸⁹ Grimke urged the women to use the power of petition that was also available to them, and then attempted to dispel some of the myths surrounding the

²⁸⁶ Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimke Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimke: The First American Women Advocates for Abolition and Woman's Rights* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1885), 138.

²⁸⁷ Angelina Grimke, “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South,” in Larry Ceplair, Ed. *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke: Selected Writings 1835-1839* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 36-37.

²⁸⁸ Angelina Grimke, “Appeal to the Christian Women...” 37-54.

²⁸⁹ Angelina Grimke, “An Appeal to Christian Women,” 55-58.

abolitionist movement.²⁹⁰ It was a powerful essay, which attacked the foundations of slavery and of women's helplessness on every level, from a woman who had grown up in the middle of the plantation system and knew slavery at its worst.

Most of the female Quaker reformers in the Northeast were followers of William Lloyd Garrison, who did not favor conventional political activism as a form of social reform. However, many of them did experiment with this form, some by gathering signatures on legislative petitions, and others working for suffrage for blacks and women.

In 1839 Sarah Pugh described experimenting for the first time with more traditional techniques of political activism: "12th mo. 31st—'This fall I engaged in a new department, to me, of anti-slavery labor, circulating petitions to be presented to Congress and the State legislature, for the abolition of slavery.'"²⁹¹

One typical Massachusetts women's petition read that the women signing it were "deeply convinced of the sinfulness of slavery and keenly aggrieved by its extension in a part of our country...." The women asked for its immediate abolition in the District of Columbia, and warned: "We also respectfully announce our intention to present this same petition, yearly, before your honorable body, that it may at least be 'a memorial of us' that in the holy cause of human freedom, 'we have done what we could.'"²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Angelina Grimke, "An Appeal to Christian Women," 66-79.

²⁹¹ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 22.

²⁹² Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, Revised Edition (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), 52. See also Flexner's footnote 30.

Lucretia Mott was the first to remind people that Friends' peace witness was never about passivity: "the early Friends were agitators; disturbers of the peace; and were more obnoxious in their day to charges which are now so freely made than we are."²⁹³ The reminder would stand her in good stead at the meeting of the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840. She was one of a delegation of American abolitionists voyaging on a ship from New York to London on May 7, 1840, to attend the famous Convention. On board with her were the newlyweds Elizabeth Cady and Henry Stanton, whom Lucretia had yet to meet.²⁹⁴ Also attending were fellow Quaker abolitionists Elizabeth Neall, Abby Kimber, Sarah Pugh, and Emily Winslow, and Abby Southwick.²⁹⁵ This would be an important beginning. Stanton noted in her *Reminiscences*, "these were the first women I had ever met who believed in the equality of the sexes and who did

²⁹³ *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Vol. XXI, No. 25, Nov. 3, 1860, quoted in Otelia Cromwell, *Lucretia Mott* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 169-170.

²⁹⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years or More: Reminiscences 1815-1897* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 71.

²⁹⁵ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years or More*, lists the names only, 78. Margaret Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, acknowledges only Neall, Pugh and Kimber as Quakers, 108. Debra Hansen mentions the Southwick and Winslow families as Quaker families involved in the Boston Anti-Slavery Society, *Strained Sisterhood*, 81. Kathryn Kish Sklar says that all the American women delegates with the exception of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Grew were Quaker, and that Sarah Pugh was Orthodox. Elizabeth Neall attended the conference without male companionship, and represented the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society. She was later to marry non-Quaker Sydney Gay, to become Elizabeth Gay Neall. Sterling presents several interesting anecdotes concerning Neall and A. K. Foster. Abby Kimber also attended without male companionship, and represented the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society. Emily Winslow attended with father Isaac, both from Portland, Maine, and represented the Massachusetts Antislavery Society. Later, she married Franklin Taylor, and "Franklin and Emily left the Quaker faith to join the Unitarian community which emphasized tolerance of differences in religious opinion." Their son Frederick became famous for developing techniques of scientific management in industry. Abby Southwick attended without male companionship, and represented the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation': American and British Women Compared at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840" *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Nov., 1990), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3640236> (accessed 6/22/2009), 454, 477, 480; Douglas H. Maynard, "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Volume 47 No.3 Dec. 1960, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1888877> (accessed 6/22/2009), 456; Hindy Lauer Schachter,

not believe in the popular orthodox religion. The acquaintance of Lucretia Mott, who was a broad, liberal thinker on politics, religion, and all questions of reform, opened to me a whole new world of thought..."²⁹⁶

The 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention²⁹⁷ became as famous in the end for its place in women's history as in abolition history, when, after travelling all the way across the ocean for this convention, the leaders of the conference would not allow the female delegates from America full participation.

Apparently the Americans on the ship had prior knowledge of the problems that were to come, but they were unable to fend them off. In her diary of the trip, on June 6, six days prior to the Convention, Lucretia noted: "Joseph Sturge breakfasted with us.... We endeavored to shew him the inconsistency of excluding Women Delegates—but soon found he had prejudged & made up his mind... therefore all reasoning was lost upon him, and our appeals made in vain." ²⁹⁸

Later that same day, Mott records an interesting interchange with British Quaker William D. Crewdson that sheds light on her subtle and biting ability to deliver her point. Crewdson, who also happened to be the foremost anti-Hicksite of the British Friends, was "[addressing] his friends by the title of 'Mr.'"—a

Frederick Taylor and the Public Administration Community: A Reevaluation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 19.

²⁹⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years Or More*, 83.

²⁹⁷ The World Anti-Slavery Convention was organized by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and British Quaker Joseph Sturge to "capitalize on the movement's recent success in securing the abolition of slavery in the British Empire" (Britain abolished slavery in 1833). Howard R. Temperley, "British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (1839-1909)", in Paul Finkelman and Joseph C. Miller, Eds., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 130.

²⁹⁸ Lucretia Mott, June 6, Slavery and "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, Edit. By Frederick Tolles

practice quite improper among Quakers, who eschew titles—Lucretia apparently initiated “conversation on the expediency of continuing such conventions.” Then she inquired as to whether the British abolitionists also believed in the practice of “immediate emancipation” as Americans do. “On being answered affirmatively,” she educated Friend Crewdson to the fact that it was a woman, Elizabeth Heyrick, who originated the idea of immediate emancipation and that therefore, “when the convention should be held in America, we should not contemplate the exclusion of Women.” Mott records that “Many spoke kindly to us [in response], some responded, ‘hear hear’! all were pleasant. Elizabeth Pease the only female present beside ourselves—about 25 men.”²⁹⁹

On June 8, Mott reports that “Josiah Forster [Clerk for twelve years of London Yearly Meeting] called James aside—informed him he had received word from America, that we were not Friends—” [The issue here is that Britain took the side of the Orthodox in the Hicksite schism, and did not acknowledge the Hicksite Quakers as valid Friends.] “...Presented our certificates—explained some things—found them ignorant & bigoted, but kind in feeling after disclaiming religious fellowship.”³⁰⁰ Even after this issue was “resolved” on June 8 with the Motts, some believe that sectarian antagonism remained, and that the ultimate rejection of the female delegates from America had as much to do with the rejection of prominent Hicksite leader Lucretia Mott by the British Quakers as it

(Friends Historical Association and Friends Central Bureau and Friends Historical Society: Philadelphia and London, 1952), Sophia Smith Collection, Northampton, MA., 22.

²⁹⁹ Lucretia Mott, June 6, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 24.

³⁰⁰ Lucretia Mott, June 8, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 25.

had to do with gender. James Mott was one of the proponents of this theory.³⁰¹

In a letter to friends following the Convention, Sarah Pugh wrote, “the manner in which some of the business was conducted, and the strong sectarian feeling evinced by some of its members, particularly the aristocratic Quakers, did not please *us*. It was vexatious to see them so captious on some points that clashed with their orthodoxy....”

Over the next few days representatives of the American and the British delegates went back and forth to each other, the British informing the Americans that the women were to be rejected at the upcoming Convention, the Americans forming their protests. On the 11th, Sarah Pugh drafted a written protest on behalf of the group, that it was “contemplated to exclude women from a seat in the convention as coequals in the advocacy of Universal Liberty....”³⁰² Yet the delegation was still informed that “the company of Women [was] not desired.”

On the same day, Lucretia Mott reports an interchange with one of the black delegates of the Convention regarding the inclusion of the women: “.... Prescod of Jamaica (colored) thought it would lower the dignity of the Convention and bring ridicule on the whole thing if ladies were admitted—“ To this, Mott’s group argued that “similar reasons were urged in Pennsylvania for the exclusion of colored people from our meetings—but had we yielded on such flimsy arguments, we might as well have abandoned our enterprise.” Another black delegate, “Colver thought Women constitutionally unfit for public or

³⁰¹ Frederick Tolles, Ed. *Slavery and "The Woman Question"*, 51.

³⁰² *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 25-26.

business meetings—he was told that the colored man too was said to be *constitutionally* unfit to mingle with the white man. He left the room angry.”³⁰³

On the day of the Convention itself, some delegates did speak up on behalf of the women. One British delegate, Dr. Bowring, “adverted to the fact that Great Britain was ruled by a woman and that the Society of Friends ‘have given their women a great, honorable, and religious prominence.’”³⁰⁴ Lucretia Mott noted that “William Ashurst pointed them to the inconsistency of calling a ‘World’s Convention’ to abolish Slavery-and at its threshold depriving half the world their liberty.”³⁰⁵

Sarah Pugh offered an interesting window into the relative predominance of Quakers in the abolitionist movement in her own country, when she remarked that it was refreshing to meet so many abolitionists at the World Conference who were not Quakers: “it seemed strange to me to hear grave and solemn truths uttered by one in the world’s garb. Our antislavery people are most Friends, but here there was a large body of people zealous and earnest for the right, dressed as the worldly dress. It is cheering to see great principles unconnected with sect.”³⁰⁶

Meanwhile, the American delegates continued to discuss the gender issue among themselves and with others. Lucretia Mott had a hard time checking her anger when male delegate N. Colver offered the women, “now, if the spirit moves you to speak on this subject—say on—you’ll be *allowed* to say what you wish.”

³⁰³ Lucretia Mott, June 11, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 28-29.

³⁰⁴ Frederick Tolles, Ed. *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 30, note 5.

³⁰⁵ Lucretia Mott, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 30-31.

³⁰⁶ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 30-31.

Mott says that she was quite tempted by that to speak “--but if the Psalmist withheld his mouth even from good when the *wicked* were before him—even so now” she held her tongue.³⁰⁷

On the very last day of the Convention, June 23, Quaker Abby Kimber wrote an eloquent letter of protest, which she unsuccessfully tried to have presented to the Convention before the delegation returned home. The letter named the parallel problems of the gender split at this Convention and the split in the American abolitionist community: “.... Since we left America, the *man* question has, it seems, split the National Anti-Slavery society; therefore it has a tremendous significance in our country—and it does seem to us that you have been warped from your propriety, by the influence of those who stand directly opposed to that Society in this matter...” The letter pointed out that the leaders of the convention had listened to the point of view of the group that seceded from the National Anti-Slavery Society because of its inclusion of women (the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society), but had not listened to the inclusive, Garrisonian group’s side. Meanwhile the Convention had allowed that group to use the name “American *and* Foreign Anti-Slavery Society” without the European community having heard the complete story.³⁰⁸ The request was refused.

American women had used the third method, consumer control and boycott, for centuries as a way to register their opinions and values when they

³⁰⁷ Lucretia Mott, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 40.

³⁰⁸ Lucretia Mott, June 23, *Slavery and “The Woman Question”*, 43-44. Note: Aside from Americans, actual delegates to the convention represented primarily England and the British territories, plus single delegates from Haiti, Spain and Switzerland, and four from France. Deborah Bingham Van Broekhoven, “Perspectives on Slavery: Opposition to Slavery”, in Paul Finkelman and Joseph C. Miller, Eds., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery, Volume II* (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 692.

could not vote. In the case of abolitionist reform, women raised large amounts of money through abolitionist fairs, and participated in consumer boycotts against slave-produced goods like cotton, molasses and coffee, and encouraged their families and friends to do the same.

Particularly women since the beginnings of American history have practiced the use of consumer boycott as a technique of political activism. As early as the Revolutionary War, “women joined the prerevolutionary protests as members of mass demonstrations against Parliament’s new stringent trade regulations and taxes, as organizers and supporters of tea boycotts, and as producers of cloth to compensate for the nonconsumption of British manufactured goods.”³⁰⁹ In a satirical poem in 1774, an unnamed “Lady” wrote, of her tea:

“No more shall I dish out the once lov’d Liquor,
Though now detestable,
Because I ‘m taught (and I believe it’s true)
Its use will fasten slavish Chains upon my Country,
And LIBERTY’S the Goddess I would choose
To reign triumphant in America.”³¹⁰

Elizabeth Margaret Chandler was one of the Hicksite women who would influence other women to follow the free produce movement. Born on December 24, 1807 in Centreville, Delaware, Chandler moved when young to Philadelphia, and would make some of her greatest contributions to the abolitionist movement through her writing. Chandler joined the staff of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* at the same time as William Lloyd Garrison, according to one

³⁰⁹ Carol Berkin and Leslie Horowitz, Editors, *Women’s Voices, Women’s Lives: Documents in Early American History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 160.

historian, “—a significant fact of women’s history that has been obscured by her early death.”³¹¹ Chandler contributed to the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* for years, many of them as the head of the Female Department.³¹² She was a strong advocate of the free produce movement. One of her poems, entitled “Slave Produce”, warned women against the consumption of items like sugar and cotton. She wrote:

“List thee, lady! And turn aside,
With a loathing heart, from the feast of pride;
For, mix’d with the pleasant sweets it bears,
Is the hidden curse of scalding tears,
Wrung out from woman’s bloodshot eye,
By the depth of her deadly agony.

Look! They are robes from a foreign loom,
Delicate, light, as the rose leaf’s bloom;
Stainless and pure in their snowy tint,
As the drift unmarked by a footstep’s print.
Surely such garment should fitting be,
For woman’s softness and purity.

Yet fling them off from thy shrinking limb,
For sighs have render’d their brightness dim;
And many a mother’s shriek and groan,
And many a daughter’s burning moan,
And many a sob of wild despair,
From woman’s heart, is lingering there”³¹³

In her frequent letters to relatives and friends in the Philadelphia Quaker community Chandler demonstrated her strong and continued commitment to the

³¹⁰ “A Lady’s Adieu to her Tea Table,” *Virginia Gazette*, January 20, 1774, quoted in Berkin and Horowitz, *Women’s Voices, Women’s Lives*, 181.

³¹¹ Jennifer Rycenga, “A Greater Awakening: Women’s Intellect in the Transatlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1824-1834” (Paper Presented at the Third Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference at Yale University: Sisterhood and Slavery: Transatlantic Slavery and Women’s Rights, Oct. 25-28, 2001, Yale University, New Haven, CT.). Rycenga quotes Lutz 1968, 8-9; Dillon 143.

³¹² Marcia J. Heringa, Ed., *Remember the Distance That Divides Us: The Family Letters of Philadelphia Quaker Abolitionist and Michigan Pioneer Elizabeth Margaret Chandler 1830-1842* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004), 259.

free produce movement. She wrote to her sister Jane Howell: "In addition to the articles mentioned in my last, we should like to have a couple of shillings worth of *free sewing* cotton..."³¹⁴ A letter to Chandler from her sister notes: "... I saw Hannah Townsend a few days since.... She says she has written to thee, and is waiting a private opportunity as she has some pamphlets which she wishes to accompany the letter. She says Java Coffee is of free production as it comes from the East Indies...."³¹⁵ In another letter between the two sisters Chandler writes: "P.S. 11 mo. 3rd—I should like to have sent thy patchwork by this opportunity, but have not yet got it finished, as sewing cotton run [s] low with us, and I felt unwilling unless compelled by actual necessity to purchase any of the slave manufacture."³¹⁶

Not content merely to practice free consumption herself, Elizabeth Chandler tried to influence members of her family as well. In a note to her sister-in-law, Sarah, Elizabeth encouraged her to read the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*: "...it would give thee particularly a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with my sentiments, and besides, I should have an opportunity of lecturing you now and then, along with the rest of the folks about making use of slave produce..."³¹⁷

³¹³ Heringa, *Remember the Distance*, 379-380.

³¹⁴ Elizabeth Margaret Chandler to Jane Howell, Hazelbank, June 20, 1832, in Heringa, *Remember the Distance*, 123.

³¹⁵ Jane Howell to Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, Philadelphia, October 2, 1832, in Heringa, *Remember the Distance*, 143.

³¹⁶ Elizabeth Margaret Chandler to Jane Howell, Hazelbank, October 18, 1833, in Heringa, *Remember the Distance*, 210.

³¹⁷ Elizabeth Margaret Chandler to Sarah Chandler, in Heringa, *Remember the Distance*, xxxv. Note: some of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler's papers are kept at Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore and others at the Ohio Historical Society.

Lucretia Mott remembered her first introduction to the concept of free consumption as a child when she was told she could not partake of certain candy because of the way it had been obtained. “It was like parting with the right hand, or the right eye, but when I left the meeting I yielded to the obligation, and then, for nearly forty years, whatever I did was under the conviction, that it was wrong to partake of the products of slave labor.”

Nor would it be easy for Lucretia later, when she grew up and she and husband James Mott would try to succeed in business as cotton merchants in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their daughter Anna Hallowell notes that Lucretia “felt concerned about her husband’s business for several years before it became clear to his mind that it was his duty to give it up”, and indicates that both James’ wife and his mother came to a conclusion that, for reasons of conscience, he should abandon his business as it could not be extricated from the fruits of the slave trade. Hallowell says that “judging from allusions in the letters of the next five years, we may believe the struggle in his mind was long and painful.” Finally, around 1830, “he quitted the profitable trade, that could not be extricated from the fruits of the slave trade.”³¹⁸

As the child of reformers, Anna Hallowell Mott notes that committing to free produce was not always easy—in fact, for the children especially, it could involve family sacrifice: “unfortunately...free calicoes could seldom be called handsome, even by the most enthusiastic; free umbrellas were hideous to look upon, and free candies, an abomination.” These, she explained, often provided at birthday parties, had usually been accompanied by “delightfully silly couplets”

in bright paper, but free candies came instead with abolition morals, like “If slavery comes by color, which God gave, Fashion may change, and you become the slave.”³¹⁹

Hicksite Sarah Pugh discussed an incident which occurred to her on shipboard when she was travelling to a meeting of the first American Women’s Anti-Slavery Convention in New York: “ 5th mo., 8th, 1837--.... On the steamboat at dinner the colored waiter removed a plate before E.J. Neall had finished her dinner. One of the party requested him to supply another, adding, ‘My friend will not eat your dessert, as I suppose it is not free produce.’ The waiter caught the idea instantly, and served us with alacrity. Dinner finished, the steward.... said, ‘I, too, am an abolitionist.... I mean to examine the subject of free produce, and may be better provided next year.’”³²⁰

The Orthodox Grimke sisters also became awakened early on to the importance of the free produce movement. Catherine Birney relates how Angelina contributed one hundred dollars as seed money to begin a free cotton factory, which in turn, turned out to be the “beginning of a society formed by those willing to pledge themselves to the use of free-labor products only.”³²¹

The abolitionists learned to be very creative in their endeavors as well. When the escaping slave Henry “Box” Brown had himself boxed up in Richmond, Virginia and sent by Adams Express to the Anti-Slavery office in Philadelphia, he was delivered to the Motts’ home, and dressed in James Mott’s clothing for the

³¹⁸ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 87.

³¹⁹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 88.

³²⁰ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh: A Tribute of Respect From Her Cousins* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1888), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 15.

remainder of his escape from slavery. James and Lucretia also served on a Vigilant Committee that helped inform slaves of their legal rights once they had crossed the Mason-Dixon Line.³²²

Another person who deserves mention in this section is Hicksite Jane Hunt, who will be covered in greater detail in the women's rights chapter, for her involvement in the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention. She and her husband Richard were also involved in abolition, and were among a group of Quakers from Waterloo, New York who "family legend suggests...used a large room over the carriage house attached to the rear of the main building as a haven for freedom seekers" on the Underground Railroad.³²³ In his business, Richard Hunt "deliberately created a wool mill rather than a cotton mill so that he did not have to buy raw materials produced by people in slavery."³²⁴

Similarly, Hicksite Mary Ann M'Clintock and her family will be discussed in the women's rights chapter for their involvement at Seneca Falls. The M'Clintocks and their four daughters were all "active in one way or another with antislavery petition drives, temperance meetings, and abolitionist fund raising fairs."³²⁵ Historian Sandra Weber also notes that according to the 1850 census, there were three young people living with the M'Clintock family, aged 8, 16, and 17, who were most likely fugitive slaves. "The eight-year-old child certainly was

³²¹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 134.

³²² Dorothy Sterling, *Lucretia Mott*, 140-142.

³²³ Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 207.

³²⁴ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 74.

³²⁵ Sandra Weber, *Special History Study: Women's Rights National Historical Park, Seneca Falls, New York*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Park Service, 1985), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, PA., 138.

not hired help. The fact that Richard Hunt is known to have been active in the Underground Railroad lends credence to this supposition.”³²⁶

Like many other Quaker families, the M'Clintocks were abolitionists who knew William Lloyd Garrison and shared his belief in the technique of “moral suasion”. They supported the goals of the American Anti-Slavery Society: “abolish slavery immediately; work for complete social, political and religious equality for free people of color; and withdraw from every church, political party, or government that supported slavery in any form.”³²⁷ Mary Ann and Elizabeth M'Clintock worked together on a committee with Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley, Hicksite Amy Post and others, on western New York's first abolitionist fair, raising three hundred dollars in the process. The M'Clintock family also participated in the Free Produce Society, selling wool, honey, and molasses.³²⁸

Many abolitionists at this time were critical of the established churches for their failure to take a stronger and more consistent stance on behalf of the slave. In Mott's words, “it was...a startling revelation daily made, a painful experience daily borne, that the churches which had nurtured their sons and daughters on the *words* of Christian love and human brotherhood, had no desire to see them practically illustrated towards the slave or the negro.” Her daughter Anna Hallowell notes, “it is sad to have to record that the Society of Friends was no exception to this indictment.” The concerns raised by Friends in Hallowell's description match ones I have found in other Quaker abolitionist cases in this

³²⁶ Becker, *History of Waterloo*, 156, quoted in Weber, *Special History Study*, 140.

³²⁷ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 113.

³²⁸ “Reform: A Way of Life: Reforming Family: The Hunts and M'Clintocks of Waterloo, NY,” <http://www.nps.gov/wori/archives/refam7.htm>, (accessed 8/5/2005), 1-2.

study. She notes: “Only here and there could a meeting-house be found where an avowed discussion of the subject was permitted; Friends were exhorted by those in authority to ‘keep in the quiet’, to ‘avoid all contention,’ and to be careful about ‘going out into the mixture.’” Hallowell notes that in Mott’s widespread travels as a preacher, “her discourses...were mainly on religious subjects, but she never failed to bear testimony against the sin of slavery. It was this ‘lugging in’ (to use the words of her opponents) of a distasteful subject which finally brought her into such disfavor in the Society....”³²⁹ Hallowell also elaborates on the topic of “mixing”, noting that in the calling of her work, Lucretia spoke with others about the plight of the slave, without discrimination, whether they themselves had an orthodox Christian faith or not, whether that faith was the same as her own, different, or even if they had no faith at all. This type of “active association with ‘world’s people’...was becoming [a] matter of offense to many of the prominent members to have one of their own anointed ‘mingling with others.’”³³⁰

Hallowell gives us a fascinating window not only into the denomination at this time but into the inner thoughts of its most famous female leader. She shows Lucretia Mott to be not only a powerful minister and reformer, but an intelligent politician who knew how to be “careful to give her opponents no legitimate cause of action against her, for she greatly desired to remain not only in the Society, but as an ‘approved minister’ in it.” And for good reason. “Not only was this a matter of justice to herself; it was also because she loved her Society,

³²⁹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 122-123.

³³⁰ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 202-203.

its traditions, its inheritance, and its principles.”³³¹ Mott gives one very specific example of how this worked in a case where she was charged with “mixing.” In a letter to Richard and Hannah Webb, she described an encounter with Elders from the New York meeting who “have been quite desirous to make me an offender, for joining with those not in membership with us, and accepting offices in their societies.” Lucretia argued, “our Friends here know full well that such a position is neither contrary to our Discipline, to Scripture, to reason, nor to common sense. I was permitted to answer for myself, and found proof enough in the practice of Friends, from the days of Wm. Penn to the present, of such ‘mixtures.’ They failed to bring action against me....”³³² Hollowell notes that many efforts were made to remove Lucretia Mott from the Society of Friends—she even names some of her enemies by name—but none ever succeeded.³³³ Mott remained in the Society, as a recognized minister, with a reputation of great renown.

Lucretia Mott’s would be only one of numerous cases, Hicksite and Orthodox, where Quakers were not always in accord with each other about abolition. For example, long before the schism, even though prototypical Quaker abolitionist John Woolman is referred to in hagiographic terms, J. William Frost notes that at the time he was alive “...the Burlington Quarterly Meeting—to which Woolman belonged—lagged far behind some other New Jersey Meetings in freeing slaves and conformed only after the Yearly Meeting made manumissions

³³¹ Hollowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 203.

³³² Hollowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 227.

³³³ Hollowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 203, 204.

mandatory.”³³⁴ Woolman influenced a denomination, and in some ways a nation, yet he did not convince all of those closest to him.

And Lucretia Mott’s would not be the only case. The Orthodox family of Elizabeth Chace would not always feel unanimously supported in their abolitionist concerns by their Quaker friends and neighbors. Chace notes: “I remember well how eager we were...to present the cause of the slave to everybody we met.... from the Friends, surely, we expected sympathy and cooperation.” But this was not always the case. Some Quakers “objected to the strong, denunciatory language of the *Liberator*, they disapproved of Friends uniting with other people in public meetings or philanthropic work; they did not think the slaves should be set free all at once, and they did not want their daughters to marry Negroes....” Quaker elders advised Friends “not to give way to excitement, but to keep in the quiet and wait for divine guidance; and not to unite with people outside of our religion in public undertakings....” Chace had been a faithful Orthodox Quaker for all of her life “but to be an Abolitionist put me down among the ostracized.”³³⁵

Elizabeth describes an instance in which she and her sister, Lucy invited “a few very respectable young colored women” to join their Society: “That raised such a storm among some of the leading members, that for a time, it threatened the dissolution of the Society.... Lucy and I maintained our ground, however, and the colored women were admitted.”

In the end, Elizabeth and her father would not remain in the Society, with controversies over slavery as the divisive issue. Elizabeth notes that the

³³⁴ Soderland, “Conscience, Interest, and Power,” 218, 241-57 and Drake, *Quakers and Slavery*, 51, quoted in Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 131.

Smithfield Monthly Meeting disowned Arnold Buffum “on charges which he proved to them were false, and when he did so, and remonstrated against their threatened action, he was assured by the leading authority in the meeting, that it could ‘all be amicably settled, if he would give up this abolition lecturing,’ thus admitting that this was the offense for which he was to be disowned.”

Elizabeth points to cases in several different areas of the country where Quakers were “forcibly carried out of Friends’ meetings for attempting therein to urge upon Friends the duty ‘to maintain faithfully their testimony against slavery,’ as their *Discipline* required.” Further, after several Quaker meeting houses were used for anti-slavery talks, “our New England Yearly Meeting adopted a rule that no meeting house under its jurisdiction, should be opened except for meetings of our religious Society.”³³⁶ Elizabeth concludes:

“Finally, after a long struggle, I was compelled, in order to secure my own peace of mind, to resign my membership in the Society to which, from my childhood, I had been devoutly attached. “ Her husband became a Gurneyite soon after the Orthodox split into Gurneyites and Wilburites, and “preserved through the remainder of his life, unmolested and respected, his anti-slavery character; while I lost what little caste I held among the Friends, many of whom were near and dear to me by kin, and some of them by the nearer and dearer ties of life-long association and friendship.”³³⁷

Other early female abolitionists who should be described in any discussion of Orthodox Quaker reformers are Grace Douglass and her daughter Sarah

³³⁵ EB Chace “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 96-98.

³³⁶ EB Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 99-101.

Mapps Douglass. These two African American abolitionists probably became most well known for their role in exposing racism within the Society of Friends itself. Margaret Bacon notes “Grace ...grew up as a Friend...” She attended Friends meeting with her family at old North Meeting on Key’s Alley. Douglass attended school in downtown Philadelphia. She created a millinery business in her father’s establishment at 56 Arch Street....”In addition to raising her children and operating her shop, Grace Douglass was an active civic leader. In 1819 she opened a school in conjunction with the famous sailmaker, James Forten.” In 1833 she became a founding member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and remained on the board for life. She was a delegate to the Annual Conventions of Anti-Slavery Women, held in 1837, 1838 and 1839, and to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society.³³⁸

Yet Grace and her children did not always feel welcomed into the Quaker fold. Sarah developed a close friendship with the Grimke sisters in which she shared with honesty her family’s experiences of being discriminated against within the Quaker meeting itself. In one letter to Sarah Grimke, Sarah Douglass wrote that the prejudice of Quakers in meeting houses so affected her brother Charles that it “drove him to the very verge of infidelity. Many times...the bitterness of his heart exclaimed ... ‘tis all a fable, or why do Christians act thus?’” Charles ended up choosing to attend the Presbyterian church, where he apparently felt more accepted. ““ Ah, if Friends only knew the...this one common

³³⁷ EB Chace, “My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences,” 102.

³³⁸ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglass, Faithful Attender of Quaker Meeting: View from the Back Bench* (Philadelphia: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 2003), 3-4.

expression of theirs- ‘This bench is for the black people’, ‘This bench is for the people of colour,’ inflicts on the sensitive + tender amongst us...”³³⁹

On another occasion, Sarah Douglass described attending meeting in New York, where she taught school as an adult. She was alone, and noted that only one friend spoke to her. “I had been attending one month, when a friend accosted me thus—‘Does thee go out a house-cleaning?’ I looked at her with astonishment—my eyes filled with tears, + I answered ‘no’.... I wept during the whole of that meeting...” Sarah said that she felt like “a stranger in a strange land”.

When a minister of Grace Douglass’s North Meeting died, Grace showed up to attend the funeral. Sarah writes that all of the white women, even servants were put into carriages, while her mother for reasons of color alone was expected to walk. Sarah writes, “My very spirit filled with indignation as I write, I would rather have died than gone to that funeral....but Mother felt that it was right to go, although her heart was bleeding with the wounds inflicted by professed friends.”³⁴⁰

Margaret Hope Bacon indicates that “when her children were young, Grace Douglass had thought of becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends so they could enjoy a religiously guarded education, but was warned in

³³⁹ Sarah Moore Grimke, “Letter on the Subject of Prejudice Against Colour Amongst The Society of Friends in The United States, Transcribed and edited for possible publication by Elizabeth Pease Nichol from letters written to her and to William Basset “(London: 1839), Anti-Slavery Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library, Mass., 15-16.

³⁴⁰ Sarah Moore Grimke, “Letter on the Subject of Prejudice, “ 9-10.

kindly fashion by a friend not to apply because she would only get her feelings hurt.”³⁴¹

Sarah told a friend of her disappointment when, as a child, her mother was relegated to the back bench: “I remember well, wishing (with the ‘foolishness that is bound in the heart of child’) that the meeting house would fall down, or that Friends would forbid our coming, thinking then that my mother would not persist in going among them.”³⁴²

Orthodox Quaker abolitionists Sarah and Angelina Grimke were among the Douglass’s’ greatest supporters. Angelina wrote Sarah Douglass, after inviting her and Grace to attend the upcoming meeting of the American Convention of Anti-Slavery Women, that she was pleased to hear they would attend, and “would say all I could to urge you to do so without fail. You, my dear Sisters, have a work to do in rooting out this wicked feeling, as well as we. You *must be willing* to come in amongst us, tho’ it *may be* your feelings *may be* wounded...” She concluded that to “suffer these things” was a “sacrifice” that would “tend to your growth in grace, & will help your pale sisters more than any thing else to overcome their own sinful feelings. Come then, I would say, for we need your help.” Sarah adds to the same letter: “I suppose thou still attends our meeting. I feel as if the seat you occupy there, is a reproach to us, & I think the Lord must send you there to be a memorial to us of our pride & our prejudice....”³⁴³

³⁴¹ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglass*, 6.

³⁴² Margaret Hope Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglass*, 6-7.

³⁴³ Angelina and Sarah Grimke to Sarah Douglass, New York, 3 April 1837, [W/G, Box 3.], in Ceplair, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina*, 126-127.

Sarah also had a very close relationship with Abby Kelley Foster. In a letter of May 18, 1838, Sarah Douglass writes to Abby, “Do write to me sometimes, it rejoices my very soul to meet with an abolitionist who has turned her back on prejudice.”³⁴⁴ In a later letter, Sarah wrote to Abby: “I love to call you sister—sister in Christ! What a precious feeling it is to know that you have put ... cruel prejudice beneath your feet and that your regard for your friends is not measured by the fairness of their complexions but by their moral worth....”³⁴⁵

When a frustrated Abby Kelley wrote to Angelina Grimke about the slowness of the Society of Friends to fully embrace racial equality, Angelina wrote back the following: “...I do not think Friends ever conceived the noble & generous scheme of elevating the free people of color to an equality with the whites. A colored man of this city...remarked, the Quakers have desired our emancipation, but not our elevation. I...must confess from my knowledge of the sentiments of Friends, this is a correct statement.”³⁴⁶

Bacon notes that the Orthodox publication, *The Friend* made no acknowledgment of Grace Douglass’ death on March 9, 1842, “although Grace had continued as a faithful attender to the end of her days. Thinking of the insults her mother had endured during her lifetime was painful to Sarah at this period.”³⁴⁷ Fortunately, Bacon notes that Sarah eventually became reconciled to the Society of Friends. Arch Street Meeting also became a place where African

³⁴⁴ Sarah Mapps Douglass to Abby Kelley Foster, Philadelphia, 18 May 1838, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

³⁴⁵ Sarah Mapps Douglass to Abby Kelley Foster, Philadelphia, 19 March 1839, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

³⁴⁶ Angelina Grimke to Abby Kelley Foster, 15 April 1837, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

³⁴⁷ Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglass*, 21.

Americans could feel welcome, “possibly in response to her public criticism....It is clear from her letters to Rebecca White that she was attending Arch Street Meeting again and finding great comfort from the worship.”

Like abolitionists Angelina Grimke and Abby Kelley Foster, Sarah Mapps Douglass would marry an abolitionist minister of a faith other than the Quakers, Episcopal Priest Reverend William Douglass. Although Sarah was not formally a Quaker, as in the cases of many abolitionists who left the Society or were disowned by it, she still maintained a strong identification with the Quakers. Bacon notes that “even though she was not officially a member of the Religious Society of Friends she felt that she was ‘marrying out.’...Sarah Grimke encouraged the match and in July of 1855, the couple were married.”³⁴⁸

Historians owe a debt to both the Douglass family and the Grimke sisters for saving and documenting the important and complicated aspects of abolitionist history represented here. However, an article in *The Liberator* of November 10, 1837 provided by the *New York Colored American* indicates that the situation of the Douglass family and the Quakers was not unique among churchgoing free blacks at this time, and the Presbyterians were not always welcoming to African American parishioners. Witnesses note: “The spirit of slavery and of caste no doubt is the bane of the Church of Jesus Christ in this country. It is the golden wedge which must be removed, ere she can prosper, or her latter day glory be ushered in.” The writer notes his/her experience in Christian churches where ministers and church members “refuse to rent pews to colored members, however pious and respectable.” The writer’s family lives very close to six

Presbyterian churches where they find themselves unwelcome. “Truly we can worship with our white brethren, by submitting to great degradation, or we can stay at home...” When they visited the Laightstreet Church and were seated in “rather an obscure place” by Mr. Tappan, “yet this circumstance excited a PERFECT TUMULT throughout the whole church, and sent a multitude of the followers of the ‘lowly Jesus’ to their homes in a rage of disapprobation and wrath.” Meanwhile, the writer notes, ecclesiastical bodies neither admit the attendance or vote of colored ministers, “nor will they permit the admission of a student into their Theological Seminaries, who, knowingly, has one drop of African blood in his veins....”³⁴⁹

Some Hicksite Quakers who did not feel that their denomination was doing enough for the cause of abolition and others split off from the Hicksites in 1848 and formed the Progressive or Congregational Friends. These were the Quakers of Waterloo, New York, and one of the particular issues in contest was the refusal of members of the Farmington Monthly Meeting to open their meeting houses for the use of abolitionist speakers. The Progressive Quakers numbered about two hundred and included members of the Hunt, McClintock and Post families, all of who would become deeply involved in both abolition and women’s rights reform.³⁵⁰ The first Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends addressed the following social concerns: the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia

³⁴⁸ Bacon, *Sarah Mapps Douglass*, 25, 28.

³⁴⁹ “Prejudice in the Church”, Excerpt from *New York Colored American* in *The Liberator*, November 10, 1837.

³⁵⁰ A. Day Bradley, “Progressive Friends in Michigan and New York,” *Quaker History: The Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, 52 (Autumn, 1963), 95-103.

and the free territories, the abolition of capital punishment, the pardon of a man who was convicted for helping fugitive slaves.³⁵¹

Not surprisingly, views on the group differed greatly depending on which Quakers you asked. Friend Sunderland Gardner wrote that the Progressives were a result of “ranterism,” and that “the trouble first commenced among those who professed to be Friends, by their taking very active measures out of Society on the subject of slavery, and uniting and mixing with almost everything however absurd, until they left Society for larger liberty.”³⁵² Meanwhile the Progressives preferred to see themselves as one abolitionist Quaker described them, “as the legitimate outgrowth and offspring, more than any other, of the descendants of Fox, Penn and Hicks.”³⁵³ Another indication of the close connection between the creation of the Progressives and the slavery issue may be that Bradley notes there is no reference to activity by this group after 1860.³⁵⁴

Thomas M’Clintock would write the Congregational Friends’ statement on the reasons it differed from the Quaker societies which came before it. Called *The Basis of Religious Association*, Wellman summarized its contents: “Each local meeting would make its own decisions. Men and women would meet together, not separately. No person was to be subordinate to another. There

³⁵¹ Bradley, “Progressive Friends in Michigan and New York,” 98.

³⁵² *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Labors of Sunderland P. Gardner*, (Philadelphia: Genesee Yearly Meeting, 1895), 117, quoted in Bradley, “Progressive Friends”, 103.

³⁵³ Aaron Macy Powell, letter written at Ghent, Columbia County New York, 5/25/1858 to the Longwood Meeting, Longwood Proceedings, 1858, 115, quoted in Bradley, *Progressive Friends in Michigan*, 103.

³⁵⁴ Bradley, *Progressive Friends in Michigan*, 103.

were to be no ministers and no hierarchy of meetings. Members need not agree on any points of doctrine, nor were they to be tied to creeds or rituals....”³⁵⁵

There is another group of Progressive Friends in the Northeast, who split from the Hicksite Kennett Monthly Meeting in 1851 in Pennsylvania. Here again, slavery and the proper measures of abolitionist activity were key dividing issues. The group built their own Meeting-house in 1853 and declared their concerns with “Slavery, Intemperance, War, Capital Punishment, the denial of the Equal Rights of Woman, Oppression in all this forms, Ignorance, Superstition, Priestcraft and Ecclesiastical Domination....”³⁵⁶ Like the Seneca Falls Methodist Church at which the Women’s Convention Of 1848 was held, this group attracted a variety of reform-minded individuals from many different religious denominations. In fact, the main speaker at the dedication of the new Meetinghouse was Unitarian abolitionist preacher Theodore Parker. This study shows that the Quaker female reformers often made strong ties with other reformers who shared their interests and values, regardless of religious denomination, and that they often made stronger bonds with fellow reformers than with fellow Quakers who did not share their reform values.

Unlike the New York group, this Progressive congregation actually lasted until 1940. However, Densmore notes that by 1920, the Quaker denomination had resolved its ambivalence about whether or not they were “willing to engage

³⁵⁵ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 181. See also Barbour, Densmore et. al, “The Orthodox-Hicksite Separation”, in *Quaker Crosscurrents*, 100-145.

³⁵⁶ Christopher Densmore, “Truth for Authority, Not Authority for Truth: The 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Longwood Progressive Friends Meetinghouse, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, May 22, 2005,” <http://undergroundrr.kennett.net/densmorelongwood2005.html> (accessed 6/21/2005), 2.

themselves with the world,” and there was no longer the same kind of need for a separate Progressive denomination that there had been in 1853.³⁵⁷

In the matter of these offshoot groups, Wellman notes, “Lucretia Mott’s sympathies were all with the reformers, ‘The high-handed measure of those in power...must eventually open the eyes of the people to the impropriety and danger of conferring such power on our fellow mortals.’”³⁵⁸ Mott wrote to English Quaker Richard D. Webb: “Three yearly mtgs. will be formed this autumn on radical principles...doing away with select mgs. & ordaining Ministers, men and women on perfect equality....What a wonderful breaking up there is among sects.”³⁵⁹

Abolition was one of the earliest reform movements in which these Quaker women engaged (Orthodox and Hicksite). While Elias Hicks was an outspoken advocate of total abolitionism and abstention from the use of slave-related produce, all Quakers, Orthodox and Hicksite drew on a strong and early Quaker witness against the institution of slavery. Nonetheless, abolition was perhaps the most controversial nationwide reform issue of the nineteenth century, and even the Society of Friends would experience some divisions over it. However, notably for this study, those divisions did not occur along the dividing line of the Hicksite schism. The strongest female Quaker abolitionists came from both sides of the split. Hicksite and Orthodox female abolitionists worked together, using the same techniques, and sometimes attending the same Conventions and fairs in pursuit of a goal with a shared vision. When they experienced opposition

³⁵⁷ Densmore, “Truth for Authority,” 3-4.

³⁵⁸ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 180-181.

from their fellow Friends, often articulated over the issues of mixing with other denominations or using Friends' Meeting Houses for purposes other than worship, these were experienced by both Hicksites and Orthodox abolitionists. As with the other reforms, the Orthodox and Hicksite women abolitionists had more in common in relation to their work as reformers than they did to distinguish them from each other, and in fact, they often worked side-by-side.

For these Quaker women, the discussion of abolition segues into the discussion of women's rights, because the story of the American women's rights movement features many of the same women who have figured most prominently in this chapter, and their formative years as reformers were spent advocating for the rights of the slave. Some historians contend that the two stories of liberation cannot be easily separated. This is the topic of chapter five.

³⁵⁹ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 181.

Chapter 5: Orthodox Originators of the Women's Rights Movement

There are two major theories about the birth of the woman's rights movement in America. One is that it was born in 1848 in upstate New York with the Seneca Fall Woman's Rights Convention. The other is that it was borne out of the abolitionist movement.-- That the women who were the most prominent proponents of the abolition of slavery started out working for the rights of the slave, and in the process discovered and battled their own gender oppression. No matter which of the two theories you find the most convincing, Quaker women are at the center of the story. If you start in Seneca Falls, you will begin with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the guest at a Hicksite Quaker tea party and the story is a very Hicksite one.³⁶⁰ If you follow the second theory the story is a largely Orthodox one that begins with the Orthodox Grimke sisters, with Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley Foster and the women of the Worcester Woman's Rights Convention.³⁶¹ These two stories form the next two chapters.

³⁶⁰ See Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*

³⁶¹ See Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History With Documents*

This chapter focuses on the Orthodox Quaker women who had the largest part in the women's rights movement, [Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Abby Kelley Foster, and the New England women of the Worcester Women's Rights Convention of 1850.] These were the early abolitionists who began with their concern for the plight of the slave and slowly broadened their view to include women's independence and suffrage as well.

Many feminist historians maintain that "the first women's rights movement in the United States, which began in the 1830s, emerged from the campaign to end slavery.... The chief actors in this dramatic story were Angelina and Sarah Grimke...."³⁶² A compelling argument can be made that the story began with the work of the Grimke sisters as they "broke the barrier" of speaking to "promiscuous audiences"³⁶³ against slavery in the 1830s along with Hicksite Lucretia Mott and Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley Foster. It was their work on behalf of the slave which first called them, and which first brought to light the prejudice that existed against their speaking out. In *History of Woman Suffrage*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage name abolitionism as the predominant cause of the woman's rights movement:

³⁶² Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), ix. Also see Blanche Glassman Hersh, "The 'True Woman' and the 'New Woman' in Nineteenth Century America: Feminist-Abolitionists and a New Concept of True Womanhood", in Mary Kelley, Editor, *Woman's Being, Woman's Place: Female Identity and Vocation in American History* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979), 272, and Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist- Abolitionists in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

“...above all other causes of the “Woman Suffrage Movement,” was the Anti-Slavery struggle....In the early Anti-Slavery conventions, the broad principles of human rights were so exhaustively discussed, justice, liberty, and equality, so clearly taught, that the women who crowded to listen, readily learned the lesson of freedom for themselves, and early began to take part in the debates and business affairs of all associations.”³⁶⁴ Catherine Birney, friend and biographer of the Grimke sisters wrote in her 1885 biography that while we “can scarcely realize the prejudice which, half a century back, sought to close the lips of two refined Christian ladies.... Those who denounced and ridiculed them builded[sic] better than they knew, for then and there was laid the corner-stone of that temple of equal rights for women, which has been built upon by so many brave hearts and willing hands since....”³⁶⁵

This chapter will provide evidence that while these Orthodox women may have put their efforts first on the cause of the slave, there is nothing secondary or inferior in their treatment of the women’s rights cause. Although their initial focus was abolition, when the goal became women’s rights these women were as strong, as uncompromising, as demanding of their rights as the Hicksite women reformers. They encountered the same types of problems as the Hicksite women, and were equally unwilling to yield their ground. The primarily Orthodox

³⁶³ Audiences which included men and women together. At this time it was traditional to have women’s meetings separate from men’s; the Grimkes were among the first speakers to break this barrier.

³⁶⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, Editors, *The History of Woman Suffrage, Volume I, 1848-1861* (Rochester: Charles Mann, 1881), 52.

³⁶⁵ Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimke Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimke: The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman’s Rights* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1970), 164.

group broke the ground in the late 1830s and early 1840s as they engaged in the early abolition struggles, and the Hicksite women predominated in the 1840s.

It all began with the Grimkes, and Angelina's decision to join the anti-slavery cause. She wrote in her diary: "... I had long regarded this cause as utterly hopeless but since I had examined Anti Slavery principles I find them so full of the power of Truth that I am confident not many years will roll over before the horrible traffic in human beings will be destroyd [sic] in this land of gospel privileges." Angelina prayed that God would be "pleasd [sic] to permit me to [be] instrumental of good to those degraded, oppressed & suffering fellow creatures...."³⁶⁶

During this same year, Angelina would make another decision that would change her life-- she wrote a letter to William Lloyd Garrison at the *Liberator* expressing her feelings of support and solidarity for him in the event of a described violent riot that targeted the abolitionist. She would seek neither the advice of her sister nor of her Meeting before doing so. Angelina wrote: "...I greatly feared Abolitionists would be driven back in the first onset.... The ground upon which you stand is holy ground; never—never surrender it.... It is my deep, solemn, deliberate conviction, that *this is a cause worth dying for*...."³⁶⁷

Garrison chose to publish Angelina's letter, with her signature, in the *Liberator*, noting her family connections and naming her brother, the late Thomas Grimke, a prominent Southern attorney. Garrison wanted to make sure his readership

³⁶⁶ Angelina Grimke, Diary, May 12, 1834, in Charles Wilbanks, *Walking By Faith: The Diary of Angelina Grimke 1828-1835* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 209.

³⁶⁷ A.E. Grimke to William Lloyd Garrison at the *Liberator*, Philadelphia, August 30, 1835, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 25-27.

understood Angelina's background growing up in a slaveholding family, so that they would realize that "on the subject of slavery...she has had an opportunity to be acquainted with it in all its bearings."³⁶⁸ This letter would launch Angelina into renown as an abolitionist and into conflict with both her family and her Society.

Sarah Grimke wrote in her diary that it was a "sorrow of heart" to see her sister become involved with the Anti-Slavery Society: "...But, like myself, she listened to the voice of the tempter, & oh that she may learn obedience by the things that she suffers. Of myself, I can say the Lord brought me out of the horrible pit, & my prayer for her is that she may be willing to bear the first chastisement *patiently*."³⁶⁹

In a letter of September 27 to Sarah, Angelina tried to explain to her sister why she wrote the letter to Garrison: "Now, my precious sister, I feel willing to be condemned by all but thyself, *without* a hearing; but to thee I owe the sacred duty of vindication, though hardly one ray of hope dawns on my mind that I shall be acquitted even by *thee*." She described the "deep sympathy" that she felt when she read the words of Garrison, and outlined the process by which, day after day she prayed to God about whether to send the letter, finally coming to some conclusion when "I remembered how often, in deep and solemn prayer, I had told my Heavenly Father I was willing to suffer anything if I could only aid the

³⁶⁸ *The Liberator*, quoted in Lumpkin, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke*, 164.

³⁶⁹ Sarah M. Grimke, diary entry, Philadelphia, 25 September 1835, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 27.

great cause of emancipation, and the query arose whether *this* suffering was not the peculiar kind required of *me*.³⁷⁰

In her diary entry of September 1835, Angelina discussed among other issues, her visit from Orthodox Friend Samuel Bettle, a member of the Arch Street Meeting, who tried to convince her to “reexamine the letter, & if I could, to write to WLG disapproving the publication and altering some expressions in the letter.” Angelina refused to do so, and wrote “I could not blame the publication of my letter, nor would I have recalld [sic] it if I could. I believd [sic] I had done right, that tho’ condemnd [sic] by human judges, I was acquitted by him whom I believ [sic] qualifyd [sic] me to write it, & I feel willing to bear all, if it was only made instrumental of good.”³⁷¹

This incident alone points out the difficulty in describing the Quaker perspectives concerning slavery and abolition during this period. Here we have two sisters, both Quakers, both Orthodox, both members of the same Meeting, both abolitionists, differing drastically in the way that they view one incident of abolitionist reform—Angelina’s letter to the *Liberator*. There were Quakers who condemned her and Quakers who applauded her for the same action, possibly all of them abolitionists. Historians have liked to claim that the two sides can be distinguished by Hicksite and Orthodox, but more extensive research indicates the question is not quite that simple. While there were Orthodox Quaker abolitionists who were criticized by their peers for going “too far” you can also

³⁷⁰ Angelina to Sarah Grimke, Shrewsbury, N.J., 27 September 1835, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 28-29.

³⁷¹ Angelina Grimke, diary entry, Philadelphia, September 1835, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 30-31.

find Hicksite Quakers (Lucretia Mott, for example, who will be dealt with more extensively in the following chapter) who had the same experience, as well as other Hicksites (for example, many of those who split off further from the Hicksites to form the Progressive Quakers) who believed that the Society was not “abolitionist” enough for them. Angelina, having survived the crisis of her published letter to the *Liberator*, had come to another realization of what she needed to do for the cause. “It has come to me; God has shown me what I can do; I can write an appeal to Southern women, one which, thus inspired, will touch their hearts, and lead them to use their influence with their husbands and brothers. I will speak to them in such tones that they must hear me, and, through me, the voice of justice and humanity.”³⁷² The belief that she could change others’ behavior by appealing to their hearts and minds was much in keeping with the Quakers’ and Garrisonians’ strong belief in “moral suasion”. The resulting publication would be titled “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South,” published in New York by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1836,³⁷³ and this time would consciously appear with her name: “for I well know my *name* is worth more than *myself* and will add weight to it.”³⁷⁴

In the appeal, substantial for both its length and its passion, Angelina addressed herself particularly to the women: “...If you could obtain but six signatures to such a petition only one state, I would say, send up that petition,

³⁷² Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 138.

³⁷³ Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 36.

³⁷⁴ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 140-141.

and be not in the least discouraged by the scoffs and jeers of the heartless, or the resolution of the house to lay it on the table....”³⁷⁵

Not surprisingly, Birney reports, “the pamphlet produced the most profound sensation everywhere it was read, but, as Angelina predicted, she was made to suffer for it.” She experienced the disapproval of her friends, and some of her fellow Quakers predicted she would be disowned for the act. Angelina wrote to a friend that she fully expected that she might be disowned by the Friends for her abolitionist activities, but this would not change her course: “...I must confess I value my right very little in a Society which is frowning on all the moral reformations of the day, and almost enslaving its members by unchristian and unreasonable works of faith and labors of love. I do not believe it would cost me one pang to be disowned for doing my duty to the slave.”

But the disapproval of Angelina’s appeal was far more widespread. In the South, her appeal was “publicly burned by postmasters”, and while Angelina had been planning a trip to visit her family in Charleston, “the police had been instructed to prevent her landing.” If she resisted she could experience arrest, imprisonment, and mob violence. In concern for her family’s safety, she cancelled the trip.³⁷⁶

But Angelina was undaunted in her cause and committed to working full-time for the cause of abolition. She felt obliged to offer her services first to some

³⁷⁵ Angelina Grimke, “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South” (New York: [American Anti-Slavery Society], 1836; New York: Arno and *New York Times*, 1969, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 64,66.

³⁷⁶ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 148-150

of the leadership in the Society of Friends. When they refused her offer she moved on to the American Anti-Slavery Society. Angelina wrote:

“Under all these circumstances, I felt a little like the apostle Paul, who having first offered the Jews the gospel, and finding they would not receive it, believed it right for him to turn to the Gentiles....”³⁷⁷

Meanwhile, Sarah had been experiencing some transformations of her own. First, while she had initially opposed Angelina’s connections with the Anti-Slavery Society, over time she had come to change her mind about the group.³⁷⁸ Second, Sarah had had more difficulties of her own with the Arch Street Meeting. The ultimate affront had occurred when Orthodox brother Jonathan Evans rose during meeting in the middle of Sarah’s speaking and ended her talk with total lack of tact or precedent. Sarah described her feelings, “I am branded in the public eye with the disapprobation of a poor fellow worm, and it was entirely a breach of discipline in him to publicly silence a minister who has been allowed to exercise her gifts in her own meeting without ever having been requested to be silent....”³⁷⁹ When all these factors converged and Angelina made the firm decision to go to New York and work for the Anti-Slavery Society, by herself if need be, Sarah found herself quoting from the Biblical book of Ruth: “Where thou goest, I will go; thy god shall be my God, thy people my people.... We have wept and prayed together, we will go and work together.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 152-154.

³⁷⁸ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 146.

³⁷⁹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 143-144.

³⁸⁰ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 155

The Society did not disown the sisters at this time, and the sisters thrived as agents for the American Anti-Slavery Society. Angelina wrote to their friend Jane Smith: "...How little, how very little I supposed, when I used so often to say 'I wish I were a man,' that I could go forth and lecture, that I ever would do such a thing. The idea never crossed my mind that as a *woman* such work could possibly be assigned to me." She said that she would never renounce her abolitionist feelings: "...They are intertwined with my Christianity. They have given a new spring to my existence, and shed over my whole being sweet and hallowed enjoyments."³⁸¹

The Grimkes broke boundaries concerning women speaking to large audiences in public places, especially audiences of mixed gender, but they received encouragement from colleagues like fellow abolitionist Theodore Weld, who "expressed his full unity with our doing so, and grieved over that factitious state of society which bound up the energies of woman, instead of allowing her to exercise them to the glory of God and the good of her fellow creatures."³⁸² This would be one of many times that Weld would offer the sisters moral support and advice, in a relationship that would last a lifetime.

Catherine Birney quotes Angelina to her good friend, Jane Smith, "And now, my dear friend, in view of these things, I feel that it is not the cause of the slave only that we plead, but the cause of woman as a moral responsible being...."³⁸³

³⁸¹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 165.

³⁸² Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 176,163.

³⁸³ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 178.

At this time, part of what was so radical about the Grimkes' speaking was merely the fact that they drew large audiences of men. Birney explains: "...they were adjudged immodest, and their conduct denounced as unwomanly and demoralizing.... Even many of the abolitionists had first to hear Sarah and Angelina Grimke to be convinced that there was nothing unwomanly in a woman's raising her voice to plead for those helpless to plead for themselves."³⁸⁴

But the Grimke sisters could be challenging in their message as well as their delivery. In 1837, over ten years before the Seneca Falls Convention, Sarah published her "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman."³⁸⁵ In this piece, discussed in the Biblical chapter as well, as an Orthodox Quaker, Sarah made her arguments for women's equality on the basis of the Bible, beginning with Eve. She noted that woman is blamed for bringing sin into the world, and reasoned that: "...it seems to me man might be satisfied with the dominion he has claimed and exercised for nearly six thousand years.... All I ask of our brethren is, that they will take their feet from off our necks and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God designed us to occupy."³⁸⁶ Sarah's letters on women's equality touched on topics including religion, dress, women's "legal disabilities", the "relation of husband and wife," the "Ministry of women," and the "Duties of Women at the Present Time." It is also interesting that Angelina went on record as not believing in inherent characterological

³⁸⁴ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 182.

³⁸⁵ Sarah Grimke, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman, addressed to Mary Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (Boston, Mass: Isaac Knapp, 1838; New York: Lenox Hill, 1970), Letter I, Amesbury [Mass.] July 11, 1837, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 204.

³⁸⁶ Sarah Grimke, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes..." Letter II, Newburyport, [Mass.], 17 July 1837, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 208.

differences between men and women. At a time when so many key reformers, male and female, were proclaiming the opposite, and describing separate men's and women's spheres, Angelina Grimke said the following: "It must be discussed whether women are moral and responsible beings, and whether there is such a thing as male and female virtues, male and female duties, etc. My opinion is that there is no difference, and that this false idea has run the ploughshare of ruin over the whole field of morality." To Grimke, "whatever is morally right for a man to do is morally right for a woman to do. I recognize no rights but human rights. I know nothing of men's rights and women's rights; for in Christ Jesus there is neither male for female...."³⁸⁷

Sarah and Angelina drew fire from a variety of audiences, not only the general public, but members of the clergy, in the form of a Pastoral Letter from the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts charging the sisters among other things with not limiting themselves to the "appropriate duties and influence of women [as] clearly stated in the New Testament." Sarah answered this criticism,³⁸⁸ while Angelina handled charges from Catherine Beecher, one of the more conservative of her colleagues in female reform, who tried to attack the precious right of the female abolitionists to petition the government. To this Angelina replied: "...The fact that women are denied the right of voting for members of Congress, is but a poor reason why they should also be deprived of the right of petition.... If not, they are mere slaves, known

³⁸⁷ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 187-188.

³⁸⁸ Sarah Grimke, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes...", Letter III, Haverhill, [Mass.], July 1837, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 212-213.

only through their masters.”³⁸⁹ Further, in her next letter to Beecher in the series she widened her context: “.... I believe it is woman’s right to have a voice in all the laws and regulations by which she is to be governed, whether in Church or State....” declaring that woman has just as much right as man “to sit upon the throne of England, or in the Presidential chair of the United States.”³⁹⁰

But Angelina and Sarah were probably less prepared for criticism from their own beloved male colleagues in the abolitionist movement who were beginning to fear that this focus on woman’s rights would detract from the fight for abolition. This would include New York Antislavery Agent Theodore Weld, who by this time had become more than merely a friend and colleague to Angelina,³⁹¹ and John Greenleaf Whittier who was both an agent of the Anti-Slavery Society and a fellow Orthodox Quaker. Like the women who would later be asked to postpone women’s suffrage for the suffrage of the black man, the Grimke sisters were asked to put their selfish cause aside for the greater good. The letters between the principals are informative, and speak to both the wit and the passion of the characters involved. John Greenleaf Whittier addressed the sisters in a letter: “...Does it not *look*, dear sisters, like abandoning in some degree the cause of the poor and miserable slave...whose cries and groans are forever sounding in our ears, for the purpose of arguing and disputing about some trifling oppression, political or social, which we may ourselves suffer?....a

³⁸⁹ Angelina Grimke, “Letters to Catherine [sic] Beecher, in reply to An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, addressed to A.E. Grimke. Revised by the author.” Letter XI, Brookline, Mass, 28 August 1837, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 193-194.

³⁹⁰ Angelina Grimke, “Letters to Catherine Beecher...Letter XII, East Boylston, Mass., 2 October, 1837, in Ceplair, *The Public Years*, 197.

³⁹¹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 207. Birney indicates that Angelina and Theodore were “courting” at this time.

selfish crusade against some paltry grievance of our own?....”³⁹² In a letter from New York, August 15-37, Theodore Weld wrote the sisters, “I do most deeply regret that you have begun a series of articles in the Papers on the rights of woman. He pleaded “Let us all *first* wake up the nation to lift millions of slaves of both sexes from the dust and turn them into MEN and then when we all have our hand in, it will be an easy matter to take millions of females from their knees and set them on their feet, or in other words transform them from *babies* into *women*.” Weld warned the sisters that diverting their focus from slaves to women “will make you so obnoxious as to cripple your influence on the subject of slavery.”³⁹³

At this key strategizing point the sisters responded firmly that they would not abandon the cause of women. Angelina warned, “If we surrender the right to *speak* to the public this year, we must surrender the right to petition next year and the right to *write* the year after and so on. What *then* can woman do for the slave when she is herself under the feet of man and shamed into *silence*?” She concluded that the reforms of abolition and women’s rights were joined together by God: “...They are bound together in a circle like the sciences; they blend with each other like the colors of the rain bow; they are the parts only of our glorious whole and that whole is Christianity, pure *practical* Christianity.”³⁹⁴

There is one point in the controversy over the Grimkes’ public speaking when Theodore Weld suggested the Anti-Slavery Society quell some of the

³⁹² John Greenleaf Whittier, in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, Editors, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*, Volume I (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 424.

³⁹³ Theodore Weld in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld I*, 425-427.

³⁹⁴ Angelina Grimke to Theodore and John Whittier in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld I*, 430-431.

conflict by blaming the sisters' "unique behavior" on the fact that they were Quakers. This way, he wrote to Angelina, "...If any gainsay your speaking in public and to *men*, they gainsay the *Quakers* and not the *abolitionists*. They fly in the face of a *denominational* tenet, not an *anti slavery* doctrine or *measure*."³⁹⁵ Angelina's response was swift and passionate: "Now we want thee to sustain us on the high ground of MORAL RIGHT, *not* of Quaker peculiarity. This question must be met *now*; let us do it as *moral* beings, and not try to turn a SECTARIAN *peculiarity* to the best account for the benefit of Abolitionism." She continued, obviously frustrated with his inability to understand, "What we claim for ourselves, we claim for *every* woman whom God has called and qualified with gifts and graces. Can't *thou* stand *just here* side by side with us?"³⁹⁶

The interchange is interesting for several reasons. First, we can see Weld's sense of expediency, as a political agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society who saw himself dealing with an immediate problem, posed against the Grimke sisters trying to draw his attention to the fact that this was part of a greater long-term issue, that in fact, would be coming up over, and over again for every woman who tried to raise her voice on any issue of importance. Second, it testifies to the history and reputation of the Quakers that American society had by this time become accustomed to women speaking in a public forum if a Quaker woman was doing it. Finally, it speaks to the tendency of some members of society—even someone like Theodore Weld who so revered and loved

³⁹⁵ Weld to Angelina Grimke, New York, N.Y., 22 July, 1837, W.MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld I*, 411.

³⁹⁶ Angelina Grimke to Weld, Groton [Mass.] 12 August [1837], W.MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld I*, 418.

Angelina Grimke that he married her—to occasionally minimize the Quakers as that unusual fringe group in America³⁹⁷ who sometimes acted with “extreme” behavior.

Yet the lively interchange is also typical of a mutual relationship among three people that would last a lifetime. Friendship had begun to grow between Angelina and Weld during their work together for the American Anti-Slavery Society and in a letter marked “Private” on February 8, 1838, Theodore finally declared to Angelina, “that for a long time, you have had my whole heart. Not supremely...I do love the Lord our righteousness better than I love you.” Weld confessed that he loved Angelina from the first time he read her letter in the *Liberator*, and paid her the ultimate compliment, that she made him feel such a sense of communion that “I forgot utterly that you were not of my own sex!” Weld also says that he was deferred at first by his fears that Angelina would be “so exclusive in your denominational views as to regard as heathen, well nigh, all who were not of your sect.”³⁹⁸ (Weld was a Presbyterian).³⁹⁹ He disclosed his feelings for her in an extensive letter, and then noted in the postscript that even though he had marked the letter “Private” it was “not however because I have the least unwillingness that dear sister Sarah should see it if it is your wish and her

³⁹⁷ Theodore Weld’s more complete quotation condescendingly describes Angelina’s sect as the one identified by “‘theeing and thouing’...tight crimped caps, seven by nine bonnets...that impenetrable drab that defieth utterly all amalgamation of colors”, Weld to Angelina Grimke, 22 July 1837.

³⁹⁸ Weld to Angelina Grimke, New York, 8 Feb. 1838, W. MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, Eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Sarah Grimke 1822-1844 Volume II* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 532-534.

³⁹⁹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 232.

desire. I suppose you and she have no *secrets* kept from each other and surely she has been to me as a very dear elder sister in the Lord....”⁴⁰⁰

Angelina responded that she shared his feelings in kind and that in terms of the Quaker restrictions on marriage, “for 5 years I have freely expressed my disapprobation of that part of our Discipline which disowns a member for marrying a person of another denomination; ...altho’I had not the slightest idea of ever being such a delinquent myself, I have often said that I viewed marriage as too sacred and private a duty to be thus interfered with. It is too deep for an Ecclesiastical Court to comprehend....” Sarah noted in her postscript to Angelina’s letter, “Since our first meeting I have felt as if you were kindred spirits, and that if the Lord inclined your hearts to each other I could bless his holy name....”⁴⁰¹

Angelina, Sarah and Theodore would function as a household of three for the rest of their lives, later adding children to the mix, and Sarah would be a helpmate for the couple in all endeavors, public and domestic. Like the functional relationship between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, this partnership would enable the reformers to combine a significant life of political reform and public witness with marriage and family.

In keeping with the spirit of the Reformation which the Grimkes lived and breathed, apparently Theodore also viewed his wedding to Angelina as a sort of “social experiment” for the institution of enlightened marriage. In one of his long

⁴⁰⁰ Weld to Angelina Grimke, New York, 8 Feb. 1838, W. Mss., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld* II, 536.

⁴⁰¹ Angelina and Sarah Grimke to Weld, Brookline [Mass.], 11 February [1838], W. MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld* II, 538-539.

letters to Angelina before the wedding he pointed out to her that she was marrying not only for herself, but also as a role model to thousands of other women. Ironically, Theodore begins his letter of April 15, 1838 expressing his concern for the anxiety and fear he detects in her recently. He tells her not to fret, and to “Let not your heart be troubled...” Then he expresses his belief that “Persons who contemplate uniting in that sacred union [of marriage] should STUDY EACH OTHER PROFOUNDLY and know each other *perfectly*... *informing* the other of any defect which he may have reasons to think is not fully known....” He notes that the engaged couple must “fix upon plans of life, modes of employment, the system by which to regulate their household, its order, rules, mode of living, dress, equipage, furniture, diet, regimen [?], exercise, family habits, hours, times and seasons....” This would be a great responsibility for any couple, but “We have uncommon *notoriety*, YOU *especially*. At this moment probably no female in the country is so extensively known or so much the subject of remark everywhere as *you*. God has given both of us great influence....” He tells her that the two of them are “very prominently identified with the great moral movements of the age. I mean the reformations, Moral reform, Temperance, Abolition, Rights and sphere of woman.... This is the *crisis* age of the world and *this* is the crisis of the age.... Among the dislocations of the age marriage and the relationship of husband and wife are perhaps...the most horrible perversions of all; and they must be redeemed...who knoweth but God has brought us into this state for such a time as this?” He warns her that “all eyes are upon you and almost all mouths filled with cavil.” People have been telling him that because of

her notoriety as a public speaker, no man of “high and pure feeling” would ever want to marry her, that “...*nature* recoiled at it.... You are the FIRST woman everywhere known to be on this ground, to whom...the practical test of married life will be applied.... Thousands and thousands will watch for your halting and with a Satanic eagerness forestall if possible the result of the experiment (!) by ill omen [e] d croakings and prophecies of failure and downfall.”⁴⁰²

Weld’s descriptions of marriage are in keeping with those of contemporary Transcendentalist philosopher Margaret Fuller, who compared “the highest grade of marriage union” to a “pilgrimage toward a common shrine.” She believed that through marriage, couples could develop their individual virtues, and also had a “millennial vision” that “human beings would ultimately realize and accept their shared androgyny and begin to thrive in marital harmony.”⁴⁰³

As interesting as it is to see Theodore’s perspective on the adventure the two were about to embark on, it is equally complex to see it from Angelina and Sarah’s point of view. In terms of their “domestic experiment”, Sarah would later write to her friend Elizabeth Pease that the three are “assert [ing] our unchanged opinions as to the equality of the sexes at the family altar, around the social board and on all the occasions which may and do arise in domestic life...”⁴⁰⁴ In response to Theodore’s long letter regarding how the world looks at the couple and Angelina in particular, Angelina wrote him back the following statement:

⁴⁰² Theodore Weld to Angelina Grimke, New York, 15 April, 1838, from W. MSS, in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld* Volume II, 633-638.

⁴⁰³ Eve Kornfeld, *Margaret Fuller: A Brief Biography with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 173, 45.

⁴⁰⁴ Sarah M. Grimke to Elizabeth Pease, Bellville [N.J.] 11 February 1842, G.MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld*, Volume II, 921.

“...didst *thou* not *know* that no *other* man *would marry me*—no, not even a good Abolitionist?” She explains that A. Weston told her “*no man* would wish to have such a wife. I have felt this very sensibly and been thankful for it as a shield from that kind of attention.... But thou art blind to the *danger* of marrying a woman who feels and acts out the principle of *equal* rights....”⁴⁰⁵

Sarah described the wedding, which took place May 14, 1838 at the home of their sister, Anna Frost, in Philadelphia. She noted that Sarah and Angelina expected to be disowned by the Quakers for participating in this unsanctioned wedding, and that they were prepared for the consequences. Although it was not a legal Quaker ceremony, it is interesting that Angelina made many choices in keeping with Quaker tradition. Theodore and Angelina decided to marry in the presence of family and friends without the assistance of ordained clergy. Also, “neither Theodore nor Angelina felt as if they could bind themselves to any preconceived form of words, and accordingly uttered such as the Lord gave them at the moment.” Theodore in his vows “alluded to the unrighteous power vested in a husband by the laws of the United States over the person and property of his wife, and he abjured all authority, all government, save the influence which love would give to them over each other as moral and immortal beings.” The occasion also included prayers “for the blessing of God on their union, that it might be productive of enlarged usefulness, and increased sympathy for the slave.” A heterodox group of guests were invited, “to bear our testimony against the horrible prejudice which prevails against colored persons, and the equally awful

⁴⁰⁵ Angelina Grimke to Theodore Weld, [Brookline, Mass.], 29 April 1838, W. MSS., in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld*, Volume II, 647.

prejudice against the poor.” William Lloyd Garrison read the marriage certificate, and it was signed by all present.⁴⁰⁶ Dorothy Sterling notes that “Quakers who witnessed the ceremony were...liable to excommunication.” For this reason, Lucretia Mott did not attend the Grimke wedding, and Friend John Greenleaf Whittier “solved the problem by waiting impatiently outside the door until the ceremony was over.” Orthodox Quaker abolitionist Abby Kelley was one of the only Quakers who dared to attend the ceremony itself. “She had begun to question many aspects of the society; this was her first quiet challenge to its restrictions.”⁴⁰⁷

Two days after the wedding, the three attended the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in the newly opened Pennsylvania Hall. That evening, which was to become famous for the dramatic destruction that was perpetrated there by anti-abolitionist rioters, Angelina was one of the featured speakers.

She spoke for more than an hour. As the stones were being thrown against the windows, she asked the company gathered: “What is a mob? What would the breaking over every window be? What would the levelling of this Hall be? Any evidence that we are wrong, or that slavery is a good and wholesome institution?” Grimke noted that whatever violence she and the collected crowd might be experiencing at that moment it would be nothing compared to what the slaves were asked to endure. “....No, no: and we do not remember them ‘as

⁴⁰⁶ Birney, with quotations from Sarah Grimke’s letter to England, in *The Grimke Sisters*, 232-233.

⁴⁰⁷ Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time, Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 61-62.

bound with them,' if we shrink in the time of peril, or feel unwilling to sacrifice ourselves, if need be, for their sake."⁴⁰⁸

That day also happened to be the last day that Angelina appeared in public for a very long time, which leads one to question whether these reformers did sometimes pay an emotional price for the kind of abuse that they took at the hands of anti-abolitionists, despite their courageous words. Exactly what happened to Angelina following the trauma of those two days is a subject of some discussion among historians and biographers. Birney notes that "Angelina Weld never again appeared in public. An accident soon after her marriage caused an injury of such a nature that her nervous system was permanently impaired, and she was ever after obliged to avoid all excitement or overexertion."⁴⁰⁹ Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin writes that Angelina "remained aloof" for twelve years, "an inexplicable withdrawal to the friends who knew her well," and that "considerable mystery has surrounded these intervening years" between the wedding and Pennsylvania Hall and what she sees as Angelina's reemergence later into public activity.⁴¹⁰ Whatever the reasons, at this time in their history the sisters turned from public speaking to other types of reform activity, producing with Theodore Weld the massive work, "American Slavery As It Is" which was published in 1839,⁴¹¹ and building their new household.

In an interesting reversal of gender stereotypes during this period,

⁴⁰⁸ Angelina Emily Grimke Weld, "Speech at Pennsylvania Hall, May 16, 1838," in Ceplair, Editor, *The Public Years*, 319-320.

⁴⁰⁹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 241.

⁴¹⁰ Lumpkin, *Emancipation of Angelina Grimke*, xi.

⁴¹¹ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 256-258.

Sarah Grimke complained to Abby Kelley Foster that people did not seem to be willing to accept Angelina's step from the public spotlight of the lecture circuit into domesticity: "Will they not grant as much time...for the quiet enjoyment of domestic life as was allotted to the Jews after marriages.... They are looking at Angelina as if her whole business must necessarily be public speaking as if that was the perfection of womans [sic] character & ... independence & moral responsibility..."⁴¹² Sarah complained that Angelina was now trying to fulfill "another part of the female character as important as any other, she is sharing with her husband in every respect the headship of the household, they are exhibiting the domestic characteristic in all its dignity and independence acknowledgeing [sic] no superior in either, but walking together in love....."⁴¹³

The sisters were finally disowned by the Society of Friends, as they had expected, Angelina for "marrying out" of the Society and Sarah for attending her unauthorized wedding. In their response to the letters regarding their disownment the sisters wrote, "It is our joy that we have committed no offense for which Jesus Christ will disown us as members of the household of faith.... We...regret that our Society should have adopted a discipline which has no foundation in the bible or reason..."⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Sarah M. Grimke to Abby Kelley Foster, Fort Lee, 15 June 1838, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁴¹³ Sarah M. Grimke to Abby Kelley Foster, Fort Lee, 15 June 1838, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁴¹⁴ Angelina Weld and Sarah Grimke to Mary Horner and Edith Kite, Fort Lee [N.J.] 7 July 1838, in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld II*, 685.

David Holden notes that it was in the 1750s that Friends began the custom of disowning members for "marrying outside" the Quaker fold, all part of their quest to remain a "peculiar people," "separate from the world". He also notes that later, "the large number of disownments began to decline when Friends perceived a threat to the size and growth of their meetings," and

Theodore and Angelina had three children—Charles Stuart, Theodore, and Sarah Grimke Weld. The Grimkes are one of the families in this study who managed to balance home, childrearing and extensive reform work by sharing the work three ways. Sarah wrote to her friend Jane Smith in 1852, “I know not what would have become of me but for Angelina’s children. They have strewed my solitary path with flowers, and gemmed my sky with stars.”⁴¹⁵

Theodore, Angelina and Sarah were all involved with teaching them, and creating a school that would include other children, an important primary activity during their later years⁴¹⁶. Catherine Birney describes the atmosphere at Eagleswood, which sounds reminiscent of some of the households in which the Mott children grew up: “Seldom, if ever, in the famous salons of Europe were better things said or higher topics treated than in the Eagleswood parlors.... Questions of general interest, politics, religion, the arts and sciences, even the last new novel or poem, had each its turn.”⁴¹⁷

Other early female Quaker abolitionists include Hicksite Lucretia Mott, and Orthodox Abby Kelley Foster. Lucretia Mott began preaching in 1818 and there is record of her making abolitionist sermons as early as 1829.⁴¹⁸ Her work in the anti-slavery movement has been covered extensively in the chapters on abolition and Hicksite women’s rights. Abby Kelley Foster is another strong Orthodox

Quakers discontinued the practice of disowning members for “marrying out”. (Holden, *Friends Divided*, 34-43, 152).

⁴¹⁵ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 278.

⁴¹⁶ Mr. And Mrs. Weld were asked to take charge of the educational component of the Raritan Bay Association, a collection of 30-40 “educated families of congenial tastes” known as “Eagleswood,” near Perth Amboy, N.J., in 1853. Birney, *Sarah and Angelina Grimke*, 267-268.

⁴¹⁷ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 273.

⁴¹⁸ Inez Haynes Irwin, *Angels and Amazons: A Hundred Years of American Women*, Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1934, 56.

woman's rights advocate who began her reform work as an advocate for the rights of the slave. Yet, like the Grimkes, her work in abolition reform brought her very naturally into the arena of women's rights, particularly when her appointment to a committee in the American Anti-Slavery Society split the entire society in two over the issue of gender. Like the Grimkes, Foster would never flinch nor was there any way in which the fact that her reform journey began on behalf of the slave made it any weaker or less tenacious on behalf of women⁴¹⁹, and in her later years, women's suffrage.

The beginning of Abby Kelley's public speaking career on behalf of the slave overlapped with the ending of Angelina Grimke's. On the same historic day that Pennsylvania Hall was burned down to the ground Kelley gave her first speech to a mixed audience for the abolition cause. She said: "I have never before addressed a promiscuous assembly. Nor is it now the maddening rush of those voices nor the crashing of those windows, the indication of a moral earthquake, that calls me before you." As a traditional Quaker she continued, "... it is the still small voice within which may not be withstood, that bids me open my mouth for the dumb; that bids me plead the cause of God's perishing poor." Theodore Weld attended, and was so impressed by Kelley's speech that night that he encouraged her to become a lecturer, saying, "Abby, if you don't, God will smite you!"⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁹ In addition to Kelley's work in abolition and suffrage, she served as a radical role model for working mothers, and nurtured key feminist reformers, notably Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone. Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 117, 276-277.

⁴²⁰ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 64-65.

Abby Kelley was brought up as a Quaker in Worcester, Massachusetts,⁴²¹ and attended the New England Friends Boarding School in Providence, Rhode Island, where she became schoolmates with such future reformers as Elizabeth Buffum Chace, and Prudence Crandall. Like the Buffum sisters, part of Abby Kelley's education was to learn the history of Quaker reformers like Mary Dyer, and the peace and abolitionist Friends who had been persecuted for their reformist beliefs and actions.⁴²²

In her memoir Kelley remembered being influenced by hearing William Lloyd Garrison speak against colonization in 1829 or 1830, and "from this time I did whatever I could to carry forward the work; circulating petitions to the State Legislature and to Congress, distributing our publications...raising funds.... At length, my whole soul was so filled with the subject...." Looking back on her career in retrospect, Kelley reflected "but for the fact that I had so little command of language, and had never any training for public speaking, I should think I had a divine call—as understood by Friends—to go forth and lecture."⁴²³

One of Abby Kelley's claims to notoriety in the history of the abolitionist movement was that she was "credited" with causing a historic split in the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840. William Lloyd Garrison recalled:

"It was the act of placing a gifted and noble woman* [*Abby Kelley Foster] on a business committee, that constituted the withdrawal of a powerful minority

⁴²¹ Claire Berkowitz and Karen Moran, "Abby Kelley Foster Timeline", Worcester Women's History Project, 2004.

⁴²² Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 19-24.

⁴²³ Abby Kelley Foster Memoir, January 26, 1885, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, Worcester Historical Museum Library, Worcester, Mass.

from the Society.... The name of that woman will yet be illustrious in the history of the United States...”⁴²⁴

A vote was taken in which Kelley prevailed at 557 (vs. 451 opposed). Lewis Tappan led the walkout of men which ensued, and his group became the “American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society”. This new group would strip Garrison’s American Anti-Slavery Society of its assets: “Even the furniture in the antislavery office on Nassau Street had been cleared out, some of it ending up in Tappan’s study.” John Greenleaf Whittier, another Orthodox Quaker abolitionist compared Kelley in a letter to Philadelphia Quaker Benjamin Jones, with “such predatory females as Eve, Delilah, and Helen of Troy.” Sterling notes that “Abby was unprepared for the waves of misogyny that threatened to engulf her.”⁴²⁵

Abby Kelley was a physically attractive woman, yet she was “stepping outside her gender sphere”. Critics could not seem to decide whether to insult her as unattractive or to imply that she was a beautiful woman of questionable moral character and behavior. They did both.

Kelley seems to have had the ability to draw reactions from people that ranged from one extreme to another, illustrated by one article in her defense in *The Liberator*: Addressed to all those who had not yet had the “opportunity to listen to the glowing eloquence of ABBY KELLEY...we would say—Go and hear the woman, by all means! We have heard her called an *infidel*, a *blackguard*, and other names equally creditable to the intelligence of those who use them....” Yet, the *Herkimer Journal* writes, “... we regard Miss K. as a highly gifted,

⁴²⁴ “To the Friends of the American Anti-Slavery Society,” *The Liberator*, May 26, 1843.

⁴²⁵ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 104-107.

amiable, and noble woman.... It pains us to hear *ladies* object to Miss K. as being 'out of her place,' and refuse to go and hear her. Why, good woman! You don't know how much she might learn you in an hour!"⁴²⁶

Abby recalled in her memoirs the Reverend Hayes, a Congregational minister in Connecticut who declared from his pulpit that Abby, who had been touring Connecticut trying with great difficulty to find open meeting houses for her abolition message was "another Jezebel," "making pretentions to philanthropy [sic] and Christianity" while "aiming to entice and destroy [his] church." "Do any of you ask for evidence of her vile character? It needs no other evidence than the fact that in the face of the clearest of the commands of God, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak'.... She is a servant of satan, in the garb of an angel of light."⁴²⁷

Dorothy Sterling notes that the public criticized Abby in different ways from their criticism of Angelina and Sarah Grimke. Speaking of the "Jezebel" incident, Sterling writes: "Nothing in the Grimkes' experience had prepared [Abby] for this attack.... Their critics had mocked them as stereotypical old maids who could not attract a man. Pretty, youthful Abby, with her full figure and farm girl coloring, aroused male fantasies as well as fears. " Sterling also points out that the Grimkes had the advantage of traveling as a couple, while Kelley traveled alone. "For a young woman to travel without a companion or chaperone was to invite all manner of harassment, both verbal and physical."⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ "Abby Kelley," *The Liberator*, June 2, 1843.

⁴²⁷ Abby Kelley Foster Memoir, 26 January 1885, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, Worcester Historical Museum Library, Worcester, Mass.

⁴²⁸ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 118-119.

Abby would later marry fellow abolitionist Stephen Foster. Yet this would not solve her difficulties: "... 'My usefulness in the anti-slavery field would be lessened' if the engagement were made public. 'People wish me married to get rid of me, and did they know of our relation they would say I was under obligations to take care of [Stephen], and if I did not, they would call me unfeeling and brutal.'" ⁴²⁹ As a female reformer, Kelley was guaranteed criticism from the public whether she was married or single.

Kelley's marriage to Stephen Foster on December 21, 1845⁴³⁰ complicated her life as a reformer. Foster, trained at Union Theological Seminary in New York, was an abolitionist who was born into the Congregational Church, but would become disillusioned with the organized religion when seminary officials tried to prevent him from holding an antislavery meeting. Sterling notes: "The faculty forbade the meeting but offered Stephen a scholarship if he would call off his abolitionist proselytizing. He rejected the bargain, saying he 'could not be bought to hold his peace.'" ⁴³¹

Stephen's relations with the institutional church would remain troubled for the rest of his life. A letter from his ministerial colleagues at Dartmouth in 1841 threatened him with "separat [ion] from the communion" if he does not modify his radical behavior. They note that while it was fine to be "highly excited by the evils of slavery" it was not acceptable to "reprobate...all ministers & churches who did not sustain yourself and those in fellowship with you, as antichristian and unworthy of their name and place." The brothers also note that in their view

⁴²⁹ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 203-204.

⁴³⁰ Biographical Notes, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, Worcester Historical Museum Library.

Foster had “lost sight of social distinctions, the necessity & lawfulness of restraint.... the social distinction of the sexes, taught by God equally in physical nature and the Bible; the subordination of children & servants....”⁴³²

Stephen Foster would end up publishing a booklet on the churches entitled *The Brotherhood of Thieves; Or, A True Picture of the American Church and Clergy*, in 1884. In this book, he asks the reader whether s/he belongs to a church, and if so, to “Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing.... Turn your back upon the church, and repudiate your allegiance to their government; for they have conspired together for the enslavement of a sixth portion of your countrymen!”⁴³³

Kelley had also had difficulties with her own denomination. Sterling notes that Kelley, like other Protestant reformers, was experiencing disillusionment with the amount of abolitionist activity (or lack thereof) by her own Quaker denomination: “Abolitionist lecturers were barred from meetinghouses, and Friends who joined ‘the world’s people’ in the antislavery and nonresistance movements were frowned on. ‘Thee must keep in the quiet till the Lord opens a way,’ elders counseled. “

In a sense, over a period of years, Kelley seemed to have disowned the Quakers before the Quakers disowned her. Sterling notes that Kelley had begun to “quietly [ignore] some of the prohibitions of Quakerism. ‘Plain language’ and

⁴³¹ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 131.

⁴³² Church Committee of Dartmouth College to Stephen Foster, 14 October 1841, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁴³³ Stephen S. Foster, *The Brotherhood of Thieves; Or, A True Picture of the American Church and Clergy*: A Letter to Nathaniel Barney of Nantucket (Concord, N.H.: Parker Pillsbury, 1884), cover, Abby Kelley Foster Papers, Worcester Historical Museum Library.

the rigid dress code, which paid more attention to the tilt of a bonnet than to a slave's immortal soul were, she believed, mere empty forms 'made to stand in the place of vital religion.' Yet, even Sterling points out the paradox, which applies to Abby Kelley and many other female Quaker reformers over these issues. The Quakers' treatment of abolition during this period is the reason Kelley gives for disowning herself from the Society, yet she also acknowledges that it is the Society itself which influenced her fundamental values in the first place: "The fundamental principles of the society [had] taken deep root in her heart." Yet, "after a painful period of deliberation she felt she could no longer keep silent about the Quakers' 'departures from the ground of truth'". In March of 1841 she sent a letter to her local meeting, the Uxbridge Monthly Meeting, saying "I hereby disown all connection of fellowship with the Society of Friends, feeling it a duty to 'come out and be separate.'"⁴³⁴

Kelley's choice of words indicates her sharp judgment of the Society, whose members would have been well aware of her scriptural reference. Kelley quoted from the apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 6, in which he advises his followers: "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For....what fellowship is there between light and darkness?" The apostle urged true Christians to "come out" from among the false Christians "and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean," implying the danger of

⁴³⁴ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 122-123.

associating with those people; “then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Almighty.”⁴³⁵

This kind of reasoning is similar to that used by denominations like the Amish to justify the “shunning” of a sinning member who refuses to heed the counsel of the greater religious community. Here Kelley reverses the movement and disowns the Society, justifying her actions by her religious beliefs. It is interesting to note that this is a time in history when the Quakers were seriously considering who they were in terms of their religious and reform identity—Would they be a denomination like the Amish which deliberately separated itself from the larger community, or not? How, as a religious community, would they best make their values known to their own group and to outsiders?

Similar techniques were being employed by abolitionists, including Kelley. Her biographer notes that Kelley and abolitionist Wendell Philips both advocated a technique called “disunion”: “Disunion was the final step in come-outerism—to come out from everything that supported slavery, ‘from governments, from constitutions, from statute laws, from all political machinery.’”⁴³⁶

Sterling describes how Kelley also borrowed techniques from the Washington Temperance Society in her abolition work. She notes, “The climax came when [Kelley] read her own ‘Tee Total Pledge’—essentially the pledge that Stephen had proposed at the Syracuse convention—which called on people to

⁴³⁵ Second letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 6 verses 14, 16b-18. *New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Revised Standard Version, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

⁴³⁶ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 187.

withdraw from all churches and political parties that failed to demand immediate emancipation.”⁴³⁷

To complicate our understanding of Kelley’s “disowning “ the Society, Sterling tells us that the members of the Uxbridge Meeting of Friends did not have an immediate reaction to receiving Kelley’s letter: “The Uxbridge Friends, some of them abolitionists, kept the matter quiet, perhaps hoping that Abby could be induced to change her mind.” It was Kelley who forced the issue. “After waiting six months for their response, she broke the silence by sending a copy of her letter to the *Liberator*. Shortly afterward the Uxbridge Meeting formally disowned Abby Kelley.” Sterling notes that it was Orthodox Quaker and fellow abolitionist Lydia Capron who was “appointed to notify [Kelley] of her disownment.”

Yet I found in this case as in a great many others, even when a female Quaker reformer “left the fold” or was rejected from it, women like Abby Kelley continued to manifest some elements of her “Quaker identity” both in her own eyes and those of others. Sterling writes, “the separation meant some broadening of [Kelley’s] interests. She read at least one novel—*Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne—that year, but her belief in the inner voice remained unchanged⁴³⁸. Nor was she ever able to put aside her Quaker ways of thinking

⁴³⁷ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 167-168.

⁴³⁸ Quakers, especially early Quakers were not particularly fond of the arts, seeing them as one of the “frivolities of society”. Historian David Sox notes that “pianos were not even allowed in Quaker schools until the end of the 19th century.” Arts have evolved slowly into the Quaker community, however, “attitudes altered not by decree but rather in degree,” and largely by struggling with the lives of Quaker artists in their own community, like Benjamin West, Edward Hicks, John Greenleaf Whittier and Walt Whitman. David Sox, *Quakers and The Arts: ‘Plain and Fancy’ An Anglo-American Perspective* (Richmond, IN.: Friends United Press, 2000), vii, 101, 9.

and behavior.”⁴³⁹ When Kelley married Stephen Foster four years after her disownment, she was marrying a non-Quaker, a potential “disownable offense”. Yet Sterling notes, that “in the Quaker tradition they had drawn up their own wedding certificate” declaring their “mutual affection, and covenant of perpetual love, and fidelity, of our purpose to perform faithfully, all the relative duties of husband and wife.”⁴⁴⁰ In the *Liberator*, January 8, 1847, James Russell Lowell described Kelley as “a simple Quaker maid.”⁴⁴¹ Yet at that time Kelley was neither simple nor a Quaker.

Foster and Kelley’s shared interests and dramatic flair made them a great pair, and Kelley’s biographer describes the romantic scene in which the couple decided to be arrested together in 1846 at a church in Ohio: “The charge was Sabbath breaking; they had sold antislavery books at a Sunday meeting...” Three officers grabbed Stephen, “only to have Abby throw her arms around her husband and declare that although it was common to separate husbands and wives in the South, they could not do so in Ohio.” As the story unfolds, the police “finally managed to drag the limp couple through the doorway and deposited them...in a waiting buggy”, while spectators followed and sang abolitionist songs to cheer them on.⁴⁴²

Five years before the Hicksite tea party that launched the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention, Abby Kelley was stirring things up near a Seneca Falls Presbyterian Church. Kelley came to town to speak about abolition, and as

⁴³⁹ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 123.

⁴⁴⁰ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 220-221.

⁴⁴¹ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 3

⁴⁴² Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 224-225.

she often did, found no churches or meeting-houses open to her. She ended up preaching in an orchard, and gathering a good-sized following. Kelley was harshly critical of churches regardless of denomination: “Your churches are connected with slavery and they are guilty of that sin. They are not Christians if they are slaveholders, if they steal and sell men, women and children....”

She preached her “come-outer” message and was not afraid to name names: “That includes your Presbyterian Church.... I happen to know something of your Mr. Bogue, the pastor of that church. Where is your Mr. Bogue today?.... Is he not in full fellowship with proslavery churchmen?”⁴⁴³

Kelley presented her listeners with her “Tee Total Pledge,” a version of the technique she’d learned from the Washington Temperance Society,⁴⁴⁴ asking them not to vote for any candidate, or follow any Christian minister, or affiliate with any church or person who owns or supports slaves.⁴⁴⁵

It was a radical event that resulted in much controversy, a public church trial between female Presbyterian congregant Rhoda Bement and the Rev. Bogue, and many changes of church affiliation. And, “Thanks to Abby Kelley, people in central and western New York had a clear chance, five years before the woman’s rights convention, to think about just how far women’s rights ought to go.”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Judith Wellman, “How Abby Kelley Turned Seneca Falls on Its Ear Five Years Before the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention,” Worcester Women’s History Project, <http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/akfoster.html.1> (accessed 11/2/2006).

⁴⁴⁴ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 167-8.

⁴⁴⁵ Wellman, “How Abby Kelley turned...”, 3.

⁴⁴⁶ Wellman, “How Abby Kelley Turned...”, 1-4.

Many other women's rights conventions did not get the kind of press which Seneca Falls did, but affected the women's movement. The Worcester Women's Rights Convention of 1850, the first national Women's Rights convention, was one of particular interest. In her book, *Joyous Greetings*, women's historian Bonnie Anderson places the history of the female American Quaker reformers into an international context. The women's movement in America was not operating in a vacuum, but was connected with similar reform movements in Europe, particularly since the formative event of the World Anti-Slavery Conference of 1840, at which Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and the other female delegates were refused seats. Anderson writes: "Strong connections forged during that visit between American and British women developed into a vital link in the early international feminist movement." The connections that British and American women made in their quest for abolition were foundational to the subsequent women's rights movements. "Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind," went the abolitionist motto and this expansive universalism carried over when women created their own movements."⁴⁴⁷

Anderson believes that "the years from 1848 to 1856 are the heyday of the international women's movement." It was during this period that the New England women, some of them Orthodox Quakers, played key roles in the national women's conferences of 1850 and 1851. Historians of the Worcester Women's History Project quote Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the 1870

⁴⁴⁷ Bonnie Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

Women's Rights Convention in New York City declaring that the women's movement "in England, as in America, may be dated from the first National Convention, held at Worcester Mass., October 1850." Why 1850 in Worcester rather than Seneca Falls in 1848? First, historians point out that the Worcester Convention brought together delegates from a wider collection of the northern states than Seneca Falls did. More significantly, "Seneca Falls sparked discussion, but did not produce any organized activity....The 1850 convention eventuated in a set of standing committees which mark the beginning of *organized* work for woman's rights."⁴⁴⁸

The convention "called for the total reorganization of 'all social, political, industrial interests and institutions,' and created committees on "education, civil and political rights, social relations, and avocations."⁴⁴⁹ William Lloyd Garrison wrote of the Conference, "I doubt whether a more important movement has ever been launched, touching the destiny of the race than this in regard to the equality of the sexes."⁴⁵⁰ I believe this is a sign of the tremendous progress of the movement in just two years; from the 1848 convention which was organized almost on a whim, to this second one where the organizers took themselves and their goals with a much greater sense of their ultimate importance.

In a Master's thesis on "The Radical Egalitarian Agenda of the Worcester Convention of 1850" Lisa Connelly Cook suggests that "The most important

⁴⁴⁸ "Why Commemorate the 1850 Woman's Rights Convention?" Worcester Women's History Project, Worcester, Mass., <http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/WomansRights/why1850.html> (accessed 11/2/2006).

⁴⁴⁹ "Why Worcester?" Excerpt from Worcester Women's Heritage Trail, Published by the Worcester Women's History Project, 2002, <http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/whyworcester.html> (accessed 11/2/2006), 2.

⁴⁵⁰ Inez Haynes Irwin, *Angels and Amazons*, 97-98.

result of the Worcester convention was its endorsement of equal rights for black women....” In her opinion this was also “the most controversial aspect of the first national women’s rights convention. For mainstream America, it was this aspect that pushed the radical egalitarian agenda to its most threatening extreme, upsetting racial and gender hierarchies.”⁴⁵¹ Cook attributes the boldness of the Conference’s racial agenda to two factors: the presence of so many radical Garrisonian abolitionists on the planning committee for the Conference, and the proximity of the conference in time to the dreaded Fugitive Slave Act which had just been passed in the fall of 1850.⁴⁵² It appears that the conventions of 1850 and 1851 contributed liberally to the cause of women’s rights, and built on the foundations created by the Hicksite women of Seneca Falls.

One of the key organizers of the Worcester Conventions was Abby Foster Kelley. Sterling notes that she “served on the Central Committee and the Committee on Civil and Political Freedom”, and that Hicksite Lucretia Mott “was the convention’s most politic figure, steering a path between passionate Abby Kelley and those male speakers who talked for ‘giving’ the women their rights or ‘permitting’ them to receive them”.⁴⁵³ In the 1851 Convention, Kelley gave a rousing unplanned speech, which placed radical responsibility for women’s rights on the shoulders of women themselves: “.... I cannot, I will not charge it all upon man.... Resolved, that...Woman lacks her rights because she does not feel the

⁴⁵¹ Lisa Connelly Cook, “The Radical Egalitarian Agenda of the Worcester Convention of 1850” (February 16, 1998, Clark University History Department masters thesis, not yet published advanced copy for Worcester Women’s History Project participants October 20-22, 2000, Worcester, Massachusetts), 4, 13.

⁴⁵² Cook, “The Radical Egalitarian Agenda of the Worcester Convention of 1850”, 8, 5.

⁴⁵³ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 266.

full weight of her responsibilities... Foster chided, “woman is vain and frivolous”. When she urged poor women to start their own businesses and they argued with her that “the responsibilities of business” were “too much”, Foster responded curtly, “Well then, starve in your laziness!” Kelley maintained that when woman “shall feel her responsibilities sufficiently to induce her to go forward and discharge them, she will inevitably obtain her rights....”⁴⁵⁴

Sterling notes that “although Abby continued to back the woman’s rights cause, she did not make it her first priority until after the Civil War.”⁴⁵⁵ She also disappointed some of her feminist sisters along the way by joining the group who believed that suffrage for slaves took priority over suffrage for women (the American Woman’s Suffrage Association).⁴⁵⁶ But after the fifteenth amendment had been passed Kelley reset her sights upon women’s suffrage. By 1872, Kelley felt that the movement needed an extra boost—“a Bunker Hill battle in the Woman’s Rights contest.” She and her husband Stephen decided “to bear witness in a dramatic way—by refusing to pay taxes on their jointly owned farm until Abby was permitted to vote.”⁴⁵⁷ The couple hoped to start a mass movement, but were disappointed when only one other woman refused to pay her taxes for the cause.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ “Abby Kelley Foster’s Speech, “ Worcester Women’s History Project, http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/WomansRights/akfoster_1851.html (accessed November 2, 2006).

⁴⁵⁵ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 269.

⁴⁵⁶ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 347-356, 364-366; Robert Cooney & Helen Michalowski, Editors, *The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1987), 33.

⁴⁵⁷ Sterling reports that of the thirty-four thousand women who owned property in Massachusetts, only fellow Worcester abolitionist Sarah Wall joined the Fosters in making the sacrifice. Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 367.

⁴⁵⁸ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 372, 346.

Foster and Kelley had an unconventional marriage by the standards of their time, and when they had a daughter in 1847, an unconventional family as well. “Alla,” a shortened form of Paulina, was named for good friend Paulina Wright Davis, on whom Abby chose to attend her at the birth, rather than a doctor. Paulina had training in medicine and was also a fellow reformer and key organizer of the Worcester Women’s Rights Convention of 1850.⁴⁵⁹ Foster and Kelley’s choices for marriage and family, Kelley’s decision to be a working mother, and the dedication of the couple to women’s rights caused the couple many conflicts and difficult decisions throughout their lives.

Like many working parents, Abby and Stephen struggled with the question of sitters for Alla, and Abby wrote Stephen, “Children should not have a great many different caretakers....”⁴⁶⁰ Yet the reality is that Abby had important work to do and Alla could be “such a burden to me at meetings....”⁴⁶¹

Abby also writes poignantly of the pain of feeling that while she was doing God’s work on the lecture circuit, she was missing something very precious at home: “.... I feel that it is a great sacrifice indeed for me to be away from Alla at this interesting period of her...development...—‘Tis of momentous importance that she should be under the proper influences.” Kelley describes for Stephen her recent successes with the abolitionist movement: “Our meetings are very effective—I think there could not have been less than three thousand present today—the tent was more than full....” Yet, she reflects, “Children are like

⁴⁵⁹ Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 243, 202; Abby to Stephen Foster, Cumberland, R.I., 7 April 1869, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁴⁶⁰ Abby to Stephen Foster, 6 August 1850, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

daguerrotype plates—They catch the images that are thrown open there. The preaching and teaching do but little: 'tis the passing life that effects most.”⁴⁶²

Abby and Stephen were in some ways forging new frontiers for their era, but as a Quaker, Abby was in another way following a long-standing tradition. For many years Quaker couples had been making the sacrifice, men and women, of traveling far from their children and spouses to preach the gospel.

Elias Hicks traveled long distances from his wife and children during his ministry, as did Rachael Hicks, a Hicksite minister related to Elias by marriage to his nephew, Abraham Hicks of Long Island. Rachael writes in her *Memoir* about the difficulties of traveling ministry for a mother. In 1852 she felt “drawn in spirit” to visit the Yearly Meetings of the midwest. “Having often renewed my covenant with my God to follow Him whithersoever He should lead me, the spirit at this time was willing but the flesh was weak, as the health of my son, and only surviving child, was evidently declining.” Though the thought of leaving her son for such a long duration “brought a conflict of mind which seemed greater and heavier than I could bear,” Yet, “...He who sees the heart condescended to give me strength to resign my all to Him, and to confide to His superintending care the tender plant that was dearer to me than my own life.”⁴⁶³

Stephen Foster wrote to Abby after a long absence: “Indeed, you have been absent so long that I am looking forward to your return as a new marriage,

⁴⁶¹ Abby to Stephen Foster, Worcester at Canterbury, N.H., 19 January, 1853, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

⁴⁶² Abby to Stephen Foster, Randolph, 11 August, 1850, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

⁴⁶³ Rachael Hicks, *Memoir of Rachael Hicks (Written by Herself) Late of Westbury, Long Island, A Minister in the Society of Friends, Together with Some Letters and a Memorial of Westbury Monthly Meeting* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1880), Long Island Studies Collection, Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y., 9, 58-59.

& it [?] be strange if the experience of four or five years did not enable me to conduct my part, on an occasion of such interest, with somewhat more facility and grace....”⁴⁶⁴ When Stephen was the one travelling, he wrote: “I am now better prepared to appreciate your loneliness, separate as you are from husband & child, than when I wrote last.... While at home, my attention was constantly engrossed with business, & the void created by your absence was partially filled by that copy of yourself....”⁴⁶⁵

Yet families found their ways of coping. In one letter Abby told Stephen to give Alla, “bushels of love and cart loads of kisses....” Stephen in turn, brought Alla a harmonica and a wagon, and reported that Alla “was careful, however, as she always is, to save some ‘for mother.’ I am struck with the fact that she always insists on your right to an equal part of every thing which I possess, if she attaches any value to it. [one would?] almost think her specially commissioned to look after your rights, in your absence—”⁴⁶⁶

In the year of her sixteenth birthday, Alla’s father sent her a letter of celebration and advice, most particularly that she should follow in her mother’s footsteps: “It is to me a source of profound & enduring pleasure that wherever your Mother is personally known, she has left an imperishable impression, & that she is remembered only to be loved & revered.... Fortunate will it be for you if her mantle in this regard shall fall upon your shoulders....”⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁴ Stephen to Abby K. Foster, Worcester, 26 Sept. 1850, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

⁴⁶⁵ Stephen to Abby K. Foster, Woods’ Hole, 8? Sept. 1851, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

⁴⁶⁶ Stephen to Abby K Foster, Worcester, 15 August 1850, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

⁴⁶⁷ Stephen to Alla Foster, 1 January 1864, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS.

And the children of these reformers, in turn, felt strongly the weight of expectations upon them. As an adult attending Vassar College, Alla wrote to her mother: "I am so proud of you and father, that you are both so devoted... to all the reforms. I am sure that I shall never do any thing half so useful. But the children of good and great people are apt to be ugly or forceless, and I think you and I should be thankful that I am not any worse...."⁴⁶⁸

Many of the Orthodox Quaker women discussed in the remainder of this chapter did not become as famous as the Grimkes or Abby Kelley Foster. Their personal stories are not as well-known and we have knowledge of them more through the civic and social organizations they participated in, and through studies that have been done of these groups. Other Orthodox women involved in the Worcester Women's Conventions include "networks of related Quaker families such as the Earles and the Chases, whose organizing efforts were crucial to the anti-slavery cause in central Massachusetts and throughout New England."⁴⁶⁹ Sarah Hussey Earle (1799-1858) worked with the Worcester Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle and the South Division of the Worcester County Anti-

⁴⁶⁸ Alla to Abby K Foster, 20 February 1870, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, AAS. Note: Actually, Alla went on to lead quite a successful life. In 1872, she was one of the first women to graduate from the newly created Vassar College for women, and then received a graduate degree in history from Cornell University in 1876. She had a distinguished career as an educator, and helped Alice Stone Blackwell and others to write a book on home sanitation, one of the key women's reforms of her day. As her parents aged, Alla also served as their "representative at woman's meetings, social affairs and bazaars, joining such other 'suffrage daughters' as Alice Stone Blackwell and Lillie B. Chace." Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 350, 359, 373-374; Ellen H. Richards, Marion Talbot, Eds., Annie E. Allen, Alice Stone Blackwell, Sarah Louise Day, Alla W. Foster, Edith Talbot Jackson, Alice Peloubet Norton, *Home Sanitation: A Manual for Housekeepers by the Sanitary Science Club of the Association of Collegiate Alumni* (Boston: Whitcomb & Barrows, Huntington Chambers, 1904), <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr&idIIAAAAIAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA7&dq=all...> 9/17/2009. For more on home sanitation, see Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), and Suellen M. Hoy, *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Slavery Society.⁴⁷⁰ A cousin of Lucretia Mott, Sarah was also a major organizer of the 1850 Woman's Rights Convention.⁴⁷¹ She and her husband John Milton Earle had six children, three of whom attended the 1850 Convention. Elizabeth and Martha B., also members of the Worcester Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle, were members of the Convention. Sarah Folger Earle was one of the first civil service workers in Worcester County. She served as clerk to her father, the Postmaster during the Civil War. Sarah attended the Convention, but not as a voting member.⁴⁷²

Historian Carolyn Lawes discusses the sewing circles which all the women in Worcester seemed to participate in, and notes that their significance was more than clubs for needlework: "The histories of several of the sewing circles of antebellum Worcester reveal that the circle functioned for women as the political party functioned for me: it was a vehicle for expressing interests and concerns that embodied community, gender, and class loyalties."⁴⁷³ Lawes analyzes the different sewing circles found in Worcester and how the types and purposes differed. The Quaker women in Worcester seemed to be affiliated with the Worcester Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle, "a society that was not only profit-oriented but explicitly political, and whose membership figured prominently in the national women's rights conventions held in Worcester in 1850 and 1851."⁴⁷⁴ The Circle, of which Sarah Hussey Earle was the first president, was ecumenical, and "open

⁴⁶⁹ "Why Worcester?", Excerpt from Worcester Women's Heritage Trail, 2.

⁴⁷⁰ "Sarah Hussey Earle", Worcester Women's History Project, <http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/Biographies/sarahhusseyearle.html>, (accessed November 2, 2006), 1.

⁴⁷¹ Carolyn J. Lawes, *Women and Reform in a New England Community, 1815-1860* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 164.

⁴⁷² "Sarah Hussey Earle," Worcester Women's History Project, 1-2.

⁴⁷³ Lawes, *Women and Reform*, 45.

to 'any person' sharing its beliefs and 'contributing to its funds.' Its founders were motivated by a commitment to equality and a dedication to Garrisonian abolitionism." Unlike many other women's organizations, "the WASSC joined forces with other women's groups, not with a national campaign run by men."⁴⁷⁵ Its membership briefly included some black women, and even had a small membership of men.⁴⁷⁶

Another Orthodox Friend who attended the Worcester Women's Convention and the Worcester Women's Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle was Hannah Marsh Inman. She and her husband Francis Henry came originally from Rhode Island and settled in Worcester, Mass. Historians were able to retrieve and transcribe a diary of Inman from September 1 1854- December 31, 1855. In many ways the journal is unremarkable-- Hannah was not a speaker or an organizer and she did not make a name for herself as a reformer in the way that other women in this study have done. However, reading of her day-to-day activities does reveal several interesting patterns in keeping with the other Quaker women reformers in my study. First, it is remarkable how much physical domestic hard labor she was required to do on a regular basis: "cleaned the wood house," "baking day," "making jelly of grapes, very dull," "ironing, making peach pies and chicken soup," "baking day, preparing for company with a headache," "ironing and boiling, cleaning chamber," all sandwiched in between her Quaker meetings and her lecture and reform activities. It is easy to see both how much she took on in any given day and to imagine how her lecture and

⁴⁷⁴ Lawes, *Women and Reform*, 47.

⁴⁷⁵ Lawes, *Women and Reform*, 77, 75.

reform activities might have given great meaning and interest to the rest of her life. Seeing her daily duties laid out in detail makes it more possible to appreciate for example the unique partnership that was developed between Susan B. Anthony as a single woman without children, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was married with seven children. Both women were aware that without the gift of Anthony's willing partnership to lend a hand in domestic duties or to take over the work of the movement when Elizabeth had to take care of the home, the two could never have made such a dynamic and powerful pair.

It is also interesting to see that though Inman was a Quaker, she had wide exposure to a variety of different religious services and speakers, and that indeed she had a wealth of interesting subjects and speakers available to her. Within the period designated, for example, Hannah mentioned going to "Sterling Camp meeting", "love fest", "Heard Wendall Phillips, A very good discourse indeed. PM to the City Hall, heard 2 or 3 speak," "PM to the African Church," "went to the City Hall to an AntiSlavery discussion," "went to hear Henry Ward Beecher," "PM went to the Old South Church. Evening to the first Baptist, heard Mr. Waland, 2 baptised," and more, with many Quaker meetings sandwiched in between. If there were some in the Society of Friends who had trouble with Friends associating across denominational lines, Hannah Marsh Inman was certainly not one of them. It is also clear that Inman lived a rich intellectual life, interspersed with her domestic one. This picture is in keeping with the image that Carolyn Lawes paints of the antebellum woman who was "seldom parted" from her needlework as she sewed and listened to a lecture, or sewed in the

⁴⁷⁶ Lawes, *Women and Reform*, 75, 78.

middle of Bible class.⁴⁷⁷ The antebellum wife's domestic chores were endless, but they were balanced in Inman's case by a very stimulating life of the mind. In Dorothy Sterling's biography of Lucretia Mott, she notes that Mott "kept a Bible tucked in the foot of her baby's cradle, and a copy of William Penn's writings spread open on her bed. While she rocked Elizabeth to sleep or held Maria on her lap, she read and memorized passages that interested her. Often she wrote Grandfather Mott to ask his opinion of a Biblical text or to question some Quaker rule of discipline."⁴⁷⁸

Orthodox Quaker Sarah Southwick gives an example of an incident in Boston where women's activism on behalf of abolitionism opened the way for their further political activities. At the age of sixteen she recalls a meeting to be held in Boston's Faneuil Hall on December 8, 1837, "to protest against the murder of [abolitionist printer Elijah] Lovejoy and to assert the right of the 'freedom of the press.'":

"Women were not then in the habit of attending political meetings, and had never been to any in Faneuil Hall.... Our going that day opened the hall to women for all future years, for public meetings. After that, anti-slavery women, certainly, always went when they wanted to."⁴⁷⁹

The Southwicks figured significantly in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. Debra Gold Hansen's analysis of this organization, *Strained*

⁴⁷⁷ Lawes, *Women and Reform*, 53.

⁴⁷⁸ Dorothy Sterling, *Lucretia Mott* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1962), 71.

⁴⁷⁹ Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days* (Macon, GA: The Kingsley Press, 1893), 20-21.

*Sisterhood*⁴⁸⁰, was not undertaken with the Quaker schism in mind, but Hansen's findings regarding the Quakers in that group are enlightening for this study. Hansen focused on the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society during the 1830s. This organization "would become one of the most famous and influential women's groups in the country." In Hansen's view, "their endeavors as social reformers set in motion the first organized women's rights movement in the United States."⁴⁸¹

Strained Sisterhood is the story of the schism which took place within the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1838, dividing it into "two organizations whose concerns and priorities were not only different from but wholly unacceptable to each other."⁴⁸² She explains: "...there began to develop two divergent philosophies.... One group interpreted female abolition as part of women's customary benevolent and domestic responsibilities; the other considered social activism as evidence of what women, given the opportunity, could accomplish."⁴⁸³ In Hansen's analysis, all of the Quaker members of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society end up in the "liberal" or "radical" faction of the group which represented the shift of the organization "from traditional female benevolence toward political action."⁴⁸⁴ Hansen identifies the particular women as follows: "of the 145 Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society members whose religion could be established.... There were...eleven Quakers in the group,

⁴⁸⁰ Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

⁴⁸¹ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 5,6.

⁴⁸² Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 28.

⁴⁸³ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 25,28.

⁴⁸⁴ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 16, 19, 21.

thanks primarily to the Southwick family and their cousins, the Winslows and Philbricks.”⁴⁸⁵ Hansen notes that Abby and Isaac Winslow were among those who visited the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London.⁴⁸⁶ The Orthodox Grimke sisters also figure prominently in Hansen’s story, and are always at the forefront of the radical feminist group.

Hansen believes the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society split in a way that “mirrored the more generally divisive process of class formation occurring in Boston at that time,”⁴⁸⁷ “with the affluent Unitarians and Quakers forming an alliance on one side and the middle-class Baptists and Congregationalists on the other.”⁴⁸⁸ Hansen provides some information about the financial circumstances of the particular Quakers involved, noting that the Southwick family was wealthy enough to employ a black domestic, who was also a member of the Anti-Slavery Society, that Joseph Southwick dealt with leather and that Sarah Southwick became a teacher.⁴⁸⁹ She also mentions that some of the highest financial contributions to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society were made by five families which included the Winslows. “Over...three years these families donated over \$2500 to that organization alone. As time passed, their donations increased even further, and their influence in the antislavery movement mounted accordingly.”⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁵ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 81.

⁴⁸⁶ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 128.

⁴⁸⁷ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 97.

⁴⁸⁸ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 92.

⁴⁸⁹ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 73, 76.

⁴⁹⁰ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 72.

In terms of class and cultural issues, Hansen's description of the Boston Quakers as part of the elite makes them reminiscent of the Philadelphia Orthodox in Dougherty's and Ingle's studies. Hansen notes that "privileged Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society members enjoyed an urbane life style and took advantage of the cultural, intellectual, and material opportunities available in the city.... Upper-class activists were also exceedingly cosmopolitan in their political and intellectual interests and alliances...."⁴⁹¹

Theologically, Orthodox Quakers might be expected to ally with evangelical Christians, and so it is interesting that in this case they did not. Hansen notes that "Congregationalists and Baptists...composed about 64 percent of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society membership," and that "most were attracted to Boston's newer evangelical churches." These included Union Church, "a focal point for the 'special effusions of the Holy Spirit' that surfaced in Boston at that time."⁴⁹² Yet rather than side with the majority, who might have also reinforced evangelical theological tendencies of Quaker Orthodoxy, the Boston Orthodox Quakers chose to ally themselves with Unitarians.

Hansen describes some of the differences between the two groups. Evangelicals, she found: "... were alarmed at the radicals' repudiation of religious authority.... At one point, word passed among the society that Maria Chapman had never been converted, leading many evangelicals to wonder 'whether any thing she can possibly do in the Society will be blessed to the cause.'"

⁴⁹¹ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 99.

⁴⁹² Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 81.

While “the writings of the more affluent Unitarians and Quakers suggest a religious conviction based upon liberalism, independent thought, and worldly concern, the rhetoric of the evangelicals reveals an Old Testament preoccupation with sin and retribution.”⁴⁹³ Hansen concluded that “the feminist attitudes of the elite women were an outgrowth of republican ideals, Unitarian and Quaker beliefs, and upper-class assumptions concerning wealth, status and power, which led them to advocate equal social, political and moral rights for all human beings.”⁴⁹⁴ In contrast, the evangelical women “more often dwelled upon woman’s meekness, unworthiness, and subjugation to moral and religious authority. Martha Ball, for instance, urged women to ‘leave all to Him’”.⁴⁹⁵ These women believed in “submitting to male authority, limiting their sphere of action to the private world of home and family, denying personal talents or interests save those that impinged upon the household, and doing so cheerfully and willingly.” Yet, Hansen notes, “evangelicals made it clear that they did not equate female domesticity with female inferiority.”⁴⁹⁶ For their part, the Society’s “Unitarians and Quakers were frustrated by the traditionalism of evangelical women and accused them of being both ignorant and servile in their continued deference to male authorities.”⁴⁹⁷

For what value it has as a study of one subgroup of Orthodox Quaker women, Hansen’s study tells us several important things. First, that the Orthodox Quaker women of Boston were at the forefront of both the abolitionist movement

⁴⁹³ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 109.

⁴⁹⁴ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 11.

⁴⁹⁵ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 110.

⁴⁹⁶ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 144, 145.

and the women's movement. Second, that their involvement in these two movements does not seem to differ in significant ways from their Hicksite counterparts in other areas of the country, regardless of whatever theological differences they may have had with Hicksite women. Third, that the values of liberal social reform and women's rights were as important to these women as their theological beliefs, if not more so.

Amy Swerdlow's study of the Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Societies of 1834-1840 contrasts a New York City group of women reformers (mostly non-Quakers) with Philadelphia and Boston women's anti-slavery societies and finds some interesting differences. According to Swerdlow, the women of New York championed the rights of the slave but were unwilling to stand up for equal rights for women. She notes that while the New York ladies hosted an anti-slavery convention, "they did not lead it, and, as a group, they played the most conservative role, opposing radical positions on both the tactics of abolition and the questions of woman's sphere."

When defending their right to petition, "the Boston women, daughters of the Enlightenment, claimed citizenship in their own right.... The Philadelphia antislavery women not only claimed citizenship but also gave it particularly feminine responsibilities." Yet the women from New York City "defined their right mainly through their relationships to males. 'We have fathers, husbands, sons.... Can the nation bleed, and we be free of pain?'"⁴⁹⁸ Where the Boston women

⁴⁹⁷ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 147.

⁴⁹⁸ Amy Swerdlow, "Abolition's Conservative Sisters: The Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Societies, 1834-1840," in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, editors, *The Abolitionist*

spoke of “preserving democratic inheritance” the New York women “emphasized the ideals of Christian charity.”

Swerdlow notes that of the New York women whose religious affiliation she could identify only one was a Quaker and a large number “were either married to or the offspring of evangelical clergymen.” In contrast, “the women of the Philadelphia Female Antislavery Society were almost all Quakers,”⁴⁹⁹ and Hansen’s study shows that a large number of the Boston women, including the most radical ones, were Quaker as well. Swerdlow hypothesizes about the reasons for the differences among the three women’s societies: “...Trained for benevolence and giving, [the evangelical woman] could not justify ‘selfish’ demands.... The New York City women, working for morality rather than equality, neither heard nor understood the Boston women’s argument for natural rights.” Swerdlow further suggests that “the New York City women had no tradition of resistance to illegitimate authority, which was part of the Quaker women’s heritage, so they had no precedent for resisting their own husbands and fathers, who were the vociferous foes in the fight against women’s equality.”⁵⁰⁰

In an excellent article on Orthodox Quaker women and social reform, Carole D. Spencer’s research confirms my own results that radical social change in the nineteenth century was not exclusively in the realm of the Hicksite camp.

Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 31, 40, 38.

⁴⁹⁹ Swerdlow, “Abolition’s Conservative Sisters,” 39, 33, 37. Jean Soderlund’s study records that “of seventeen white women who joined in 1834, thirteen were Hicksite Quakers,” and that “in 1835....twenty-five of the new members were Hicksites...eighteen were Orthodox Friends or Quakers who do not appear in the records of either branch after the 1827 schism.” Jean R. Soderlund, “Priorities and Power: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society,” in Yellin and Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 69-71.

⁵⁰⁰ Swerdlow, “Abolition’s Conservative Sisters,” 44.

She discusses how Hannah Whitall Smith and other women influenced by the Holiness Revival Movement “extended the Gospel into a vast arena of social reform and dealt with some of the most pressing social problems of their era....” and argues that their religious experience with the Movement “did not narrow their perspective, but broadened it to include active involvement in work for social justice. In fact, by the 1880’s many Quaker women, from Holiness to Hicksite, became allies in the cause of woman suffrage....”⁵⁰¹

In summary, a strong argument can be made that the American women’s movement was begun by abolitionist reformers whose first focus was freeing the slave, but in that quest discovered the need for their own liberation as well. The earliest female abolitionists were primarily Quaker and largely Orthodox (with the notable exception of Hicksite Lucretia Mott). These women were empowered by their dedication to the cause of freeing the slave and strengthened by the history of female Quaker ministers.

Their feminism may have been secondary in time but was in no way second-rate and the feminist quest of the Orthodox women in the late 1830s and early 1840s broke barriers and opened the way for the Hicksite group that was to create the feminist convention of 1848. Orthodox feminists like the Grimkes and Abby Kelley Foster would also be active in the suffrage movement later in their lives when the spotlight had moved to Hicksites Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul.

⁵⁰¹ Carole D. Spencer, “Evangelism, Feminism and Social Reform: The Quaker Woman Minister and the Holiness Revival,” *Quaker History*, Vol. 80:1 Spring 1991, 41.

The question may be raised as to whether the Society of Friends truly supported these revolutionary women. At times these reformers experienced outright opposition from their elders in the Society of Friends. These, however, were complex cases where the women were torn between several conflicting sets of values they had received in their Quaker upbringing. For example, when Angelina Grimke married Theodore Weld, she was disowned because of a prohibition against marrying outside the Society of Quakers. That prohibition was made in order to protect and insure the continuity of Quaker values, yet when she married Weld she married a man who in so many ways embodied Quaker values in his own life. Grimke was disowned, but after their marriage, the couple lived an exemplary life of which any Quaker could be proud, and which was totally in keeping with fundamental Quaker values.

When these feminist abolitionist reformers followed their calling they acted in a long history of Friends speaking out for the equality of all people, the inner light in every one, the right of men and women to minister, and the responsibility to speak and act toward truth and social justice. They also stood in a tradition that had trained them to expect opposition and persecution for their actions, and in the face of this, encouraged them to carry on. When the opposition in this case became the Society of Friends speaking for the value of obedience to the larger religious community, they chose their reform values over obedience and were prepared to accept the consequences.

In addition to the famous Orthodox abolitionists of this era, studies of New England civil, social and political groups of this period indicate that the lesser

known Orthodox Quaker reformers who participated in abolition, women's rights reform and suffrage were the most radical type of feminists, concerned not only with the benevolence of doing good deeds while staying in their proscribed place, but with changing the political and social role of the American woman. The women reformers who emerged from the Orthodox evolution of women's rights were as substantial as the ones in Seneca Falls, and in fact, helped open the way for their Hicksite sisters.

Chapter 6: The Hicksite Reformers and Women's Rights

Many historians mark the beginning of the American women's rights movement from the groundbreaking Women's Rights Convention of 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. This chapter tells the Seneca Falls account of the birth of the women's rights movement in America from its origins in a meeting at the home of Hicksite Jane Hunt. The account profiles the female Quaker reformers responsible for this movement and argues that their goals, values and ideals for the reform of women's role were more like the Orthodox Quaker reformers than they were different from them. The same argument can be made about their methods, as they were involved like their Orthodox sisters in the use of the spoken and written word in speeches, conventions, articles and petitions, and shared the common ideal of women's suffrage. Here again, the Hicksite schism appeared not to have separated or differentiated the Hicksite feminists from their Orthodox sisters in any way that related to the reforms of women's rights, abolition, or peace witness.

The Convention of 1848 began with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and an almost exclusively "Quaker tea party", a Hicksite Quaker tea party. The first guest was Lucretia Mott, the Hicksite abolitionist. Elizabeth Cady Stanton met her at the controversial World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 at which Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Hicksites Sarah Pugh and Lucretia Mott and others were all denied a voice and full participation in the convention because of their gender. Stanton first met Mott at that convention, and the memory was vivid: "As Mrs. Mott and I walked home, arm in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day, we

resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home, and form a society to advocate the rights of women.” Lucretia Mott and her fellow Quakers made a deep impression on Stanton and provided her with a ready-made women’s community: “These were the first women I had ever met who believed in the equality of the sexes and who did not believe in the popular orthodox religion. The acquaintance of Lucretia Mott, who was a broad, liberal thinker on politics, religion, and all questions of reform, opened to me a new world of thought.”⁵⁰²

Elizabeth Cady Stanton tells the story of the tea party in her autobiography: “In [a] tempest-tossed condition of mind I received an invitation to spend the day with Lucretia Mott, at Richard Hunt’s, in Waterloo.” There she was introduced to several different Quaker families, “earnest, thoughtful women. I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything.” The women decided, spontaneously, to “call a ‘Woman’s Rights Convention....’ giving only five days’ notice.... The chief movers and managers were Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock, Jane Hunt, Martha C. Wright, and myself.”⁵⁰³

Judith Wellman’s study of the Seneca Falls movement shows that the Quaker participants in that Convention were not a random group of individuals from a broad spectrum of areas in the United States, but rather an interconnected web of Quaker families and friends who comprised only a few different New York Quaker meetings.

⁵⁰² Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More, Reminiscences 1815-1897* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993 [first published in 1898], 78-83.

The participants at that event signed a “Declaration of Rights and Sentiments,” modeled after the Declaration of Independence and possibly also Garrison’s Park Street Church address of July 1829.⁵⁰⁴ A study of the signers of this document reveals that at least 25 per cent of the men and women who signed it were Quakers, and that Hicksites predominated among them. Demographically, these made up the largest religious group of signers, with the second largest group being composed of residents of the local Seneca Falls area who were Methodist, Methodist Episcopal, or Episcopalian.⁵⁰⁵ While the Seneca Falls Convention is often portrayed as a historically secular event, closer examination shows that the religious belief of the reformers who attended was more than coincidental. Historian Douglas Strong, in his study of the Wesleyan Methodist and “Holiness” churches and their roles in the development of feminist history, notes that “the Seneca Falls Wesleyan Methodist Church was not merely the closest available building that would accommodate the feminist meeting but was, rather, a particularly appropriate venue for the beginning of the women’s rights movement.”⁵⁰⁶ He explains that the Wesleyan Church of Seneca Falls was founded in 1843 when radical abolitionists from the Methodist Episcopal Church became dissatisfied with the abolitionist witness of their own church and seceded. It soon attracted “come-outer abolitionists from many denominations.”

⁵⁰³ E. C. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 148.

⁵⁰⁴ Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 390, 110.

⁵⁰⁵ Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 206.

⁵⁰⁶ Douglas M. Strong, “The Crusade for Women’s Rights and the Formative Antecedents of the Holiness Movement”, Wesley Center Online, Wesley Center for Applied Theology, Northwest Nazarene University, Copyright 1983-2005, http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/27.6.html, (accessed 8/5/2005), 12.

Strong notes that the members of this church had a great deal in common with other abolitionist churches: many members belonged to the Liberty party, and many did not feel particularly allied to the institutional structure of their denomination, but were more willing to operate as a “congregational” church.⁵⁰⁷ These abolitionists would have had a lot in common with the Quaker women reformers in this study for whom their reform values and interests seemed to be more important than their religious denomination or theological beliefs. Sandra Weber notes that the people who donated their time and their funds toward the construction of the Wesleyan Chapel “represented a wide cross section of Seneca Falls inhabitants. Drawn together by strong personal beliefs and a militant social awareness rather than hereditary church affiliation, they were a diverse group both socially and economically.”⁵⁰⁸ The group of contributors to the chapel included at least one Hicksite Quaker, Richard Hunt; described in greater detail in this chapter.

Weber notes that: “Once settled in their new home, the outspoken congregation lost none of its militancy.... The Wesleyans passed numerous resolutions stating their unequivocal stand on moral and social issues of the day.” She offers the following example: “Resolved, That as Christians and Wesleyans we cannot identify our Christian and moral character with societies where women and colored persons are excluded (1847 Conference).”⁵⁰⁹ This accumulated evidence points to the possibility that in the midst of the melange of

⁵⁰⁷ Strong, “Crusade for Women’s Rights,” 12.

⁵⁰⁸ Sandra S. Weber, *Special History Study: Women’s Rights Historical Park* (New York: U.S. Dept. of Interior National Park Service Special History Study, September 1985), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, PA., 37.

denominations and movements that composed the Second Great Awakening, there may have existed an informal coalition of liberal or radical Protestant reform churches who united to accomplish some of the great 19th century works of social reform.

Weber observes that one of the distinguishing factors of this church was “their willingness to open the Chapel, free of charge, to any reform speakers seeking a public forum.” This made the church a very precious commodity to many nineteenth century reformers who “invariably tried to deliver their lectures from the pulpit of a church, hoping that people would thereby come to identify social reform with a Christian life.”⁵¹⁰

The Wesleyan Methodists of the Seneca Falls church had several important characteristics in common with the Quakers who joined them in the Seneca Falls Women’s Convention. First, they were radical abolitionists who felt that their denomination did not always go far enough in opposing slavery. Second, they were part of a coalition of liberal Protestants who were so committed to their reforms and their causes that they were willing to cross denominational lines to work with others against slavery, for women’s rights, and for the other myriad of causes embraced by these Protestants of the Second Great Awakening. The Wesleyan Methodists and the Hicksite and Progressive Quakers who launched the Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention had also

⁵⁰⁹ Weber, *Special History Study*, 43.

⁵¹⁰ Weber, *Special History Study*, 45.

both participated in major religious schisms in which they placed their own religious reform values over denominational unity and orthodoxy.⁵¹¹

Jane Clothier Master Hunt, at whose home the tea party was held, was a Quaker, originally from Philadelphia. She came to New York in 1845-1846 to marry successful Waterloo Quaker entrepreneur Richard P. Hunt.⁵¹² Historian Sandra S. Weber describes Hunt: “No one in Waterloo, least of all Hunt himself, could claim that he was not a wealthy man...Early residents remembered how his large brick home was ‘one of the social centers of the vicinity.’”⁵¹³ Hunt and his wife were “radical Quakers who firmly believed in the power of practical humanitarianism and social reform” who “associated themselves with the more liberal Hicksites.”⁵¹⁴

Wellman notes that Mr. and Mrs. Hunt and the other three women mentioned in Stanton’s recollection were all “part of the egalitarian group that had walked out of the Genesee Yearly [Quaker] Meeting.”⁵¹⁵ She points out that these “Congregational Friends” were “all abolitionists and woman’s rights advocates. They were centered in Junius Monthly Meeting. Rhoda Palmer [another signer of the Declaration] recalled that ‘every member’ of this meeting attended the convention,” as did members of the Quaker Monthly Meetings in Rochester and Scipio.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹¹ See section on the Progressive and Congregational Quakers in abolition chapter, and section on the Wesleyans in Douglas Strong, “The Crusade for Women’s Rights”.

⁵¹² Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 188.

⁵¹³ Weber, *Special History Study*, 118-119.

⁵¹⁴ Weber, *Special History Study*, 119.

⁵¹⁵ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 188.

⁵¹⁶ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 207.

In addition to their work for women's rights, the Hunts were also involved in abolition, and were part of a group of Quakers from Waterloo who were thought to be involved in the Underground Railroad.⁵¹⁷ As an entrepreneur, Richard Hunt made a conscious choice to create a business manufacturing wool rather than cotton so that he could avoid reliance on slave produce.⁵¹⁸ Weber notes that Richard and Jane Hunt were "active in the Progressive Quakers, joining with them in passing resolutions against slavery, war, and alcohol, and calling for equal rights for women, humane treatment of prisoners, and equal educational opportunities." The Hunts were among several families in the area who had donated money for the construction of the Wesleyan church in which the Seneca Falls Convention would be held.⁵¹⁹ Records indicate that Hunt pledged 100\$ toward the ecumenical endeavor. Weber notes that "although never a member of the Wesleyan congregation, Hunt apparently felt strongly enough about what the Chapel stood for to offer the new church some financial assistance."⁵²⁰

Richard Hunt's grandson describes his grandfather's contribution to the Seneca Falls tea party. He had apparently heard the women discussing their dissatisfactions: "...Grandfather Hunt was a Quaker...who thought, 'Faith without works, is dead.' His reply was, 'Why don't you do something about it?' They thereupon resolved...to obtain a change in laws and customs governing women, and to call a convention to consider steps ... to carry out their determination and

⁵¹⁷ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 118.

⁵¹⁸ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 74.

⁵¹⁹ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 80.

⁵²⁰ Weber, *Special History Study*, 37, 43.

to assert women's rights."⁵²¹ Susan B. Anthony would later tell Jane and Richard Hunt's son, "You should be proud that this whole movement started at your mother's tea table."⁵²²

The Hunt family was related by marriage to another Quaker family involved in the tea party, the M'Clintocks⁵²³. Richard Hunt's third wife, Sarah M'Clintock (they were married in 1837), was the sister of Thomas M'Clintock.⁵²⁴ Wellman notes that: "the Hunt-M'Clintock-Pryor family of Waterloo were the key to organizing the Seneca Falls convention itself... Together, they formed the largest family network at the convention."⁵²⁵

Mary Ann Wilson married Thomas M'Clintock in Burlington, New Jersey on January 13, 1820, in what Wellman describes as a "typical" Quaker marriage ceremony.⁵²⁶ The couple served as "equal heads of the family," in a culture where "women and men shared both status and decision-making power."⁵²⁷

These women reformers had the longstanding practice of Quaker marriage as their model. In an address on woman's suffrage, Lucretia Mott summarized the Friends' customs, pointing out that two hundred years ago, Society of Friends' co-founder George Fox declared that a Quaker wedding

⁵²¹ Weber, *Special History Study*, 127-128.

⁵²² Weber, *Special History Study*, 130.

⁵²³ Spelling of the last name appears to vary between M'Clintock and McClintock. I will use the first spelling except in quotations from other writers.

⁵²⁴ Weber, *Special History Study*, 121.

⁵²⁵ "...Six members of the extended M'Clintock family (including Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock; their daughters Elizabeth and Mary Ann; the elder Mary Ann's half sister, Margaret Pryor; and her husband, George Pryor) signed the Declaration of Sentiments. Five members of the extended Hunt family (including Richard and Jane Hunt; two of Richard's adult sisters, Hannah Plant and Lydia Mount; and one of his nieces, Mary E. Vail) also signed." Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 207.

⁵²⁶ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 99.

⁵²⁷ Wellman, 98-99, and Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 112.

would consist of two individuals who, in the presence of their friends and neighbors, “in acknowledgment of the divine presence”, [would announce their obligations to each other], “entirely reciprocal, with no assumption of authority on the one hand or of obedience on the other; but entire reciprocity, and a pledge of fidelity and affection until death should separate them.”⁵²⁸ Mott would become known for her saying that “in the marriage union, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.”⁵²⁹

In her “Discourse on Women,” Lucretia Mott decried the legal status of wives as “femmes coverts,” subsumed under the identity of their husbands, and quoted Hurlbut’s *Essays on Human Rights*: “The laws touching the rights of woman are at variance with the laws of the Creator. Rights are human rights, and pertain to human beings, without distinction of sex. Laws should not be made for man or for woman, but for mankind. Man was not born to command, nor woman to obey.”⁵³⁰

For Quakers, even their understanding of the legacy of Adam and Eve was one of hope and equality for men and women. According to George Fox, in an epistle of 1672, Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, they fell from grace, and Adam was made to rule over Eve, as in many traditional interpretations. However, in Fox’s interpretation, “in the restauration by Christ, into the image of God, and his righteousness and holiness again, in that they are

⁵²⁸ Lucretia Mott, “The Argument That Women Do Not Want to Vote,” Address Delivered to the American Equal Rights Association, New York, May 9-10, 1867, in Dana Greene, *Lucretia Mott, Her Complete Speeches and Sermons*, (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 288-289.

⁵²⁹ Lucretia Mott, “Discourse on Woman,” 162.

helps meet, man and woman, as they were before the fall". Christ has restored Eden, in Fox's theology, to marriage.⁵³¹ Barry Levy notes in his work on the family life of early American Quaker families, that "since a Quaker marriage existed as if the Fall never occurred, women were to be spiritually equal to men in marriage, not 'weaker vessels'."⁵³²

Mary Ann's husband, Thomas M'Clintock "was a Hicksite Quaker minister, and a Biblical scholar of some renown," who "had played a prominent part in the Hicksite schism in Philadelphia."⁵³³ The M'Clintocks had five children⁵³⁴ and their home, like the homes of the other reformers in this study, was described as a social, intellectual and political center. Contemporary Thomas Mumford noted: "Nowhere else could we find such fresh literature, or such intelligent interest in vital questions of the day.... That house was our gateway into the widest realms of thought and the richest fields of duty.... Famous and friendless guests often sat together there, and colors and creed were alike forgotten."⁵³⁵

Like many of the other Quaker families in this study, the M'Clintock parents also contributed to the cause of reform by raising children committed to the values of social justice and equality. Weber notes that the M'Clintocks and their four daughters were all involved in a variety of reform movements--⁵³⁶ their contributions to abolition have been outlined in the abolition chapter. An article on

⁵³⁰ Lucretia Mott quoting Hurlbut in "Discourse on Woman," 158.

⁵³¹ George Fox, epistle of 1672, quoted in Edward H. Milligan, *Quaker Marriage* (Quaker Tapestry Scheme: Kendal, Cumbria and Warwick, England: Friends Meeting House and Warwick Printing Company, Ltd., 1994), 27.

⁵³² Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family*, 71.

⁵³³ Weber, *Special History Study*, 121-122.

⁵³⁴ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 93.

⁵³⁵ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 98.

⁵³⁶ Weber, *Special History Study*, 138.

the McClintocks indicates that Mary Ann and Elizabeth M'Clintock worked with Orthodox Quaker Abby Kelley Foster and others on an antislavery fair, and the same article notes that "Mary Ann's half-sister, Margaret Pryor, often accompanied Kelley on her tours as a traveling companion and bookkeeper."⁵³⁷ Pryor also signed the Declaration of Sentiments at the Seneca Falls Convention, and as she was also a Hicksite/Progressive Quaker her relationship with Kelley provides further evidence of the fluid boundaries between Hicksite and Orthodox women reformers.

It has long been assumed by historians that the Quakers' rich history of social egalitarianism in meetings helps to explain the predominance of Quaker female activists like M'Clintock. I believe that the role of Quaker women's experience in meetings undoubtedly had an influence on the confidence and ease with which they conducted themselves in these settings, and 19th century Quakers also believed this to be true. Judith Wellman quotes a Quaker publication, *The Friend; or, Advocate of Truth*, which concluded in 1831 that "Quaker women had 'intelligence, sound sense, considerateness, discretion...that is not found in any other class of women, as a class,'" . Even at this time, the Friends' publication hypothesized, as many historians have done since, that these qualities so predominant in Quaker women could be attributed to the "extensive and a separate share' that women played within Quaker meetings. Working with other women, Lucretia Mott, Abby Kelley, Amy Post, the

⁵³⁷ "Reform: A Way of Life: Reforming Family: The Hunts and M'Clintocks of Waterloo, NY, [http: www.nps.gov/wori/archives/refam7.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wori/archives/refam7.htm) (accessed 8/5/2005), 1.

M'Clintocks, Margaret Pryor, and Martha Wright learned whatever they knew about self-respect, letting their lives speak, and public organizing.”⁵³⁸

This sense of equality was especially notable in the Quakers of the Junius Monthly and the Genesee Yearly Meeting. Wellman explains that these meetings were the first, in 1838, to make the Quaker men's meetings and women's meetings totally equal, withdrawing from the men's meeting the right to veto power over decisions made in the women's meetings.⁵³⁹

In 1848, this Genesee meeting and the M'Clintocks themselves would find themselves in the throes of yet another Quaker schism, this one precipitated by issues concerning techniques of abolitionism and reform as well as issues of authority and leadership. By this time, many Quaker abolitionists in this study (such as the Post family) had separated themselves or were separated from the Society of Friends over issues connected with abolition. These Friends founded the Progressive or Congregational Quakers, which has been described in the abolitionist chapter.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott would both point to the M'Clintocks as key figures in the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention. In a letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1855, Mott wrote: “When James and self were attending the Yearly Meeting at Waterloo, in 1848 was it? Thou again proposed the convention which was afterward held at Seneca Falls. I have never

⁵³⁸ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 105.

⁵³⁹ Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 105. Wellman also directs the reader to Genesee Yearly Meeting minutes, June 11, 1838, FHL; Discipline of Genesee Yearly Meeting (Rochester, N.Y. 1842), 11; Christopher Densmore, “The Quaker Tradition: Sustaining Women's Rights,” National Women's Studies Association, 1998. Available at <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/untis/archives/urr/>.

liked the undeserved praise in the Report of that meeting's proceedings, of being 'the moving spirit of that occasion', when to thyself belongs the honor aided so efficiently by the McClintocks."⁵⁴⁰

Weber describes the M'Clintocks' involvement in the Seneca Falls Convention itself. Mary M'Clintock "was appointed secretary for the proceedings, and on the last evening of the conference 'delivered a short, but impressive, address calling upon woman to arouse from her lethargy and be true to herself and her God.'" Elizabeth M'Clintock made multiple presentations at the Seneca Falls Convention. One was to read a reply she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had written to a local Presbyterian pastor critical of the Convention and of the women's movement.⁵⁴¹ Weber adds: "Thomas McClintock was also a highly visible figure at the Convention.... He acted as the chairman of the final session, during which he also made a strong speech 'in proof of woman's servitude to man' by reading a series of repressive laws then on the books."⁵⁴²

Lucretia Mott has been introduced on multiple occasions before, as an early Hicksite abolitionist and minister, as one of the leading members of the women's delegation to the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 in London, and as a primary influence on Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the formation of the Seneca Falls Convention. One of the most highly respected Quaker "ministers", Mott's religious belief in the equality of men and women, her extensive Biblical knowledge and her egalitarian Quaker background were intertwined. In a

⁵⁴⁰ Weber, *Special History Study*, 142.

⁵⁴¹ Weber, *Special History Study*, 143.

⁵⁴² Weber, *Special History Study*, 143-144, also quoting Stanton et.al, *Woman Suffrage*, p. 69, and "Report of Convention," p. 9.

“Discourse on Woman” delivered in Philadelphia in 1849, Mott reminded her audience that “in the beginning, man and woman were created equal. ‘Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam.’ He gave dominion to both over the animals, but not to one over the other.”⁵⁴³

One of Mott’s most interesting speeches on the topic of women’s suffrage was, “The Argument That Women Do Not Want To Vote,” delivered to the American Equal Rights Association in May 1867. In this, Mott opened with the idea that “the argument...that women do not want to vote is like that which we had to meet in the early days of the Anti-Slavery enterprise that the slaves did not want to be free....”⁵⁴⁴ Here was another instance where the experience of these reformers with their work in the abolitionist movement informed their work in the women’s rights movement. Mott repeated an argument she had heard at the Syracuse Women’s Rights Convention “that as the assertion that the slave did not want his freedom, and would not take it if offered to him, only proved the depth of his degradation, so the assertion that woman had all the rights she wanted only gave evidence how far the influences of the law and customs, and the perverted application of the Scriptures had encircled and crushed her....”⁵⁴⁵

Martha Wright was the final “mover” listed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also present at the Hunt’s tea party. Although she was a leader both in the women’s rights and the abolition movements, she is often referred to only as Lucretia Mott’s younger sister. It would be unjust if we left her description there, as she

⁵⁴³ Lucretia Mott, “Discourse on Woman,” Delivered in Philadelphia, December 17, 1849, in Dana Green, Editor, *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 144.

⁵⁴⁴ Lucretia Mott, “The Argument That Women Do Not Want to Vote”, 287.

was a remarkable woman who made great contributions to many areas of reform. She is also an interesting reformer to profile because she so actively tested the boundaries of Quaker propriety.

Martha's relationship to the Quakers is quite complicated, as was the case with many of the most liberal female Quaker reformers in this study. Her mother, Anna Folger Coffin was an active member of the Society of Friends, and she and her siblings, Sarah, Lucretia, Eliza, Mary and Thomas were all brought up in the Quaker faith. As a child Martha attended a "Quaker day school" for ten years, and then at age fifteen moved to Westtown, a Quaker boarding school about twenty miles west of Philadelphia. Her biographer notes that "Westtown was founded by Philadelphia Quakers in 1799 with the expressed purpose of 'creating a hedge' around Quaker children to free them for a time from the immoral influences of Philadelphia, America's largest port." This would include "un-Quakerly" activities such as "drinking, fighting, swearing, prostitution...theater, dancing, music, fanciful dress, and ostentatious display of any kind."⁵⁴⁶ But at age sixteen Martha Coffin fell in love with thirty-seven year old Captain Peter Pelham, a military officer who was not a Quaker. Although her family initially opposed the relationship, the couple was married in Philadelphia on November 18, 1824, by a Methodist minister. Now Martha had not only married out of her faith but also violated the Society's beliefs against using "hireling clergy" (Quaker "ministers" are neither paid nor ordained). A few months later, Martha received a letter from the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of Friends,

⁵⁴⁵ Lucretia Mott, "The Argument That Women Do Not Want to Vote", 288.

sanctioning her and asking her to repent. Martha's unrepentant reply in April: "I do not feel willing to condemn the act of which you speak, but can truly say that I have much regretted the existence of a rule admitting of but one alternative."⁵⁴⁷

The Philadelphia Meeting sent her a response, indicating that since "Martha Pelham, late Coffin, who had a right of membership amongst us, has accomplished her marriage with a man not in profession with Friends, by the assistance of an hireling minister..." [therefore] "We no longer consider her a member of our religious society—nevertheless we desire that she may experience a qualification to become rightly restored."⁵⁴⁸

This act resulted in Martha's official disownment⁵⁴⁹ from the Quakers. However, her writings provide much evidence throughout Martha's life to demonstrate that while this Quaker reformer violated many regulations of the Quaker faith, to her death she maintained her self-image as a Friend, and held to the Quaker values that she believed were most important. Her "marrying out" would be just one among many decisions that Martha would make to establish her independent identity and reject what she referred to as the "trammels of sect."⁵⁵⁰

In a letter to Lucretia Mott, Martha related an event in which she identified herself as a Quaker even after her disownment. She described an encounter with an old woman who "observed my drab merino and said, 'You have got on a

⁵⁴⁶ Sherry H. Penney and James D. Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman: Martha Wright and Women's Rights* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 8-13.

⁵⁴⁷ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 17, 23.

⁵⁴⁸ Statement of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia to Martha Coffin Wright, June 23, 1825, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

⁵⁴⁹ Disownment is the Quaker form of excommunication and means that a person is no longer a member in good standing of the Society of Friends.

Quaker dress.’ Said I, ‘didn’t you know we were quakers? [sic]’⁵⁵¹ In another letter to her sister, Martha related the following incident with her daughter Ellen:

“Ellen said to me the other day, ‘Ma, you aint a Quaker are you?’ ‘Yes’, said I ‘who said I was?’ ‘Mrs. Scarings children.’ A few days afterward she wanted me to fix something for her, but turned away and said ‘O you cant do it ‘cause you’re so—a quaker [sic],’ Her estimate of me being probably such as Caroline Stratton’s of her mother when she refused to let her learn to dance. She turned from the room in deep disgust saying ‘I wish thee wasn’t such a blamed Quaker.’”⁵⁵²

On another occasion, Martha was engaging in a verbal sparring match with a visiting divinity student, who offered, “my parents were Congregationalists, and I am one.’ ‘My parents’”, she responded, “were Quakers, and I am one.”⁵⁵³

Yet Martha Coffin Wright’s religious beliefs could not be easily summarized with any category or label. She describes an encounter with her favorite visiting theological student, who asked, “Are you a member of no Christian Church?” to which Wright replied: “I told him we were independent of all sects, that we endeavoured to instil the percepts [sic] that Christ taught, and I considered that all sufficient, without burdening children’s minds with any of the absurd dogmas of any sect.”⁵⁵⁴

On another occasion, discussing with him the idea of Jesus Christ dying for the sins of humanity, Martha said “Certainly, I think it a most preposterous

⁵⁵⁰ See Martha on the “trammels of sect,” Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, May 13, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁵¹ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, April 23 [year is missing but letter mentions her second husband, David’s office], William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁵² Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, December 11, 1845, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁵³ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, March 2, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁵⁴ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, January 17, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

idea that an innocent person should suffer for another's sins, but you were brought up to consider those things essentials."⁵⁵⁵

In terms of the Hicksite-Orthodox schism, technically Martha was disowned by the Quakers by the time the split occurred.⁵⁵⁶ It is also interesting that some members of Martha and Lucretia's extended family chose to associate themselves with the Orthodox branch of Friends. Her biographers note that Martha and Lucretia's sister Eliza Yarnall "remained firmly Orthodox, as did most of the other Yarnalls."⁵⁵⁷

Martha's first husband Peter Pelham, died tragically on July 10, 1826, leaving Martha with their baby, Mary Anna Pelham. Two years later, Martha lost her second husband, another military man. Julius Catlin, a graduate of West Point, was brother to the famous American painter, George Catlin.⁵⁵⁸ Her third marriage, to lawyer David Wright, would have a happier ending. The two were married in Aurora, New York, on November 28, 1829, by a justice of the peace.

David was not a Quaker, but was born to a Quaker mother and educated in a Quaker school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He never joined the Society himself but had great respect for the Quaker faith, indicating, "I have ever believed that it was, and yet is, the most reasonable, and the best for the welfare of the individual and of the community, of any of the many forms of faith and practice." Martha's biographers note that David "developed what would later

⁵⁵⁵ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, March 2, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁵⁶ However, Penney and Livingston mention on multiple occasions Martha's greater comfort with Hicksite positions, and hypothesize that "If Martha had not married 'out of meeting' and had remained a Quaker, she would surely have been a Hicksite." (Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 38).

⁵⁵⁷ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 38.

be called 'the leading law practice in the county,' and he eventually would argue twelve cases before the United States Supreme Court in Washington."⁵⁵⁹ Penney and Livingston note that the Wright family was middle class, able, for example, to hire help and send their children to private schools, but not able to afford extravagances.⁵⁶⁰

Reading Martha Wright's letters, we see that like other middle and upper class nineteenth-century reformers in this study, Wright showed the utmost consideration for her black sisters but contempt for her Irish ones. Like Abby Kelley Foster, Wright seemed to have a blind spot for her own prejudice when it targeted the Irish laborer rather than the African slave. At one point Martha was upset with her husband David for his lack of empathy in her loss of her house servant, Susan. "I wonder if he would think it was owing to a mistaken system, etc., if all his clerks should leave in a busy time, and the whole labor of the office devolve on him. It shows a very great omission, no doubt, in a man's bringing up, that he can't go and dig and plant his garden all himself, instead of being so enterely [sic] dependent on low Irish laborers."⁵⁶¹ On another occasion, she is again discussing servants: "Some of those Emeralds are so faithless! I should dispair [sic] of teaching a new one, such as Susan terms 'greenhorns', some are so awkward. I have heard of their creeping up stairs not understanding the usual mode of ascent, but that must be a fable."⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁸ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 25,30-31.

⁵⁵⁹ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 84.

⁵⁶⁰ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 34- 37.

⁵⁶¹ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, August 24, 1846, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁶² Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, February 25, 1847, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

By the time of the Quaker tea party at the Hunt's home, Martha was forty-one years old and sixth months pregnant with her seventh child, a fact memorialized by her pregnant bronze likeness at the Woman's Rights Park in Seneca Falls.⁵⁶³ She led a full life as a wife and mother as well as a reformer. Her biographers note that, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who also had seven children, Martha was familiar with the pressures and the drudgery of life in the home. Like Marcia Inman, Wright tried to balance an intellectual life with a domestic and political one. In a letter to Lucretia, she notes: "Yesterday passed like all the rest in brushing up, straightening the green cloth, holding fast the table cover that Ellen should not pull it off, resting, reading and sewing. I made 3 pumpkin pies and one apple... (Three days later in the same letter)

"...[Maria] was up at 5. I made the starch and made bread...Yesterday being the first dry day since Friday I shook the green cloth and pieces and swept the parlor and dining room thoroughly. Other days I made the hand brush and dust pan answer..."⁵⁶⁴

Obviously, Martha and the other married reformers, despite all of the important work they did in national reform, were still expected to take care of all the household duties of life at home as well. On another occasion, Wright despaired of not having more time for the life of the mind: "I should have liked to go to court and hear David open the cause [sic], if it had not been washing day. I read over his brief last evening which looked interesting, and was fortunate enough to find an idea for him in Ray of which he availed himself. Those Medical

⁵⁶³ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 1.

Jurisprudence works are exceedingly interesting, if one only had time to read them.”⁵⁶⁵

In other letters, Wright strategized with leaders of the women’s movement over key issues. She wrote to Susan B. Anthony in 1862: “And now, as to calling a National Woman’s Rights Convention...” Wright joined those who felt that to call a conference in the midst of the Civil War “would be very unwise, at this time, when the Nation’s whole heart and soul are engrossed with this momentous crisis.” Wright agreed with Anthony that “we ‘should not forget our principles, or fail to declare them because the Majority do not or cannot recognize them’, but it is useless to speak if nobody will listen—“ ⁵⁶⁶

On another occasion, she sent Anthony a copy of her letter to women’s rights activist Lucy Stone concerning what would become the famous split of the 19th century American women’s rights movement: “My dear Lucy—I received your letter and circular, proposing a Convention to form an American Woman’s Suffrage Association, but as there is already a National Association, I cannot agree with you that the cause will be better served by two. In union there is strength and I feel persuaded that our cause will be weakened and the day of our success postponed, by unwise dissension, or the attempt to ostracise [sic]

⁵⁶⁴ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, November 7, 1841, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁶⁵ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, July 13, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁶⁶ Martha Coffin Wright to Susan B. Anthony, Philadelphia, March 31, 1861, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

some of the truest and noblest pioneers, and most indefatigable workers in it....”⁵⁶⁷

With her characteristic honesty, Martha admitted to being distracted at the time of the Seneca Falls Convention by her domestic roles (perhaps feeling burdened to be pregnant for the seventh time at her age and at this exciting time in women’s history): “I plead guilty to being very stupid & dispirited at Seneca Falls, the prospect of having more Wrights than I wanted tending materially to subdue the ardor and energy that would doubtless have characterized me ‘at another time’... “ Yet, Wright was “glad of the privilege [sic] of looking on and shrinking, as far as shrinking was practicable, into the insignificance that under the circumstances [pregnancy] was appropriate for me.”⁵⁶⁸

In addition to being a key organizer of the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention, Wright questioned some of the common practices of the day. In an exchange with her husband over fair wages for women, Martha shared her strong feelings and advanced progressive arguments that might still be made today: “I told D. this morning...how I should like...to pay Miss Soule [the seamstress] exactly as much as we pay Thomas...steady sewing is as injurious to the health as active labor and I don’t see why a woman should not have the chances of laying up something against the age of rheumatisms and poor sight, as a man.” David responded that such a plan would “raise the price of labor and

⁵⁶⁷ Martha Coffin Wright to Susan B. Anthony, Auburn, November 4, 1869, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁶⁸ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, October 1, 1848, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

set people by the ears". Martha asked why this was different from paying a man and David responded, "Why, a man had a family to support". Martha responded that many women supported their husbands and families as well and suggested that her plan would work if everyone was just willing too make the necessary sacrifices: "people would have fewer clothes, wear their old mended ones as long as I do and let their city cousins tell them their dresses were 'immortal' if they wanted to...."⁵⁶⁹

Martha's biographers note that "Martha, as a parent, was not constrained by traditional roles for boys and girls; she also taught Willy and Frank how to knit, a skill which they continued to practice after going to boarding school."⁵⁷⁰ In a letter to Elizabeth M'Clintock, Martha writes: "... Men are so desperately idle... having no resources of knitting and sewing to fill up odd moments, they become inveterate *gossips* sometimes, to a degree quite painful for *women* to witness.... P.S. After a world of patient and impatient teaching as I felt nervous or otherwise, I have taught my little boys to knit."⁵⁷¹

Like the other women in this study, Wright was involved in multiple reforms, including abolition. Her daughter notes that "a branch of the underground railway came through Auburn, and our house was one of the stations."⁵⁷² In a letter to her daughter Ellen, Martha noted: "We have been expending our sympathies, as well as congratulations, on seven newly arrived

⁵⁶⁹ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, May 13, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁷⁰ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 85.

⁵⁷¹ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 99. .

⁵⁷² Eliza Osborne, Sketch of Martha Coffin Wright, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Box 252, folder 15.

slaves that Harriet Tubman has just pioneered safely from the Southern part of Maryland.”⁵⁷³ When the time came for the Civil War Martha and David’s son Willy decided to serve in the Union army. His parents’ feelings regarding the war and other issues related to violence are discussed in the chapter on peace.

Like the other Quaker homes in this study, Martha and David’s home was a center of intellectual and social activity which enriched the lives of their children. Eliza Osborne writes: “There were many notable people among our visitors as the years went on: George W. Curtis, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Moncure D. Conway, and Saml. J. May of Syracuse”, whom Osborne calls “the embodiment of love and gentleness”. She describes how the acquaintance between “Miss Anthony, Aunt Lucretia Mott and Mrs. Stanton” “ripened into a lasting and devoted friendship.... The papers spoke of the women as a lot of sour faced old maids. Mrs. Stanton...said, there wasn’t an old maid among them. They were mostly blooming and happy looking matrons.”⁵⁷⁴

Like many of the other Quaker women in my study, Martha expected her children to follow in her reforming footsteps. In a letter to her daughter Ellen, Martha writes, “Be a good girl, & if you ever expect to take your place with such women as Mrs. Rose⁵⁷⁵ & Lucy Stone & Antoinette Brown⁵⁷⁶ it will only be attained by storing your mind with what is valuable—so do not I beg you spend

⁵⁷³ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 132.

⁵⁷⁴ Eliza Osborne, Sketch of Martha Coffin Wright, Box 252, folder 15, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁷⁵ Ernestine Rose was a Jewish women’s and human rights activist, a contemporary of Anthony, Stanton, and Mott. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Women and Religion in America: Volume I: The Nineteenth Century* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 158.

your time in reading the worse than useless trash that the idlers round you supply.”⁵⁷⁷ In the case of Martha and David Wright, they not only influenced the upbringing of many more reformers in their family in the conventional sense, they also ended up heading a regular 19th century reform dynasty. In 1845, after much discussion and controversy between the two families involved, Marianna Wright married Thomas Mott, son of Lucretia and James. Her biographers note that Lucretia and Martha were now not merely sisters, but were intermarrying their two families. There was some concern discussed among them at his time concerning the potential danger of intermarriage resulting in birth defects to offspring, “but Martha dismissed their concerns with the trenchant observation, ‘I know a good many simpletons in the world whose parents are not cousins.’” In 1864, Ellen Wright married William Lloyd Garrison, Jr. Her biographers note that “Martha wrote to Ellen her enthusiastic approval, ‘not only on account of his own moral worth, but because he is the son of one whom we have so long regarded with reverence.’”

In keeping with her parents’ ecumenicity (drawing from a variety of liberal Protestant traditions), Ellen’s wedding would be performed by “hireling clergy”, Unitarian minister Samuel J. May.⁵⁷⁸ Although there is much evidence that Martha’s self-image as a Quaker remained strong throughout her life, she and David also clearly felt free to “switch pews” if a particular preacher or denomination did not support their own moral and religious beliefs or style of

⁵⁷⁶ Antoinette Brown Blackwell was the first woman to become fully ordained in an American Christian Church, the Congregational Church of South Butler, NY, in 1853. Ruether and Skinner, *Women and Religion in America*, Vol. I, 206.

⁵⁷⁷ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 111-112.

worship. Most of the Quaker reformers in this study seemed more concerned with a minister's stance on reform than his denomination. In a letter from Martha to Lucretia in 1849 she notes, "we have a pew in the Universalist Church. I have not seen it. Before Frank was hurt David went one Sunday morning and again in the evening."⁵⁷⁹ In another letter to Lucretia Martha writes, "Yes, we read S. J. May's sermon on Woman's rights, and thought it very good. I wish his church was here, instead of Syracuse."⁵⁸⁰

Continuing the "reform dynasty", in 1869, Willy Wright married Flora McMartin, whose aunt was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Martha's biographer notes that "just as Ellen's marriage had strengthened Martha's ties to William Lloyd Garrison, Willy's marriage strengthened her ties to Stanton."⁵⁸¹ Martha wrote to Ellen, who apparently did not attend the wedding, that "Flora looked very pretty and *didn't* promise to *obey*." In April 1866, Frank Wright married Fanny Rosalie Pell. Fanny's mother was the first cousin to Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing, and their first daughter would be named Mabel Channing Wright.⁵⁸²

These marriages increased the likelihood that the lives of the Quaker reformers' children would follow in their stead, that they would be filled with social meaning and intellectual stimulation, and guided by the values of human equality, social justice and equal rights for women. If they followed in their parents'

⁵⁷⁸ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 49, 167.

⁵⁷⁹ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, May 6, 1849? William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁸⁰ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, February 25, 1847, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁵⁸¹ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 173.

⁵⁸² Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 172, 174.

pattern, the marriages of the reform children would likely be egalitarian ones, but would not necessarily be limited to the Quaker fold. Like good reform children, they gave the reform values of Friends their greatest allegiance and denominational loyalty a place of secondary importance, and the girls carried on in the grand tradition of their mothers, Hicksite and Orthodox.

As noted, all the women at the famous “Quaker tea party” at the Hunt’s house had strong specific connections to the Hicksite Quakers or identified themselves with the Hicksite Quakers⁵⁸³. Even the one non-Quaker at the party-- Elizabeth Cady Stanton—voiced some identification with the radical group. Martha Wright’s biographers note that when asked about her own religious affiliation, Stanton answered, “‘I am a member of Junius meeting⁵⁸⁴ [Friends] & not of the Episcopal church. I have heard that infamous report [that she had become Episcopalian] & feel about it very much as if I had been accused of petty larceny.” She explained that she renounced all Christian churches in the sense that “‘If my theology could not keep me out of any church my deep & abiding reverence for the dignity of womankind would be all sufficient.” Yet Stanton also admitted to attending the Episcopal church every Sunday. “‘With four boys at home, I find Sunday a very noisy day. In church they must be still, I can think. I

⁵⁸³ Judith Wellman notes that all the women at the Hunt tea party with the exception of Stanton were members of the “egalitarian group that walked out of Genesee Yearly Meeting.”(188) These were also called Congregational Friends, and were a liberal offshoot of the Hicksites who were ardent abolitionists, and challenged previous custom by voting for both genders of Quakers to meet together. Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 180-181. Congregational Friends are also discussed in greater detail in the abolition chapter.

⁵⁸⁴ The tea party group were originally members of the Junius Monthly Quaker Meeting, and the Genesee Yearly Quaker Meeting. Thus, Elizabeth Stanton identified with them. Wellman, *Road to Seneca Falls*, 92.

go simply & solely to keep the children still. All I enjoy is the organ music, always thrills my soul.”⁵⁸⁵

One way to evaluate the egalitarian nature of these reformers' marriages is to examine which of them signed the Declaration of Sentiments alone, and which signed as couples. Jane and Richard Hunt, at whose party the idea of the convention was initiated, signed as a couple, as did Mary Ann and Thomas M'Clintock, and Lucretia and James Mott. Weber notes in her study that Thomas M'Clintock was also a recognizable member of the Convention. Elizabeth Cady Stanton took note of his involvement, and he “acted as the chairman of the final session, during which he also made a strong speech ‘in proof of woman’s servitude to man’ by reading a series of repressive laws then on the books.”⁵⁸⁶ At one point, James Mott served as chairperson during the Convention.⁵⁸⁷

Noticeably missing from the Declaration, however were the names of Henry Stanton and David Wright. Weber notes that Henry Stanton “did not always appear to be quite so supportive of [ECS’] work.” She cites a letter from Susan B. Anthony in which Elizabeth Cady Stanton explains that she will not be able to join her on the lecture circuit because “the pressure on me just now is too great. Henry sides with my friends, who oppose me in all that is dearest to my heart. They are not willing that I should write even on the woman question. But I will both write and speak.” Stanton asks Anthony to “consider this letter strictly confidential. Sometimes, Susan, I struggle in deep waters....” Weber notes that

⁵⁸⁵ Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 114.

⁵⁸⁶ Weber, *Special History Study*, 143-144, also quoting from Stanton et. Al, *Woman Suffrage*, p. 69, and “Report of Convention,” p. 9.

⁵⁸⁷ Weber, *Special History Study*, 157, quoting “Report of the Woman’s Rights Convention”, p 6.

Henry Stanton's name is not on the Declaration, and that "popular tradition says he left town the day of the Convention to show his disapproval of the venture."⁵⁸⁸

Harriet Alonso in her study of the women's peace movement notes that at the famous London slavery convention that caused so much controversy, "when the delegates at the conference refused to allow the women attending to be seated and participate as equals, [William Lloyd] Garrison (but not Henry Stanton) sat in the gallery with the women and remained silent throughout the ten days of meetings."⁵⁸⁹

Also missing from the Declaration of Sentiments was the signature of David Wright. Like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Martha had become willing to disagree openly with her husband, particularly on issues pertaining to women's rights."⁵⁹⁰ While David and Martha shared many of their reform interests, David did not sign the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, nor, Martha confided to Lucretia, could she convince him to sign one of her petitions for woman suffrage. Martha's biographers note that "David shared Martha's views on abolition, temperance, capital punishment, and most political and religious questions, but she was never able to fully convert him to her views on woman suffrage and other woman's rights issues." In fact, Mr. Wright declared at one point in the suffrage argument that he was "willing to grant the right only to women who paid taxes."⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Weber, *Special History Study*, 80, also quoting from Stanton and Blatch, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p.59-60, and Stanton, "Aged Housekeeper".

⁵⁸⁹ Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 38.

⁵⁹⁰ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 70.

⁵⁹¹ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 113, 115.

One notable Quaker feminist was not at the Seneca Falls tea party: Susan Brownell Anthony. This woman whose name would become forever linked with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's was not to meet Stanton until after the Convention. However while Susan was working as a teacher upstate in Canajoharie, both her parents and sister Mary had attended the Seneca Falls Convention, signed the Declaration of Rights, and had been quite taken by the event,⁵⁹² and Susan's cousin, Sarah Anthony Burtis, had served as secretary for the Convention.⁵⁹³

Elizabeth Cady Stanton described Susan's father, Daniel Anthony, as "a stern Hicksite Quaker. In Susan's early life he objected on principle to all forms of frivolous amusement, such as music, dancing, or novel reading, which games and even pictures were regarded as meaningless luxuries."⁵⁹⁴ Ida Harper notes that Daniel's mother and sister were "'high seat' Quakers, the latter a famous preacher."⁵⁹⁵ Apparently Daniel was not so strict a Quaker that he could avoid falling in love as a young man with a Baptist girl, and against Friends' strictures about "marrying outside of Meeting" Daniel married Lucy Read on July 13, 1817. This would cause Daniel's first disownment from the Society of Friends, from which he was released supposedly after confessing that "I was sorry that in order to marry the woman I loved best, I had to violate a rule of the religious society I revered most."⁵⁹⁶ Lucy Read Anthony, according to Ida Harper, would become a

⁵⁹² Rheta Louise Childe Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony, The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation* (New York: AMS Press, 1928), 52-53.

⁵⁹³ Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume I (New York: Arno & New York Times, 1969), 59.

⁵⁹⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815-1897* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1898), 157.

⁵⁹⁵ Ida Husted Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume I (New York: Arno & New York Times, 1969), 57.

⁵⁹⁶ Daniel Anthony in Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 10.

“much more consistent Quaker than her husband, but she never became a member of the Society, declaring she was ‘not good enough.’” Lucy had eight children, of whom Susan was the second, born February 15, 1820, in Adams, Massachusetts. Later the family would move to New York for better business prospects. Daniel was a merchant and a social reformer himself who came to believe in the causes of temperance and abolition, and “made every effort to get cotton for his mills which was not produced by slave labor.”

Daniel valued education and set up his own private school for his children, where girls were taught math as well as needlework, and when his daughters turned fifteen Mr. Anthony was “much criticized for allowing his daughters to teach, as in those days no woman worked for wages except for pressing necessity; but he was far enough in advance of his time to believe that every girl should be trained to self-support.”⁵⁹⁷

As Susan grew up and gained experience in her teaching, she also learned to go even beyond the reform values she had learned from her parents. Rheta Dorr notes that Daniel Anthony was “in advance of most Quakers in his abolition sentiments, but he still hesitated to take the extreme position of Phillips and Garrison, who were all for removing every social barrier between whites and blacks.”⁵⁹⁸ Susan was critical of the Quakers in her local meeting in a letter she wrote to brother-in-law Aaron McLean: “The Friends raised quite a fuss about a colored man sitting in the meeting house, and some left on account of it.... There are three colored girls here who have been in the habit of attending Friends

⁵⁹⁷ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 23.

⁵⁹⁸ Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 28.

meeting where they have lived, but here they are not even allowed to sit on the back seat.”⁵⁹⁹

Susan did not reserve her high moral standards and her tendency to criticize those who failed to meet them only for Friends. When she saw President Martin Van Buren ride through her town of New Rochelle on his way to dinner with Washington Irving, she described the scene as follows: “Let us look at his behavior and scan its effects on society.... While he and his party were reveling in their tents on luxuries and the all-debasing wine, many poor dear children were crying for food and water to allay their thirst.... Is it to be wondered at that such vast numbers of our population are votaries of vice and dissipation?”⁶⁰⁰ Susan apparently internalized the Quaker value of simplicity in dress, and criticized the girls she observed at a Presbyterian Sabbath service: “...the dress of the communicants bespeaks nothing but vanity of heart—curls, bows and artificials displayed in profusion about most of them. They say they can dress in the fashion without fixing their hearts on their costume, but surely if their hearts were not vain and worldly, their dress would not be.”⁶⁰¹

It was during Susan’s youth that her father experienced his second disownment from the Society of Friends. Apparently when the towns’ young people approached Daniel Anthony wanting to use hold dancing classes in his large attic, “with true Quaker spirit, he refused”. However, once they explained

⁵⁹⁹ Susan B. Anthony, letter to Aaron McLean in Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 28. Note: Lynn Sherr records the same letter as SBA to Guelma Penn Anthony, June 15, 1839, MCR-S, SBA Papers, in Lynn Sherr, *Failure is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1995), 29-30, 341.

⁶⁰⁰ SB Anthony, in Dorr, *Susan B Anthony*, 30.

⁶⁰¹ SBA in Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, vol. I, 36.

that they were trying to find a place to dance where the young people would not be tempted to drink alcohol as they would in the available alternatives, a tavern or an inn, Anthony gave in with the proviso that his own daughters would not be allowed to participate. The event was successful, but as soon as the Quakers heard of it “they read him out of meeting ‘because he kept a place of amusement in his house.’”⁶⁰² Daniel responded that “For one of the best acts of my life I have been turned out of the best religious Society in the world.” Harper notes that even after his disownment, Daniel Anthony continued to attend Quaker meetings.⁶⁰³

Like the other Quaker reformers in this study, Anthony's family, while strongly identified as Quakers, also felt free to allow their reform interests to take them to work and worship with churches of other denominations. Harper reports that at one point where there was some disagreement among Friends on the issue of slavery and abolition, the Anthony family began attending a Unitarian church. Unitarian ministers William Henry Channing and Samuel J. May would become Susan's “steadfast friends and never-failing support in all the great work which was developed in later years.”⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰² Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, vol. 1, 36-37. Apparently there had also been an issue at some time concerning Daniel's purchase and use of a “camlet cloak with cape and...colored silk muffler. These were declared ‘out of plainness,’ but Daniel kept on wearing them just the same.” Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 70.

⁶⁰³ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, vol. 1, 37. Rufus Jones notes that according to the London Discipline of 1802, after disownment, the member's “collection shall not be received,” he will not receive economic assistance from the Meeting if he should “fall into poverty or want,” nor will be allowed to “sit in Meetings of discipline [i.e. business] until [he] be restored into unity” again with his Monthly Meeting. *London Discipline* (ed. 1802), p. 71, quoted by Rufus Jones in *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol. I, 189.

⁶⁰⁴ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, I, 58-59.

Throughout her life, Susan experienced support for her reform work from both her parents.⁶⁰⁵ Ida Harper notes that Daniel “encouraged her desire to go into the reforms which were demanding attention, gave her financial backing when necessary, moral support upon all occasions, and was ever her most interested friend and faithful ally,” and that Susan also benefited from “the sympathy and assistance of her mother” who was “never willing that [Susan] should take any time from her public work to give to the duties of home....” Like many of the other female Quaker reformers in my study, it was not unusual for the Anthony home to be a “hot-bed of discussion and fermentation” on one political issue of the day or another. Her parents also introduced her to such notable reformers as Frederick Douglass.⁶⁰⁶ Other frequent guests to the Anthony home included “Garrison, Pillsbury, Phillips, Channing”.... [and] “the Posts, Hallowells, DeGarmos, Willis, Burtises, Kedzies, Fishes, Curtises, Stebbins, Asa Anthonys, all Quakers who had left the society on account of their anti-slavery principles and were leaders in the abolition and woman’s rights movements.”

Thus, when Susan heard about the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and then the National Women’s Rights Convention of 1850 in Worcester, she found them of great interest. Ironically, Harper notes, while Anthony certainly supported equal rights for women in general, she was not sure at first that she supported the idea of women’s suffrage. Harper explains that this is because

⁶⁰⁵ Harper notes that Susan B. Anthony was also a temperance reformer, who made her first speech for the cause of temperance on March 1, 1849 for a Daughters of Temperance dinner. (Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, I., 53).

⁶⁰⁶ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 57-59.

many Quaker men at this time in history did not vote, “thinking it wrong to support a government which believed in war.” Thus, “even so progressive and public-spirited a man as Daniel Anthony, much as he was interested in all national affairs, never voted until 1860, when he became convinced it was only by force of arms that the question of slavery could be settled.”⁶⁰⁷

According to Dorr, 1853 marked a real turning point for Susan B. Anthony toward the women’s rights movement, influenced by the gender discrimination she had experienced as a temperance and abolition reformer, her growing relationship with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and her father’s final disownment from the Quakers. In Dorr’s view, Daniel’s disownment from the Quakers helped launch him into the even more liberal interdenominational group of Unitarians, Progressive Quakers, and others with whom he and his family began to associate.⁶⁰⁸

By 1854 Susan B. Anthony, who had not been sure of the value or need of women’s suffrage, would appear in Albany before a joint committee of the New York Senate and Assembly with demands for changes in the law such that: “Married women must have all the rights of single women, exactly as though the husbands did not exist. They must own and control their property, their wages...” Women deserve the right to “sue and to be sued”, to equal custodianship of their minor children, “homesteads must be made inviolable and inalienable for widows and children; habitual drunkenness must be made cause for divorce; and finally, in order that they might aid in the securing of equal laws, women married and

⁶⁰⁷ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 61.

⁶⁰⁸ Dorr, Susan B Anthony, 77-78.

unmarried, must be given the right to vote.” Further, women deserve full access to “all offices, occupations, professions, be entitled to serve on juries, and to be employed in public offices.”⁶⁰⁹

Susan B. Anthony’s individual conversion was paralleled by the Society of Friends. This dissertation is primarily about the Hicksite schism and its effects (or lack thereof) on liberal reform among female Quaker reformers. However, the subplot that emerges from this story is the picture of a vital denomination, with great emphasis on ethics and social justice, which is debating with itself whether the best way to do God’s will as they know it is by withdrawing from the world and creating their own protected religious community or by thrusting themselves into the midst of a complex pluralistic world and trying to make their influence felt. The Anthony family and the members of the Society of Friends who prevail into the twentieth century decided on the route of active, untiring involvement.

Like other women in this study, Susan B. Anthony saw her reform activity as a religious activity⁶¹⁰. Mary Pellauer, who did a study of the religious thought of Stanton, Anthony, and Anna Howard Shaw, describes Susan B. Anthony’s theology as follows: “Anthony believed in the redemption of the human world by the moral power of voting and monied womanhood.... She maintained the view

⁶⁰⁹ Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 99-100.

⁶¹⁰ Robert Abzug has observed in his study of nineteenth century American reformers that for many of them, “the role of the reformer itself...remains in many ways a religious calling.” *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reforms and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), viii.

that it was reform work, and especially that for equal rights for women, which was 'wholly spiritual,' indeed an act of worship on her part."⁶¹¹

In the chapter on Biblical interpretation, I dealt in greater detail with Anthony's response to Stanton's *Woman's Bible*, including her protest to Stanton "No—I don't want my name on that Bible Committee—You fight that battle—and leave me to fight the secular—"⁶¹² Yet it is also interesting to see that in the midst of her reform work, if her opponents tried to use what she considered faulty hermeneutical argument, her Quaker Biblical education prepared her to meet them on their own ground. Anthony's journal records an incident in which she encounters a young Virginia preacher, a Quaker, no less, who tried to use the examples of Christ and Quaker co-founder George Fox to oppose social protest. The preacher claimed, "Christ was no agitator, but a peacemaker; George Fox was no agitator; the Friends of the South follow these examples and are never disturbed by fanaticism.' This was more than I could bear; I sprung to my feet and quoted: 'I came into the world not to bring peace but a sword.... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites that devour widow's houses!'" Anthony advised the preacher and his listeners to "Read the New Testament and see if Christ was not an agitator. Who is this among us crying 'peace, peace, when there is no peace?'" ⁶¹³

⁶¹¹ Mary D. Pellauer, *Toward a Tradition of Feminist Theology: The Religious Social Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Anna Howard Shaw* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1991), 154.

⁶¹² Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, July 24, 1895, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Anthony Family Collection, AF24 (2), in Lynn Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 254-255

⁶¹³ Susan B. Anthony's journal, from Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 177.

When the Civil War broke out, both of Susan's brothers enlisted with the Union army,⁶¹⁴ but Susan retained her pacifist stance.⁶¹⁵ Meanwhile, for several years, active campaigning for women's rights was put aside in order to support the soldiers and the war effort, and then to work through the issues involved in emancipation, the permanent legal abolition of slavery and the recovery and reconstruction of the nation. Anthony, never in favor of the military solution, was further upset when she learned that after the war, people expected women to sit back patiently and wait longer for their suffrage while the vote was won for black Americans. Suddenly the people Anthony had worked next to, as colleagues, like Frederick Douglass were on the other side of her, expecting her to stand by and wait. In a debate with Douglass, Anthony said: "The question of precedence has no place on an equal rights platform." Anthony and Stanton countered that "If you will not give the whole loaf of justice to the entire people, if you are determined to give it to us piece by piece, than give it first to women, to the most intelligent & capable portion of the women at least, because in the present state of government it is intelligence, it is morality which is needed...."⁶¹⁶

This issue was a major cause of the split in the women's rights movement at the time, with Anthony and Stanton forming the National Woman's Suffrage Association in 1869, and those who disagreed on this key issue and others

⁶¹⁴ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, I, 37.

⁶¹⁵ Anthony's feelings considering the War are discussed in detail in the peace chapter.

⁶¹⁶ Susan B. Anthony, Debate with Frederick Douglass in 1869, in Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 40-41.

forming the American Woman's Suffrage Association. In 1890 the two would finally join into the National American Woman's Suffrage Association.⁶¹⁷

Several claims have been made for Susan B. Anthony's spirituality. Her best friend and compatriot, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote in her autobiography: "To-day Miss Anthony is an Agnostic.... Every energy of her soul is centered upon the needs of this world. To her, work is worship.... In this nineteenth century, by the very laws of her being, she is a Reformer."⁶¹⁸

Margaret Hope Bacon notes that Anthony joined the radical Hicksite splinter group of Congregational Friends and served at one time as their Secretary. At a later time she attended the Unitarian Church, but was never disowned as a Quaker, nor did she ever renounce her membership in the Rochester Hicksite Meeting.⁶¹⁹

It is possible that Anthony, like many of the other women in this study, gave more thought to her reform work than her denominational labels, but it is also clear that Susan B. Anthony, like the other women featured, did see herself as a Friend, and that identity is reflected in many of her statements. Engaging in a religious debate on sabbatarianism, Anthony once wrote, "I am as earnest a Quaker as my friend Miss [Frances] Willard is a Methodist...."⁶²⁰ In a diary entry of April 29, 1900, Anthony wrote: "Returned in time for church. Mr. Gannett preached on 'Material reasons for rejoicing in being a Unitarian'—said he was

⁶¹⁷ Robert Cooney & Helen Michalowski, Eds., *The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1987), 33.

⁶¹⁸ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 161.

⁶¹⁹ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1986), 117.

⁶²⁰ Susan B. Anthony, Letter to the Editor, 1892, in Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 253.

thankful for having been born one. So am I thankful for having been born a Friend—a Quaker. To be born into a free religious world is a blessing indeed.”⁶²¹

Susan B. Anthony would not live to see her dream of women’s suffrage come to fruition in her time, but the torch of the struggle would be passed on to some worthy younger women, including, appropriately, another Hicksite Quaker: Alice Paul.

Alice Paul’s parents were active Hicksite members of the Society of Friends, and attended the Westfield Monthly Meeting in New Jersey.⁶²² “Mother was the clerk of the Friend’s Meeting in our hometown. I would say that my parents supported all the ideals that I had.”⁶²³ Biographer Amelia Fry notes that Paul: “attended the Friends’ school through high school, then went four years to the Hicksite college that her grandparents had helped found, Swarthmore....In her oral history interview, Paul said, ‘ I have practically no ancestor who wasn’t a Quaker. I don’t know whether I had ANY....”⁶²⁴ Another biographer notes, “I asked Alice Paul once what converted her to Woman Suffrage. She said that she could not remember when she did not believe in it. She added, ‘You know the Quakers have always believed in Woman Suffrage.’”⁶²⁵ Her training to become a reformer for suffrage was varied. It would include multiple graduate degrees earned in America and Europe as well as some all-important work

⁶²¹ Susan B. Anthony, diary entry April 29, 1900, In Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, III, 1215.

⁶²² Miriam Feyerherm, “Alice Paul: New Jersey’s Quintessential Suffragist,” *New Jersey Folklife* 15 (1990), Swarthmore Peace Collection, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, PA., 32. NOTE: Paul was born January 11, 1885 in Moorestown, N.J. (Feyerherm 32).

Inez Haynes Gillmore, *Up Hill with Banners Flying* (Penobscott, Me.: Traversity Press, 1964), 6.

⁶²³ Alice Paul interview, “I Was Arrested of Course”, February 1974, in Robert S. Gallagher, *American Heritage: The Magazine of History* Feb. 1974 Vol. XXV No. 2, 18.

⁶²⁴ Amelia R. Fry, “Alice Paul”, in Carol and John Stoneburner *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 381.

experience under the tutelage of Emmeline Pankhurst and the British suffragists.

⁶²⁶ After returning from England she became active in the American suffrage movement. ⁶²⁷

In 1912, with Paul's expertise in law and economics and experience on the ground of the suffrage movement, Jane Addams (herself the daughter of Hicksite Quaker John Addams)⁶²⁸ named her the national chairperson of the Congressional Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Her job was to push through a woman's suffrage amendment to the federal constitution in the forty-eight states, under the new American President, Woodrow Wilson.⁶²⁹

In 1912, "the day before Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated, Alice Paul organized a beautiful and massive suffrage parade that drew unruly crowds, disrupted Washington, and required the cavalry to control the mobs."

In 1913, Wilson told Paul's committee that "Suffrage was a question to which he had given no thought and on which he had no opinion," and that "he could take no action on the Suffrage Amendment until commanded by his Party."

⁶²⁵ Inez Haynes Gillmore, *UpHill With Banners Flying*, 6-7.

⁶²⁶ Fry, "Alice Paul," in *Stoneburner*, 383-386.

⁶²⁷ Note: Margaret Hope Bacon notes that Alice was not totally welcomed home by the community of American Friends. Quakers had seen press reports of her involvement with the at times militant British suffragist movement, and had trouble in particular with Paul's defense of violence against property in the case of social protest (in this instance the breaking of windows). Bacon says that "Alice met hostility just at a time when she needed support," at the same time that she "felt critical of the sleepy Society of Friends, particularly in Moorestown, having met much more dynamic social reformers in England." Paul gave a speech at Haverford College which was critical of Friends; it was not received well and was one of her last addresses to a group of Friends. "Feeling both critical and criticized, she began to move away from the Society of Friends, although she retained her membership, and her strong sense of self-identity as a Friend all of her life." Bacon believes that Paul was one "in a tradition of Quaker women who were so far ahead of their time that they lost patience with the Society, and yet had a major influence on later generations of Quaker women." (Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 192-193.)

⁶²⁸ Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 147.

In 1915 Wilson gave women's suffrage his personal support but refused to support it in Congress. Inez Haynes Gilmore describes the situation in 1916 as follows: "Wilson...was beginning to realize that the Suffrage Amendment must ultimately pass. But he had just been re-elected. He was safe for four years; he could take his time about it. The Woman's Party...realized that they must devise ...methods to keep Suffrage..."⁶³⁰ This was Alice Paul's expertise, and it would require all of her Quaker background in non-resistance as well as her experience with the Pankhursts and the English suffragists. In a retrospective interview, Paul describes how the suffragists decided to picket Wilson at the White House every day, "six days a week, from ten in the morning until half past five in the evening.... Every day when he went out for his daily ride, as he drove through our picket line he always took off his hat and bowed to us. We respected him very much. "

Paul notes that after the United States entered into World War I, on April 6, 1917, the women's picketing was not as well-received by the public: "...There was some hostility, and some of the pickets were attacked and had their banners ripped out of their hands. The feeling was...that the cause of suffrage should be abandoned during wartime, that we should work instead for peace." Paul pointed out the parallels between this time and the Civil War, when women were asked to put off their suffrage on behalf of African Americans..."after which they wrote the word 'male' into the Constitution.... So we agreed that suffrage came *before* war. Indeed, if we had universal suffrage throughout the world, we might not even

⁶²⁹ Fry, "Alice Paul," in Stoneburner, 386-387.

⁶³⁰ Inez Haynes Gilmore, *UpHill With Banners Flying*, 199.

have wars.” So Paul and the suffragists continued to picket during wartime, “even though we were called traitors and pro-German and all that.”⁶³¹

On October 20, 1917, Alice Paul was arrested outside the White House and sentenced to seven months in prison in the District of Columbia.⁶³² Circumstances for Paul and other women at the Occoquan Workhouse included unsanitary conditions, food with worms and weevils in it, brutal treatment by guards, and inadequate toilet facilities.⁶³³ Alice spent some of her time in solitary confinement in the prison’s psychopathic ward (“I think the government’s strategy was to discredit me.”) To protest her imprisonment, Paul went on a hunger strike lasting three weeks, during two of which she was forcibly fed through the nose. Inez Haynes Gilmore describes one incident where Paul was being interviewed by a psychiatrist in the prison. The psychiatrist met Paul for the first time and asked the nurse whether the patient would talk: “Alice Paul burst into laughter. ‘Talk!’ she exclaimed. ‘That’s our business to talk....’” Paul gave the psychiatrist a detailed history of the women’s suffrage movement from Hicksite Susan B. Anthony’s work to her own time. The psychiatrist’s response to Paul: “he said in effect: ‘ There is a spirit like Joan of Arc, and it is as useless to try to change it as to change Joan of Arc. She will die but she will never give up.’”⁶³⁴ Paul and other suffragists were released on November 27 and 28, and on January 18, 1918, President Wilson finally took a stand for federal suffrage. The

⁶³¹ Alice Paul, Interview, New York, 1974, in Robert Gallagher, “I Was Arrested...”, 24, 92.

⁶³² Robert Gallagher, “I Was Arrested, Of Course, “ 92.

⁶³³ Inez Haynes Gilmore, *Uphill With Banners Flying*, 270-300.

⁶³⁴ Inez Haynes Gillmore, *UpHill With Banners Flying*, 293-294.

Senate would not finally vote for the amendment until June 4, 1919. It would appropriately be called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.

Alice Paul did not rest on her laurels. In 1923 she joined with other women to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, and started work on the Equal Rights Amendment, stating that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."⁶³⁵ Paul lived until 1977, and influenced the 1945 incorporation of the Equal Rights Statement into the United Nations Charter and Title VII of the American Civil Rights Act of 1964 "outlawing, among other things, discrimination in employment on the basis of sex."⁶³⁶

The history of women's rights activism in America is rich and varied and it has been led in every period by Quaker women. The early period began with the first Quaker reformers, standing up for their own strong beliefs and those of the Society of Friends. This includes especially the abolitionists of the 1830s like the Grimke sisters. The Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention of 1848 was another landmark, this one largely a Hicksite accomplishment. In 1850 and 1851 the country saw its first National Women's Rights Conventions in Worcester Massachusetts, and here again the focus moved to the New England women, many of them Orthodox Quakers. The struggle for women's suffrage began with all of these women, a mixture of Hicksite and Orthodox reformers, and came to fruition largely under the leadership of Hicksite Quakers Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul.

⁶³⁵ Robert Gallagher, "I Was Arrested, Of Course..." 92-94.
Miriam Feyerherm, "Alice Paul: New Jersey's Quintessential Suffragist", 35.

The Hicksite schism continued during this entire period, not to be resolved until long after the triumphs of the women's suffrage movement. But again, the schism had no noticeable affect on the issue of women's reform itself. Hicksite and Orthodox women participated equally in women's rights activism and suffrage, and their struggles and victories were balanced equally between the two sides. Both sides experienced similar problems and employed similar techniques. Just as Alice Paul, when she was imprisoned in a psychiatric hospital, drew on the example of Susan B. Anthony, Quaker women Hicksite and Orthodox before her, drew on a history of strong female Quaker ministers who were willing to stand up for the values of equality and social justice.

⁶³⁶ Miriam Feyerherm, "Alice Paul: New Jersey's Quintessential Suffragist", 36.

“Slavery must be attacked with the whole power of truth and the sword of the spirit. You must take it up on Christian ground, and fight against it with Christian weapons, whilst your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace....”⁶³⁷

-Angelina Grimke

Chapter 7: Peace Witness and the Quaker Women Reformers

In the area of peace witness and reform, Hicksite and Orthodox women were well balanced. Hicksite and Orthodox worked together in the early American peace societies, which were progressive and extensive in their scope. All came from a long-standing Quaker history of pacifism and conscientious objection that went back before the Revolutionary War.⁶³⁸ Women on both sides of the schism struggled with the question of violence and abolition and some of them found themselves supporting the Civil War in some form despite their pacifism, whether it was with their hearts or even more deeply with their own sons. But this struggle affected Hicksite and Orthodox women equally. And as the Civil War ended and the focus turned to women's suffrage a new kind of peace activist emerged in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, exemplified by Orthodox Quaker Hannah Johnston Bailey and the Hicksite and Orthodox women who joined her in trying to secure peace in the home.

⁶³⁷ Angelina Emily Grimke, “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South”, New York: [American Anti-Slavery Society], 1836; New York: Arno and *New York Times*, 1969, in Larry Ceplair, Editor, *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimke: Selected Writings 1835-1839* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 66.

⁶³⁸ Charles C. Moskos and John Whiteclay Chambers II, Eds., *The New Conscientious Objection: From Sacred to Secular Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 23.

The New England Non-Resistance Society, created in 1838 and described as the “boldest pacifist organization in the 19th century”, dedicated to “radical social change without violence,”⁶³⁹ included among its members Hicksite minister Lucretia Mott, and the Orthodox Grimke sisters as well as Orthodox Abby Kelley Foster.⁶⁴⁰ The “Declaration of Sentiments” adopted by the Peace Convention held in Boston, Sept. 18, 19, 20, 1838” was signed by Orthodox Quakers Abby Kelley, Hannah Buffum, Sarah Anna Chase, Sarah Southwick, Thankful Southwick, and Anna R. Southwick.⁶⁴¹ This radical organization was far-reaching in its scope. Their Declaration posited: “.... Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind....” The subscribers refused to make any alliance with any human governments that would be backed by physical force. “.... We...voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority.” They vowed to substitute the Christian covenant of forgiveness for “an eye for an eye”, or the “punishment of enemies”...

One of the resolutions adopted by the group resolved that “books, pictures, and toys at present used in the education of children and youth, lauding the bloody and savage exploits of heroes alias wholesale murderers, are among the most effectual means of laying the foundations of slavery, anarchy, bloodshed, and ruin.” At one point in the proceedings, three men decided to

⁶³⁹ Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski, *The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1987), 24.

⁶⁴⁰ Cooney and Michalowski, *Power of the People*, 25.

⁶⁴¹ “Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Peace Convention held in Boston, Sept. 18, 19, 20, 1838, Signers of the Declaration Sept. 18, 1838”, Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Also *The Liberator*, “Proceedings of the Peace Convention, signers of the Declaration, September 28, 1838.

withdraw from the Peace Conference “on the ground of the admission of women to take part in its proceedings.” Three other members were chosen to replace them and the Conference continued.⁶⁴²

Harriet Alonso notes that Lucretia Mott “attended many local peace meetings, speaking out against war toys for children, the advent of military training in schools and capital punishment. Her favorite theme was the ‘peace principle’ as practiced by the Quakers and espoused by the Garrisonians.”⁶⁴³ In a speech to the Pennsylvania Peace Society, Mott shared her belief that “there is an innate feeling of love of Peace...it is part of the divine nature implanted in us.” Children are born with it, but then “they are taught by their surroundings, by the pomp and parade of the military,” they are drawn in by the military music, “and in many ways the terrible nature of war, which is so revolting to every feeling, is concealed and they are made to see it as something to glory in.” Likewise, the “toys that are given to children...in many instances are calculated to awaken a love of military trappings.”⁶⁴⁴

As a parent, Hicksite Martha Wright was against corporal punishment for children as a method of discipline⁶⁴⁵, and insisted that her children not play with guns. This was one point on which she and her husband disagreed, but Martha apparently prevailed: “David, I see has quite a struggle between respect for my

⁶⁴² “Proceedings of the Peace Convention,” *The Liberator*, September 28, 1838.

⁶⁴³ Alonso, *Peace as a Woman's Issue*, 43.

⁶⁴⁴ Lucretia Mott, “A Faithful Testimony Against Bearing Arms’: Remarks Delivered at the Meeting of the Pennsylvania Peace Society, Abington, Pennsylvania, Sept. 19, 1875,” in Dana Greene, ed., *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 375, 390.

⁶⁴⁵ Philip Greven’s study on child-rearing practices in early America, *The Protestant Temperament*, indicates that early Friends often practiced corporal punishment as parents. Philip

prejudices against guns and the associations of boyhood when his greatest happiness was on his dog and gun..." She despaired that "he gives me little help in my endeavors to inspire Tallman with my own aversion to such a cruel amusement.... Tallman often wishes for a gun...but he will have to wait till he has a house of his own to keep it in."⁶⁴⁶

Martha and David Wright were, however, united against capital punishment. In a letter to her sister, Martha mentioned "the District Attorney invited David to assist in the trial [of Mick Lewis for murder in 1849], but he said he never would assist on the side of the people in a case of life and death."⁶⁴⁷ On another occasion, Martha wrote Lucretia about the failed suicide of a criminal awaiting execution: "Do you want to hear about the judicial Assassination of Wyatt?..." Martha explained that the prisoner tried to commit suicide, fainted and was revived, to be executed three days later. "Fainted twice.... It seems to me a refinement of cruelty to restore a man who has fainted at such a time. Why not hang them while insensible to suffering? How such barbarous laws can exist for a day I cannot see."⁶⁴⁸

All of the women in this study engaged in more than one type of reform—abolition, women's rights, suffrage, and temperance. As Quakers, all were also committed, on religious principle, to pacifism. Yet at this critical time in history

J. Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

⁶⁴⁶ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, March 17, 1847, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

⁶⁴⁷ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, January 9, 1849, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁶⁴⁸ Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, Auburn, August 15, 1846, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

some abolitionists found themselves tempted to make exceptions for the use of arms in the case of freeing the slave.

On November 7, 1837 the murder of abolitionist printer Elijah Lovejoy rocked the reform community. Lovejoy, a Presbyterian minister formerly from the slave-holding state of Missouri found that his printing presses were repeatedly destroyed by mobs of anti-abolitionist vandals. Lovejoy moved his press to “free” territory in Alton, Illinois, and to insure his safety local authorities “armed and deputized Lovejoy and his supporters as a militia.” The vandals continued to come, and Lovejoy died in an exchange of fire while defending his press.⁶⁴⁹

Sarah Pugh reacted to this event in her journal: “.... Alas from the news from Alton.... Why did they arm themselves? They trusted in the arm of the flesh, and what has it availed them? ‘In the...trials yet to come,’ may we be strengthened to hold fast our faith...in the principle of resisting not evil....”⁶⁵⁰ Orthodox Angelina Grimke was equally unwilling to yield her pacifist principles at all in the Lovejoy case. She wrote to William Lloyd Garrison at the *Liberator*, “I believe the Abolitionists of Alton did wrong to arm themselves against the mob; and though I regard brother Lovejoy as a martyr to the cause of Liberty...yet I cannot regard him as a *Christian martyr*.... There is no such thing as trusting in God *and pistols* at the same time....”⁶⁵¹

Sarah Pugh remarked on the importance of the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, “to deliberate on the best means of promoting the interests

⁶⁴⁹ Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 237.

⁶⁵⁰ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 19-20.

of the slave and bringing about his unconditional freedom; and by every *pacific measure* to hasten the utter extinction of the slave trade.”⁶⁵² The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 forced abolitionists in non-slave states like Massachusetts to stand by while escaping refugees like Anthony Burns were arrested and returned to the South. It was not easy to remain steadfast.

Nineteen years later, on October 17, 1859 an event occurred which would occasion even more ambivalence within the abolitionist/pacifist community. An armed group of abolitionists, headed by Captain John Brown⁶⁵³, took over the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. They maintained it for two days, “claiming that their goal was to free as many slaves as possible in the process.”⁶⁵⁴ Brown claimed that he never intended violence, but merely the rescue of large numbers of slaves.⁶⁵⁵ However, guns were involved, violence ensued, Brown was wounded, and his son and at least sixteen others were killed.⁶⁵⁶ The group was arrested after having held the armory for two days and the leaders, including Brown, were hung for treason. What is remarkable is not so much the event itself as the reaction to the event among Northerners, particularly those in the abolitionist and even the pacifist community. Ralph Waldo Emerson called Brown “the saint, whose fate yet hangs in suspense, but whose martyrdom, if it shall be perfected, will make the gallows as glorious as the

⁶⁵¹ Angelina Grimke to William Lloyd Garrison, “Resist Not Evil”, Brookline, 12 month, 10th, *The Liberator*, December 22, 1837.

⁶⁵² *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 23.

⁶⁵³ Brown had previously engaged in an infamous violent struggle in “Bloody Kansas”, where he and others had physically fought to try to establish Kansas as a slave-free state.

⁶⁵⁴ “Attempted Insurrection in Virginia,” *The Liberator*, October 21, 1859.

⁶⁵⁵ *The Liberator*, November 25, 1859.

⁶⁵⁶ “Attempted Insurrection in Virginia,” *The Liberator*, October 21, 1859.

cross.”⁶⁵⁷ Henry David Thoreau said in his homage to Brown, “You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the savior of four millions of men.”⁶⁵⁸

It is interesting that Pugh, while she had no sympathy for the acts of Elijah Lovejoy, and while she reiterated her commitment to pacifist action in 1840, yet showed something approaching “reverence” in her journal in 1859 for violent abolitionist John Brown: “Last evening W. Phillips gave his magnificent lecture on the noble Toussaint L’Ouverture; it was worthy of them both, and of the heroic John Brown, whose character and actions were brought out in full relief, and with a halo of glory that cannot soon fade....”⁶⁵⁹ It appears that the growing feeling of hopelessness in the abolitionist camp at this time in their struggle led even the staunchest of pacifists to consider less pacific measures.

Orthodox Quaker abolitionist Rebecca Buffum Spring, another of the daughters of Orthodox Quaker abolitionist Arnold Buffum, was particularly moved by the abolitionist witness of John Brown, and set out to find him wherever he was in prison, bringing her son and carrying “linen for bandages...and a bottle of arnica.”⁶⁶⁰ In her search she encountered a Quaker who obviously did not share her respect for Brown and his actions. Spring describes this encounter with a fellow Quaker when she inquired after Lydia Maria Child and Brown: “The Friend

⁶⁵⁷ *The Liberator*, November 11, 1859.

⁶⁵⁸ Henry David Thoreau, “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” Read to the citizens of Concord, Mass., Sunday Evening, October 30, 1859. Also as the fifth lecture of the Fraternity Course in Boston, November 1; and at Worcester, November 3,” <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/thoreau/johnbrown.html> (accessed 3/26/08).

⁶⁵⁹ *Memorial of Sarah Pugh*, 95.

⁶⁶⁰ Rebecca Buffum Spring, “A Visit to John Brown in 1859”, in Salitan and Perera, *Virtuous Lives*, 118.

flew into a most unfriendly rage. Starting to his feet he shouted: 'I have nothing, and will have nothing to do with these things.'" After further interchange the Friend offered, "...I wouldn't receive her if she came.'" Spring replied, "I rather think John Woolman would." To this, the Friend replied, "I don't care what John Woolman would. I know David Howells wouldn't."⁶⁶¹ Spring found Brown without help from her fellow Quaker, and brought her son to visit him in prison, carrying the gifts of a rose and a garland of "rich autumn [leaves] ...fastened together with thorns."⁶⁶² She told Brown she had one question, "not for myself, but for others. In what you did at Harper's Ferry were you actuated by a spirit of revenge?" She notes that Brown was taken back for a moment, then responded, "No, not in all the wrongs done to me and my family in Kansas did I ever have a feeling of revenge." Spring appears to have been satisfied with Brown's reply. She and her son remained in town for several days and received news of Brown's improving health, and were summoned by Brown for one final visit at his request (to convey a message to Brown's wife in Philadelphia). She describes him in their final meeting: "Capt. Brown was sitting at a table, writing." She noted that his hair, previously matted with blood, was now clean and brushed. "Thrown up from his brow, it made a soft white halo around his head. His high white forehead expressed a sort of glory. He looked like an inspired old prophet.... The last farewell was a silent one. Our hearts were too full for words...."

Following the execution, Mr. and Mrs. Spring sent for the bodies of Brown's party and had them returned to their home in Eagleswood, where

⁶⁶¹ Rebecca Buffum Spring "A Visit to John Brown," 199.

⁶⁶² RB Spring "A Visit to John Brown," 121.

services were held for them and they were laid to rest in the family's burial ground.⁶⁶³

On the night of John Brown's execution, Susan B. Anthony engaged a hall in Rochester for a "memorial meeting" of abolitionists: "Susan went from door to door selling tickets, priced at fifty cents to keep the rabble away...and the proceeds were sent to John Brown's widow. Susan was but one of the brave who dared consequences by voicing their indignation and sorrow...."⁶⁶⁴

Lynn Sherr reproduces the inscription that Anthony left at the Brown Farm in Lake Placid in 1891 on the visitors' register: "Both of my brothers—D.R. & J.M. Anthony were with John Brown in every way of his Kansas enterprizes [sic]—They were perilous days--& no one did so much to give the history to freedom—as did John Brown & the handful of men who stood with him—at least—in the opinion of Susan B. Anthony..."⁶⁶⁵

While Brown was being held for execution, his wife stayed in the home of pacifists Lucretia and James Mott in Philadelphia. After Brown's execution, Lucretia Mott made a public, though somewhat ambiguous, statement to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society at their meeting in October of 1860. After first stating that the Society did not "sanction the measures resorted to by John Brown," that "our principles lead us to reject and to intreat [sic] the oppressed to reject all carnal weapons", Mott declared, "we praise Brown for his heroism." "For it is not John Brown the soldier that we praise; it is John Brown the moral hero; John Brown the noble confessor and martyr whom we honor...." Mott said

⁶⁶³ RB Spring "A Visit to John Brown," 123-4.

⁶⁶⁴ Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony*, 135.

of herself: “Robert Purvis has said that I was ‘the most belligerent non-resistant he ever saw.’ I accept the character he gives me; and I glory in it.... I am no advocate of passivity....” Mott added her belief that “the early Friends were agitators; disturbers of the peace; and were more obnoxious in their day to charges, which are now so freely made, than we are....”⁶⁶⁶

When the Civil War did break out, both of Susan B. Anthony’s brothers enlisted with the Union army,⁶⁶⁷ but Susan retained her pacifist stance. She described her reaction to the choice for war in a letter to a fellow abolitionist: “I can not welcome the demon of expediency or consent to be an abettor...of wicked means to accomplish an end, not even for the sake of emancipating the slaves.... The Abolitionists.... have yielded to the world’s motto—‘the end justifies the means.’”⁶⁶⁸

Lucretia Mott’s relationship to the peace testimony was complex during the Civil War. Lucretia seldom wavered in her belief in and advocacy of peace. In fact, in an editorial in the *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison publicly credits Lucretia with shocking him with the idea (earlier voiced by Quakers Hannah Barnard and Isaac Shackleton) that “she did not believe God ever authorized or

⁶⁶⁵ Lynn Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 38.

⁶⁶⁶ Lucretia Mott, Speech to the 24th Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, October 25-26, 1860, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, November 3, 1860, <http://quaker.org/mott/no-passivist.html>. (accessed 3/30/2008). The distinction between pacifism and passivity is key to the believers of the Society of Friends. Rufus Jones notes, “In the early stages of the movement Quakerism was not so much a ‘testimony’ against war as the proclamation and exhibition of a kind of Christianity that risked everything on the venture of the conquering power of love. It was a type of life which eliminated war because it eliminated hate...” Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* in Two Volumes, Volume I (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.), 1921), 157. This distinction was also especially important to the women reformers at a time when nineteenth century societal expectations were for women to be passive and remain in the home.

⁶⁶⁷ Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 37.

sanctioned war, in any age or nation.” When he asked Lucretia for further explanation about the wars waged in the Old Testament by Moses and Joshua, Lucretia replied “I can more easily believe that man is fallible, than that God is changeable.”⁶⁶⁹ When her nephew Willy decided to enlist in the Union Army, Lucretia wrote to her sister Martha, “A strange thing it is, that the glories of war can, in any wise, reconcile one to the perils. It is in vain to say much on the subject now, but my convictions are as strong as ever, that a better and more effectual way will be found as civilization advances.”⁶⁷⁰

Yet Anna Hallowell describes Lucretia’s strange ambivalence to the local Union camp’s black troops. “As an abolitionist, she gave the movement her sympathy, but as an advocate of peace, she condemned any resort to carnal weapons. With these conflicting feelings, she seldom visited the camp, and seemed indifferent to its affairs as a military body; but she found many chances to befriend its inmates, both officers and privates, as individuals.” Hallowell paints an incongruous picture of the troops marching out to war with the Confederate army and Lucretia running up to them with a gingerbread in her apron for each man.⁶⁷¹

The Civil War brought the Wright family into a maelstrom of contradictory feelings and emotional dynamics. Like many Americans in the nineteenth century, including Mary Todd Lincoln, Martha Wright had relatives on both sides of the slavery conflict. Many of her Pelham relatives, from her first marriage,

⁶⁶⁸ Susan B Anthony to Beriah Green, May 22, 1861, in Harper, *Life and Work of SBA*, Vol. I, 214-215.

⁶⁶⁹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 296-297.

⁶⁷⁰ Lucretia Mott to Martha Wright, in Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 402

were slaveholders and supporters of the institution, and Martha managed throughout the struggles to hold both her strong beliefs and her family ties. In 1853, in the midst of one of Martha and Lucretia's reform-related trips, they went to Kentucky to meet her late husband's brother, John Pelham. In a letter to David, Martha relates: "John said to me he hoped Mrs. Mott wd. not allude to slavery—the notice had been given for a religious meeting. I told him that Anti Slavery was eminently religious....She felt herself called of God, & it is not for me, sd I, to come between her and her convictions of duty..."⁶⁷²

Martha's letters show her struggle and gradual evolution toward the acceptance of violence in the cause of abolition. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 left the question of these two new states' slave status up to its inhabitants, and the violence referred to as "bloody Kansas" resulted, Martha wrote the following letter to Universalist minister W.R.G. Mellen: "[David] feels quite a strong interest in Kansas affairs, and says if any fighting is necessary for Freedom, he means to be thar [sic]..." People would counter, "'Why, Mr. Wright, I thought you were a non-resistant.'" To this, Wright responded that..."like Theodore Parker [a prominent Unitarian minister and abolitionist], he never adopted that nonsense. I hope those who are there will maintain their ground manfully, and not be driven off by the idle threats of the Missourians--"⁶⁷³

In a later letter to Mellen, she pondered the depth of her own pacifism: "I have often thought if we had all participated in your enthusiasm and gone with you to

⁶⁷¹ Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 406-407.

⁶⁷² Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 104, also quoting MCW to DW, Oct. 23, 1853, Garrison Family Papers.

Kansas to live, what would have been the result....Do you think we could have held firmly to non-Resistant principles-- are you sure that you could?"⁶⁷⁴

Martha and David would move as far as it is possible to move from a non-resistant stance when one of their own sons decided to join the Union army. In October of 1862, Willy Wright was appointed a second lieutenant in the "1st New York Independent Battery" of the Union Army. Martha now had a son on one side of the conflict and a nephew (John Pelham) on the other.⁶⁷⁵

The Wrights were more than proud of their military son. In 1863, Martha wrote Willy that they awaited his return home, but, "we look forward to the time, proud as we can be, tho: that you can be classed with the 'Veterans' in this holy war between Liberty +Slavery." In this letter, the connections between abolition and the War in Martha's mind were absolutely clear. Martha told Willy: "My only hope for permanent peace, is in a decree of immediate & unconditional emancipation under the War power—My great fear, is that the War may be temporarily ended, by some hollow compromise, only to give time for new atrocities on the part of the slave power and its supporters."⁶⁷⁶

After the war, during which Willy was wounded but not fatally, Martha felt no less strongly in her anger against the secessionists. She wrote to her son-in-law, "I dread any misplaced 'magnanimity' toward the leaders of the Rebellion, &

⁶⁷³ Martha Coffin Wright to Reverend Mellen, June 6, 1855, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁶⁷⁴ Martha Coffin Wright to Rev. Mellen, Nov. 14, 1856, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

⁶⁷⁵ Penney and Livingston, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, 154-156.

⁶⁷⁶ Martha Coffin Wright to William Pelham Wright, Philadelphia, March 25, 1862, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

the murderers of our prisoners. I would not have one hanged, but disfranchised & their land confiscated.”⁶⁷⁷

One major Orthodox peace activist who characterized the turn of the century from nineteenth to twentieth is Hannah Clark Johnston Bailey⁶⁷⁸. Like many other Quakers, the Civil War brought Hannah into conflict with her own pacifist principles and those of her religion. While firmly committed to pacifism, Hannah also understood when two of her brothers decided to enlist in the Union Army. On October 14, 1861 she wrote to her brother Frank: “.... Our Country has called...your services...in putting down rebellion and slavery and instituting freedom and peace in a permanent reign over a land which has been so long noted for its freedom. May God help me...make the sacrifice and help you bravely to defend your Country’s good...”⁶⁷⁹ Frank Johnston would return from the war. However, her younger brother Joseph Johnston, who also enlisted in the Union army, died in 1864 as a result of injuries suffered during the Battle of the Wilderness.⁶⁸⁰

In 1868 Hannah Johnston married Moses Bailey, also a member of the Society of Friends. The couple were members of the Winthrop, Maine

⁶⁷⁷ Penney and Livingston, p. 169, also quoting MCW to WLG Jr., Apr. 12, 1865, Garrison Family Papers.

⁶⁷⁸ Bailey was born to David and Letitia C. Johnston in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York in 1839. David Johnston was a recorded minister within the Society of Friends, and Hannah attended Friends school. (Jennifer Wixson, “Private Piety, Public Witness: A Study of the Contrasting Religious Spaces Allotted to Nineteenth Century Maine Protestant Women and Their Quaker Sisters”, Master’s Thesis, Bangor Theological Seminary, 1997, 170, Friends’ Historical Library, Swarthmore College).

⁶⁷⁹ Hannah Johnston, in Wixson, “Private Piety, Public Witness”, 226-227.

⁶⁸⁰ Wixson, “Private Piety, Public Witness,” 226.

monthly meeting.⁶⁸¹ In Jennifer Wixson's study of Hannah Johnston's "ministry" she notes that "most of Hannah's 'official' activism began after the death of her husband in June of 1882," the period of her marriage being involved with "attend[ing] the needs of her husband and their son, Moses Melvin ... Bailey, who was born in 1869."⁶⁸² In keeping with Wixson's analysis, Hannah wrote a 400 page biography of her husband Moses, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, in which she describes herself in the third person. The book gives us not only information about Moses' life but also a great deal of insight into Hannah's theology and religious views, and it is notable in this regard that she writes this nearly 400 page volume on behalf of her husband and not herself. For example, when she writes about their wedding, she writes that "Moses Bailey was married to Hannah C. Johnston, daughter of David Johnston of Plattekill," and so on, without any indication of her own involvement or feelings. When discussing her husband's prayer life she writes: "His wife can recall but two instances when he offered vocal prayer publicly..." However, "she well remembers precious seasons when they knelt together in the retirement of their own room and he voiced his petitions audibly, in sweet, earnest, pleading prayer."⁶⁸³ It is interesting, since the Quaker tradition was, indeed, so open to the witness and recorded ministry of women, that Hannah chose to stand behind her husband in this regard. Apparently she

⁶⁸¹ "Leading Worker of W.C.T.U. Dies: Mrs. Hannah J. Bailey Also Noted as Suffragist", news article from 1923, p. 7 in the papers of Hannah Johnston Bailey, Papers, 1858-1923, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

⁶⁸² Wixson, "Private Piety, Public Witness", 180.

⁶⁸³ Hannah Johnston Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life* (Portland, ME.: Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, 1896), 51.

felt constrained to postpone her own career of political activism and theological commentary until she felt she had finished supporting her husband's ministry.

Johnston espouses a typical Orthodox theology which is Jesus-centered, and would fit very comfortably into a credo. For example, she discussed: "faith in the sacrifice of...our Lord Jesus Christ for us and the shedding of His life-blood...as an atonement for our sins which else must banish us into eternal condemnation...."⁶⁸⁴

Hannah appears to have made two references to the Hicksite schism in her book. In the first she related how several Quaker ministers believed that if only more Bible schools had been established for young people, so that "a knowledge of 'the Holy Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,'" had been "early imprinted on the minds of the young," perhaps "some of the divisions which have caused so much trouble in the Society might have been avoided."⁶⁸⁵

In the other section in which Bailey alluded to the schism, she warned about the dangers of being seduced by the world and by the natural: "...we may be induced to mix a little of the spirit of the world and our own natural desires with that of the true Spirit of Christ. But these are so antagonistical that they cannot be safely commingled and if we attempt it we shall be in danger of spiritual death...."⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ Hannah Johnston Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life* (Portland, ME: Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, 1896), 46.

⁶⁸⁵ Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, 90.

⁶⁸⁶ Bailey, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, 153-154.

Wixson's view of Bailey is that "following her husband's death June 6, 1882, Hannah came into her own as a reformer, activist, preacher and business woman (she took over her husband's three businesses)." Bailey joined the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1883,⁶⁸⁷ and published the story of her husband's life, *Reminiscences of a Christian Life*, in 1885.

Like the other women in this study, Bailey would be involved in many different reforms, but was best known for her peace witness activities within the Women's Christian Temperance Union, where she served as "superintendent of the Department of Peace and Arbitration".⁶⁸⁸ In his study of the WCTU, Ian Tyrrell notes, "Frank L. Byrne can claim with some justice that, for the pre-World War I period, Hannah orchestrated what was 'the greatest women's peace movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.'"⁶⁸⁹ Terrell notes that Bailey was the national superintendent of the Women's Christian Temperance Union for thirty years, as well as directing the World WCTU branch from 1889-1920.⁶⁹⁰

Like many of her peers in Victorian society, male and female, Bailey believed that women as mothers held a special role in the upbringing of peaceful

⁶⁸⁷ Wixson, "Private Piety, Public Witness," 182.

⁶⁸⁸ Description, Hannah Johnston Bailey Papers, 1858-1923, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁶⁸⁹ Ian R. Terrell, *Woman's World/ Woman's Empire: the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) 171.

⁶⁹⁰ Terrell, *Woman's World/ Woman's Empire*, 172. Quakers were historically active in the temperance movement. Blocker et. al., note that "George Fox drew their attention to the problem of drink as early as 1643," and later yearly meetings stressed "temperance" and "moderation" as religious values. In 1857, the Society officially strengthened their position against alcohol. "None of this advice was forced upon the individual, but in practice Friends complied. Further 'advice' on the question of drink later moved [Quakers] from earlier moderation to abstinence." Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey, and Ian R. Tyrrell, Editors, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia, Two Volume Set* (Santa Barbara, CA.: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 456.

and civilized citizens. She believed that peace education began very early, and embodied that philosophy in a children's newspaper she called "The Acorn", which she published from 1889-1901 out of her hometown in Winthrop Centre, Maine. In the highly decorated masthead for the paper Bailey featured a boy and a girl, animals resembling a wolf and a lamb, the watchwords "Temperance", "Peace", and "Purity" floating above, and below the words "Great oaks from little acorns grow."⁶⁹¹ It included uplifting stories and poems, references to scripture and contests for the children who did the best job of spreading or embodying the gospel of peace. Bailey's editorial to the children in her first edition is typical of her approach: "...You know when Johnnie or Polly or Bobby or some of the rest of the schoolmates borrow your slate pencil and carelessly break it in two pieces and don't feel sorry..." Bailey notes there is something in the child at this time that causes him or her to "chase the offender round the playground and catch him, and if you get a chance, strike him, or scratch him and call him as wicked names as you dare to. Isn't that so?...." Bailey explains that this kind of reaction is "very wicked, and it is Satan who stands behind you and aids you on...." Bailey counsels the children in this situation to: "... Conquer your wicked feelings and then there will come into your heart a feeling of quiet rest, and you will realize how blessed it is to conquer satan." If the children will follow Bailey's advice, "I shall not have to explain the meaning of the word 'Peace,' for you will know by experience what it is....." ⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ *The Acorn*, volume I, Winthrop Centre, Maine, U.S.A., July 1889, No. 1, 1 in Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁶⁹² Bailey, Editorial, *The Acorn*, Volume 1 No. I Winthrop Centre Maine, July, 1889, 1-2, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Johnston's editorial is a fascinating window into the genius of the nineteenth century feminist pacifist movement. First she posits that the ingredients for war begin in childhood, a time when Victorian society believed that women had a great deal of power to mold young minds. Second, war began in the human heart-- not at the negotiating tables of great men of power but in the hearts of individuals struggling with their own demons of anger, jealousy, retribution, and a variety of very normal human feelings. The ultimate goal was the control of one's *own feelings*. The man or woman who is able to *conquer* his or her negative feelings is the one who defeats Satan and achieves peace. The person who learns to conquer his or her feelings in childhood is well practiced to do so when the big conflicts of adulthood are presented. This is how peace is achieved, not by the control of outer factors alone, or even primarily—but by the early training of the human heart.

Hannah Johnston Bailey would probably have understood perfectly why it was so important for Rebecca Buffum Spring interviewing John Brown to ask if he had committed his acts of violence in a state of anger or hatred. —Because for her, intentions in the heart of the actor were as important as were the actions themselves.

Johnston was also one of many pacifist feminists who would encourage society to move away from war toys for children, warning, "One of the first steps towards bringing about a cessation of warfare is to keep the children from a love of military pursuits and this can never be accomplished so long as they are supplied with military toys." The WCTU Peace department under Hannah

Johnston Bailey would also discuss issues including labor disputes, lynching, boxing, arbitration, and animal cruelty.⁶⁹³ For Bailey and the women of the WCTU, peace, gender, family, and alcohol were all intimately related. The Union declared it their goal to achieve “in the love of God, and of Humanity...the protection of the home by outlawing the liquor traffic in alcoholic liquors, opium, tobacco and impurity; the suppression by law of gambling, and Sunday desecration, the enfranchisement of the women of all nations; and the establishment of courts of national and international arbitration—which shall banish war from the world.”⁶⁹⁴

Ian Terrell argues that while Bailey is to be lauded for her appreciation and advocacy of arbitration and its place in the peace making process,⁶⁹⁵ the ladies of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union could also be faulted for straddling a complicated relationship between pacifism and anti-imperialism on the one hand, and American ethnocentric patriotism on the other. Terrell believes that during some of the international conflicts of the early 20th century, the WCTU “attached itself...to the concept of America as ‘a redeemer nation’ whose purpose was to realize ‘the great trend of the Divine purpose for a universal humanity.’ This approach sanctioned military interference in the affairs of other nations and identified progress with the assertion of American values.”⁶⁹⁶

Terrell’s point is important, but it should also be understood that the concept of America as a “redeemer nation” was much bigger than the Women’s Christian

⁶⁹³ Terrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 175.

⁶⁹⁴ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 50-51.

⁶⁹⁵ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 178.

⁶⁹⁶ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 187.

Temperance Union. It undergirded all of nineteenth century American reform, male and female, and could arguably be traced back to the origins of the American experiment and the City on a Hill.

Terrell observes that Hannah Johnston Bailey “was ... a founding member of the Woman’s Peace Party in 1915 and supported the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom after World War I.”⁶⁹⁷ The Woman’s Peace Party, according to Harriet Alonso, was “created as a direct response to the European conflict of 1914”, and “became both the suffrage wing of the peace movement and the pacifist wing of the suffrage movement.”⁶⁹⁸ The WILPF would be the internationalized version of the American Woman’s Peace Party.⁶⁹⁹ These early twentieth century women’s peace movements followed in the steps of the earliest American peace societies and the Worcester National Women’s Convention in acknowledging the connections between American women and others. Terrell discusses Johnston’s political activism for peace, as she communicated with legislators, the W.C.T.U. and the President, to create support for key projects affecting issues of war and peace such as the Hague Peace Conference of 1899.⁷⁰⁰

Hannah Johnston Bailey also emphasized the direct connections between women’s suffrage and the peace.⁷⁰¹ She served as president of the Maine Woman Suffrage Association from 1891-1899, and was also a member of the

⁶⁹⁷ Terrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire* 176.

⁶⁹⁸ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 56.

⁶⁹⁹ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 83.

⁷⁰⁰ Terrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 177.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

National American Woman Suffrage Association.⁷⁰² In her Annual Address of the Maine Women's Suffrage Association in Portland, 1896, Bailey said: "As the home is at its best when the father and mother consult together in regard to the family interests, so it is with the government. If the peace loving sex, the mothers of soldiers, can have their way wars will soon cease and peace be established in the earth and man 'learn war no more.'" ⁷⁰³

Hicksite and Orthodox reformers participated together in peace activism, reflecting one of the fundamental reform values of the Society of Friends. Women from both sides of the divide worked together to campaign against violence in war, violence at home, military training for young people and war toys for children, and capital punishment. The biggest challenge to the reformers' pacifist witness, testing Hicksite and Orthodox women equally, concerned the plight of the slave and the Civil War. Both sides struggled with it and each woman made her own individual decisions along the way. There was no difference between the methods or goals of peace witness employed by the Hicksite and Orthodox reformers during this time, and both sides struggled mightily with the abolition issue as it touched several issues they felt very strongly about—their belief in pacifism and the need for immediate emancipation and human justice.

⁷⁰² "Hannah Johnston Bailey Papers, 1858-1923" description, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁰³ Hannah Johnston Bailey, "Annual Address of the President of the Maine Woman's Suffrage Association", Portland, 1896, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Chapter 8: Early 20th Century Peace Reformers Bring Early Healing of the Schism

The beginning of the twentieth century would be a triumphal time for Quaker women reformers. First, the struggles of temperance and women's suffrage finally bore fruit in the 18th and 19th amendments to the American constitution. This was a tribute to the activities of reformers like Hannah Johnston Bailey of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, suffragists like Hicksites Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul, and the other female reformers who have been featured in this study. But America faced new challenges in the turn of the century. Reformers were challenged with cities growing quickly beyond their capacities for housing, large numbers of immigrants coming to already crowded areas, health crises, and other problems created by America's industrial revolution. Quaker reformers— Grace and Edith Abbott, Florence Kelley, and others-- were at the forefront, meeting the new challenges head-on.

Quaker pacifists were also faced with the First World War. Hannah Clothier Hull, and Lucy Biddle Lewis engaged with other women in international efforts to negotiate peace. Quaker women helped to create the Women's Peace Party and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. They negotiated with world leaders on issues of war and peace. Two women strongly influenced by the Society of Friends (although not members themselves)⁷⁰⁴, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, became the first two women to win the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition, activated by the challenge of the war, Hicksite and

⁷⁰⁴ Jane Addams had great respect for the Quakers and was the daughter of Hicksite John Addams, but never became a member herself. Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 147. Emily Greene Balch became a member by conviction late in her career.

Orthodox reformers joined together again, and for the first time since the schism, formally created a peace committee to address their national problem. Hicksites and Orthodox worked together again, as they had done in the abolition crisis and on women's rights issues, but now in an all-Quaker committee that would eventually come to be known as the American Friends Service Committee. This would be the first step in the healing of the Hicksite schism, which would not become final and complete until 1955, and it recognized a unity of reform ideals and values which had been active and working in American history and in the women's community since the Society of Friends began. When it came to reform, and the values of working for peace, equality and social justice, American Quaker women had never been split; only their theology and hermeneutics divided them. With the formation of the Friends Peace Committee and the American Friends Service Committee, the unity of the reform community that had always existed morally could finally be recognized and acknowledged.

Urban reformer and peace activist Jane Addams was not a Quaker but was strongly influenced in her upbringing by her father, "self-styled Hicksite John Addams".⁷⁰⁵ Addams was one of the first women reformers to realize the dire needs of the urban poor and the immigrant populations of the late nineteenth century. She responded by creating Hull House, a settlement house she opened in Chicago in 1889 with Ellen Starr.⁷⁰⁶ In this ingenious social experiment, Addams and others engaged in "life-learning" about the key issues of the day—

⁷⁰⁵ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 147.

⁷⁰⁶ Carol Stoneburner, Appendix I: "Time Line of American Female Public Friends, 1650-1950", in Carol and John Stoneburner, Editors, *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 448.

sweatshops, the needs of the immigrant population, the dangers of factory work, and the problems of the poor. Hull House became a model for other settlement houses across the country, and the women of Hull House “assisted in the creation of new fields of academic study and the creation of new professional fields open to women.”⁷⁰⁷ In 1931 Addams would become the first woman to receive a Nobel Peace Prize for her work.⁷⁰⁸

Joining in the urban reform efforts were Quakers Edith and Grace Abbott, who also lived and worked at Hull House. Grace Abbott became an advocate for the needs of immigrants and children, becoming the head of the Immigrants Protective League in 1908, and in 1917 the head of the Child Labor Division of the Federal Children’s Bureau.⁷⁰⁹ In 1933 she would help Franklin Delano Roosevelt draft the Social Security Act.⁷¹⁰ Edith Abbott published a treatise on *The Real Jail Problem* in 1915, and became Dean of the School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago in 1924.⁷¹¹

Florence Kelley was another key Quaker reformer involved in Hull House and urban reform. Born a Hicksite Quaker, Florence’s maternal great- great-grandfather was a famous Quaker botanist, John Bartram, and her mother’s aunt was Quaker reformer Sarah Pugh, who had a great deal of influence on Florence’s beliefs. Her father, William Kelley, was a Progressive Congressman, who held that “Democracy believes not only in the rights of man to own himself

⁷⁰⁷ Carol Stoneburner, “Introduction: Drawing a Profile of American Female Public Friends as Shapers of Human Space,” In Stoneburner, *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 48.

⁷⁰⁸ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 462.

⁷⁰⁹ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 454, 457.

⁷¹⁰ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 462.

⁷¹¹ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 459.

but believes it to be the duty of government to protect the poor and the weak, and to secure to every child born into this beautiful world equal chances before the State and in society.”⁷¹² Florence remembered her father teaching her to read with a book that featured poor working children in England. When criticized for giving such dark material to a child, William Kelley responded that “life can never be right for all the children until the cherished boys and girls were taught to know the facts in the lives of their less fortunate contemporaries.”⁷¹³ Florence Kelley would grow up to defend the rights of poor children and mothers in America, publishing *Our Tiling Children* in 1889, and earning her law degree in 1894, the same year she became General Secretary to the National Consumers’ League.⁷¹⁴ She helped establish the National Child Labor Committee in 1904, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909, and assisted Justice Louis Brandeis on a brief concerning minimum wage legislation from 1911-1913.⁷¹⁵

Emily Greene Balch was a twentieth century social reformer and peace activist who became a Quaker by conversion, like the Grimke sisters. Balch grew up in Boston, the daughter of liberal Unitarian parents, and attended college at Bryn Mawr, a college with Orthodox Quaker roots.⁷¹⁶ Balch became an activist professor at the Department of Economics and Sociology at Wellesley College,

⁷¹² Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation’s Work: the Rise of Women’s Political*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 13.

⁷¹³ Susan S. Forbe, “‘No Gentle Saint’ Florence Kelley as a Shaper of Social Space,” in Carol and John Stoneburner, Eds., *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 331.

⁷¹⁴ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 448-450.

⁷¹⁵ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 452, 454-455.

⁷¹⁶ Barbara Miller Solomon, “Emily Greene Balch and the Tradition of Peace: New England Brahmin and Convinced Quaker”, in Carol and John Stoneburner, Eds., *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 359-361.

where she addressed relevant issues of labor and economy in her classroom while she also served the community on committees dealing with issues like factory inspection, minimum wage, and immigration.⁷¹⁷ In 1919 Balch's teaching position at Wellesley was terminated because of her controversial activism,⁷¹⁸ and in 1921 she decided to formally join the Society of Friends in London, saying that she had "found in my Quaker membership a constant rebuke and challenge and support".⁷¹⁹ Quite aware at that time of the Hicksite schism in her own country, Balch noted, "I did not want to become a member of either of the two groups into which the Hicksite controversy had split American Quakers, an unhappy occurrence which seemed to me quite abhorrent to the ideals of Quakerism." She made a conscious decision to avoid choosing by joining in England, where in her view "no division had occurred."⁷²⁰ In 1946 Balch would become the second woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her activism, particularly for her work with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.⁷²¹

With the coming of World War I in 1915, female pacifists from around the world gathered to meet the crisis. American women formed the American Women's Peace Party, and Jane Addams was appointed President.⁷²² An International Conference of Women was held at The Hague, and the American delegation included Jane Addams, Grace Abbott, and Emily Greene Balch (not

⁷¹⁷ Barbara Miller Solomon, "Emily Greene Balch," 363.

⁷¹⁸ Barbara Miller Solomon, "Emily Greene Balch," 371.

⁷¹⁹ Barbara Miller Solomon, "Emily Greene Balch," 371; Mercedes Moritz Randall, *Improper Bostonian, Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1946* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), 48.

⁷²⁰ Mercedes Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 291.

⁷²¹ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 464.

yet a Quaker at this time). 1915 also marks the founding year of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Jane Addams was made President of this organization as well, and Florence Kelley and Emily Greene Balch were founding members.⁷²³ In an international peace publication of which Balch was an editor, she observed that women like herself were at a unique place in history: "Women are...outside of the politics of the past and they are just now entering in political life even when they have not yet the vote. If they are often inexperienced and ignorant they are also largely free from bad old political habits and traditions, and free to strike out a new political method, not dominated by party..."⁷²⁴

The beginning of World War I was a crisis for the Quaker community as well. In 1915, a group of Quakers in Winona Lake, Indiana, overwhelmed with concern about the encroaching European war and their role in it as American Quakers, started the Friends Peace Committee. This group of Quakers, male and female, Hicksite and Orthodox, from different states across the country gathered on July 26, 1915, and came up with the following Statement of

⁷²² Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 205.

⁷²³ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 456. It is also interesting to note here one well-known female pacifist of the early twentieth century who was not influenced by Quaker thought. Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress in 1916, had the distinction of voting "no" for the U.S. involvement in both the first and the second World Wars. The only religious influence her biographers list in her life was a family influence in Christian Science, and to Rankin's mind it was a negative influence. Lopach and Luckowski note, "Jeannette Rankin made it clear that she did not 'want any goddamn Christian words spoken over [her] grave.' Her deep dislike of Christianity—Saint Paul in particular—stemmed from its justifying war and making its believers 'into sheep.'" Gail Collins, *America's Women: Four Hundred Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates and Heroines* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 302-303, 373; Hannah Geffen Josephson, *Jeannette Rankin, First Lady in Congress, A Biography* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974); James J. Lopach and Jean A. Luckowski, *Jeannette Rankin: A Political Woman* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 20-21.

⁷²⁴ Emily Greene Balch, editorial in *Pax et Libertas*, Vol. I, No. 1, Feb. 1920, p. 1, in Mercedes Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 282.

Purpose: “With great unanimity, we reaffirm the principle, which Friends have always maintained, that war and Christianity are irreconcilable...” The group said that this time constituted both a “crisis in the affairs of our nation” and “a unique opportunity to press the principles of peace.” They expressed their belief that military preparedness would serve as a “cause of suspicion and war, rather than an insurance of peace”, and asked the readers to “make energetic efforts in your neighborhoods to spread the principles of peace....”[followed by 13 practical suggestions for peacemaking].⁷²⁵ The names of the executive committee signing the letter included two women: Carolena Wood of Mount Kisco, New York and Lucy Biddle Lewis of Landsdowne, Pennsylvania.

Carolena Wood was an Orthodox Quaker and a member of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting in New York.⁷²⁶ Her father was a graduate of Westtown School and Haverford, a prominent Orthodox Quaker in the New York Conference. He was also crucial to the founding of the American Friends Service Committee. Carolena’s brother, L. Hollingworth Wood was also actively involved in Quaker social activism including the American Friends Service Committee, and other significant programs involved with racial equality and peace⁷²⁷.

Lucy Biddle Lewis was a Hicksite Quaker born to a well-known Quaker family of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Her father, Clement Biddle, had been active in the Hicksite Friends, and in the fostering of Quaker educational

⁷²⁵ Friends National Peace Committee Statement of Purpose, July 26, 1915, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷²⁶ Carolena M. Wood Papers, Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore College.

institutions.⁷²⁸ Lewis would serve not only with the Friends Peace Committee but also as a charter member of the Women's Peace Party. Jane Addams would also name her as one of her key national advisors, and she would serve as a trustee of Friends' Swarthmore College.⁷²⁹

Filed along with the statement in a folder of the Friends' National Peace committee's correspondence from 1915 is what appears to be a masterlist of the group's eventual membership marked at the top with "Please return to H.J. Cadbury Earlham", the head of the committee. This list consists of a total of 137 names, from a variety of towns and states. Of these thirty-two members are listed as Hicksite, eighty-two listed as Orthodox, one as Gurneyite, and the remainder as "other religions" or "none specified". This is interesting for several reasons. First, it shows the diversity of the committee. Second, it shows that as late as 1915, even in the wake of the World War, Friends still did care to note who was Hicksite and who was Orthodox. The schism was still being kept alive in 1915. But perhaps without realizing it, the Friends National Peace Committee may have been taking the first steps toward the healing of the Hicksite schism. This was the first formal effort towards united social and political reform that was made by the two sides.

On August 23 of the same year, the Friends National Peace Conference Executive Committee sent the following in a letter to President Wilson, signed by

⁷²⁷ Barbour, Densmore, Moger, Sorel, Van Wagner, and Worrall, *Quaker Crosscurrents*, 211, 213, 248-249.

⁷²⁸ Description, Biddle Family Papers, Friends Historic Library, Swarthmore College.

⁷²⁹ "Letter from Jane Addams to Carrie Chapman Catt, 5-31-27," Document 14: Jane Addams to Carrie Chapman Catt, 31 May 1927, Library of Congress, National American Woman Suffrage Association Papers (Jane Addams Papers Microfilm, reel 18, #1861-1867), <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/mililt/doc14.htm> (accessed 10/18/2008).

Chairman Henry Cadbury, at Haverford College: "May I again call your attention to the enclosed resolutions adopted last month by this conference representing all branches of the Society of Friends in the United States or over 100,000."

Cadbury was able to speak for the entire denomination, "and we believe an increasing number of our fellow citizens will unreservedly support your every effort to maintain our nation in a position of self-controlled and dignified patient good-will toward all the nations of the world..."⁷³⁰ In a handwritten note at the end, Cadbury added, "We not only oppose war for ourselves and our country. But we believe in positive and aggressive peace making".

A sampling of letters written by women, Quaker and non-Quaker, to the FNPC gives some indication of the important role that this organization began to play for Friends and non-Friends alike during this time. Eleanor Wood, an Orthodox Quaker from Tamworth, New Hampshire, wrote: "Dear Friend, - It seems to me that Friends everywhere can unite against increase of armaments and that we should speak forcefully and plainly on the subject when it comes up definitely at Washington." Wood asked whether further actions such as lobbying Congress or creating a Quaker petition would be of helpful.⁷³¹

This letter indicates not only the involvement of Quakers in the activity of the FNPC, their feelings that they were a part of it and could therefore have some say in how its activities were conducted, but also adds to the overwhelming predominance of evidence that has grown since the Civil War that the Friends

⁷³⁰ Henry Cadbury, letter to Woodrow Wilson, August 28, 1915, Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷³¹ Eleanor D. Wood, letter to Henry J. Cadbury, Richmond, Oct. 12, 1915, Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

saw themselves not as a denomination removed from the evils of the world, but members of the world with a responsibility to act within it according to the centuries-old beliefs of their society.

Quaker Sarah Grimm of Newtown, Pennsylvania wrote: "If the ideals of a nation are righteous that nation will be great and strong and it will utterly reject the position that it is its fate to be involved in a life and death struggle with some other nation—...involving the innocent with the guilty in the calamities which war inflicts."⁷³² Eleanor Wood Whitman of Boston wrote: "...I wish to express my unity with the proposal of the National Peace Committee to make a statement at this critical time for the Society of friends.... This position should be coupled with a strong statement of our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others...."⁷³³

Statements like the latter continued to reinforce the position of Friends not as isolationist or passive in relation to international conflicts, but actively involved in a nonviolent stance of activism. Quaker Elizabeth Hinshaw wrote of the mission of Friends as she saw it in this time of crisis, and alluded to the possibility that the Society might allow themselves to unite on this point despite the schism: "The time has come for strenuous efforts on our part, and in whatever else of the creeds of mankind or the dogmas of religion on which we may disagree, we must stand shoulder to shoulder against this military spirit of conscription—only remember that we do it in the spirit and fervency of which He alone is the

⁷³² Sarah Grimm, Letter to Henry Cadbury, 10-18-15, from Box 89 Newtown, Bucks Co. Penn, Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷³³ Eleanor Wood Whitman, letter to Henry Cadbury, Feb 27, 1917, Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

leader.”⁷³⁴ Mary Edgerton wrote simply: “I have written to the Pennsylvania Senators Penrose and Oliver and Representative Thomas S. Butler protesting against preparedness or asking to have my name added to the list of those protesting against preparedness.”⁷³⁵

The role of the Quakers’ public stance of nonviolent Christian activism in World War I should not be underestimated in relation to other Christian denominations. At a time when most other mainline denominations had no declared stance against war, Friends took a stand. They created a place for Christians with questions about the place of war in their faith to speak up. Dr. Adelaide Whidden, who appears to have been a medical doctor from Long Island but not necessarily a member of the Society of Friends, wrote to the committee for spiritual and practical advice: “Dear Friends: Will you please tell me the attitude of your faith in preparing for this war?” Specifically, the doctor wanted to know, “Would I be serving Christ, if when my state called, I should sign up to what services I could render or would the teaching of Christ forbid me to offering their services. Thanking you for your answers I am Sincerely....”⁷³⁶

For some people, many of whom were probably not Quakers, the Committee helped them to know that they were not alone among Americans with their antiwar thoughts and feelings. Mrs. J.B. Demmling wrote: “Your lines in the Outlook Mar. 21 bespeak thoughts like my thoughts, feelings like my feelings, in

⁷³⁴ Elizabeth B. Hinshaw, letter to Henry J. Cadbury, 2-13-1917, Emporia, Kansas, Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷³⁵ Mary J. Edgerton, Letter to FNPC, 5-5-1916, Media PA, FNPA, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷³⁶ Adelaide D. Whidden to FNPC, April 12, 1917, from Babylon NY, FNPC, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

the name of thousands and thousands of kindred spirit I thank you....” She continued, “War has been declared, but Peace must be the ultimate issue, the sooner the better. If I can do anything to promote it, please inform me...”⁷³⁷

The committee also launched a unique advertising campaign in some of the major daily and weekly newspapers distributed across America. These “advertisements for peace” included messages like the following: “To Our Fellow Citizens: In this time of crisis when our country’s highest good is the common aim of all, we voice this deep conviction of patriotic duty.” The ad noted that “the causes for which men fight—liberty, justice and peace—are noble and Christian causes. But the method of war is unchristian and immoral. War itself violates law, justice, liberty and peace, the very ends for which alone its tragic cost might be justified....” Friends wanted to make it clear that good people and good societies have choices for conflict resolution other than war at one extreme, or “inactivity and cowardice” at the other. “True patriotism at this time calls not for a resort to the futile methods of war, but for the invention and practice on a gigantic scale of new methods of conciliation and altruistic service....”⁷³⁸

Another advertisement opened with a series of questions and answers: “Why are We Urged to Go to War? To protect American lives and property?” Yet, the ad noted, “War would greatly increase loss of life and property....” Are Americans being urged to go to war to “crush militarism?” Yet, “War would not quench but feed the fires of militarism.” Is it to “maintain the honor of the United States?”

⁷³⁷ Mrs. J.B. Demmling to FNPA, 4/14/17, Erie PA, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷³⁸ “A Message from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in America, advertisement from Friends National Peace Committee, Phila. PA, (appeared in Indianapolis), Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

....Honor is maintained by patience and self-control, not by violence and revenge.” Are Americans being urged to war to “defend our rights as neutrals?”

Yet, “If we become belligerents we cease to be neutrals....”⁷³⁹

In a Quaker advertisement to the *New York Times* on February 22, 1917, the committee appealed by reminding Americans of Friends’ longstanding history of peaceful social activism, and charged them to seize this moment: “.... The Society of Friends have seen the triumph of good-will in all forms of human crisis.... The people of every land are longing for the time when love shall conquer hate, when co-operation shall replace conflict, when war shall be no more.” Yet, they warn this will only happen “when the people of some great nation dare to sacrifice the outworn traditions of international dealing and act to make the present what they want the future to be. The United States can be the nation and this is the time. It is America’s supreme opportunity....”⁷⁴⁰

In an interesting newspaper article a reporter commented on the denomination’s advertising blitz itself, which the article reported hit “fifty big daily papers and seven weeklies of national circulation.” The campaign cost between seven and eight thousand dollars and was carried by the Quakers without financial assistance. In an article entitled “Quakers Explain Their Peace Advertising Which Failed” the reporter noted that the advertising campaign, “short and ineffectual as it was” to prevent the country from preparing for war, “was noteworthy not only in its recognition of the force of advertising as a

⁷³⁹ “Why Are We Urged to Go to War?” Advertisement by Friends National Peace Committee, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

moulder of public opinion, but in the novelty of a conservative national religious body buying large space in the public press for the propagation of what really is an old and important part of its religious belief....” The article quoted Chairman Henry Cadbury as saying, “It was an effort to do nothing else than preach the gospel of Christ through the medium of the modern press and applied to the urgent international problems of the day.”⁷⁴¹ From the perspective of the editor who gave the article its title, the Committee’s advertisement campaign was a failure because it failed to prevent the involvement of America in World War I. Yet, from the perspective of Cadbury and the committee, the advertisements were not so clearly a failure. The letters received by the committee demonstrate that the FNPC helped to create a venue and a voice for those Americans, Quaker and non-Quaker, religious and non-religious, who wished to find non-violent alternatives to respond to the problems which caused World War I. In the words of Henry Cadbury, “there are many persons in America in all churches or in none, who have told us that they not only endorse our views, but rejoice that one church of Christian name was bold enough to state in clear terms Christ’s own message of a more excellent way.”⁷⁴²

In addition to the decision to involve the American people in the war, the Society of Friends and the FNPC was also greatly concerned with the specific question of conscription. The Quakers had always followed a pacifist tradition

⁷⁴⁰ “A Message from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in America”, *New York Times*, February 22, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *The New York Times* (1851-2006) Display Ad 29—No Title, pg. 6.

⁷⁴¹ “Quakers Explain Their Peace Advertising Which Failed,” newspaper article in *Printer’s Ink*, 4/19/17, p. 28, Friends National Peace Committee Collection, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁴² Henry Cadbury in “Quakers Explain Their Peace Advertising....”

(despite individual struggles in the Civil War and others), and had had conscientious objectors in every American war. This war would be no exception, and if this war were to involve a draft, then the FNPC was a natural group to consider how to support these men. The crisis of conscription in World War I also brought about the creation of another key Quaker organization; -- the Friends National Service Committee. Quaker historian J. William Frost notes that Woodrow Wilson declared war on April 2, 1917, and by April 30 members of the Five Years Meeting, Friends General Conference, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) had “agreed on creating a central clearing house for peace policies to be called Friends National Service Committee.... They assumed that Quakers would be exempt from the draft and sought to provide a vehicle for voluntary constructive service for young men.”⁷⁴³ The group declared their loyalty to America, saying “We offer our services to the Government of the United States in any constructive work in which we can conscientiously serve humanity.”⁷⁴⁴ The FNPC quickly stepped into action, and asked Quakers Henry Cadbury and Rufus Jones to join their committee. They changed their name to the “American Friends Service Committee”.⁷⁴⁵

Both the Friends National Peace Committee and the Friends National Service Committee are considered predecessors to the AFSC.⁷⁴⁶ The AFSC set up a training camp for male relief workers at Haverford College (traditionally an

⁷⁴³ J. William Frost, “Our Deeds Carry Our Message: The Early History of the American Friends Service Committee,” *Quaker History* Volume 81 number 1 (spring 1992), 9.

⁷⁴⁴ American Friends Service Committee Minutes 4/30/1917, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, in Frost “Our Deeds Carry our Message”, 9.

⁷⁴⁵ Frost, “Our Deeds Carry Our Message”, 9.

⁷⁴⁶ “Friends National Peace Committee” background history description, Swarthmore Peace Collection library entry, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

Orthodox institution) and the committee also discussed the possibility of a women's training camp at Hicksite Swarthmore.⁷⁴⁷

This group consciously saw themselves bridging the gap between the separate sections of American Quakerism. In her history of the American Friends Service Committee, Mary Hoxie Jones describes the historic occasion as follows: "Twenty-four days after the United States entered the World War a group of fourteen Friends met together in 1917, to discuss what should be done in a crisis which would affect every Quaker man of draft age...." This group included members from the two historic yearly meetings between which the schism originally began, Race Street and Arch Street, Hicksite and Orthodox, plus representatives of a third Quaker group, Five Years Meeting. "But theological differences of past generations were forgotten in the more important problem which faced them all—the desire of Friends to bear a testimony against war and to do a constructive piece of work in an area which had been used as a battlefield."⁷⁴⁸

On May 11, 1917, the Friends National Peace Committee received a letter of inquiry from Agnes Wright of the War Service Division of Intelligence and Publicity at Columbia University asking for information toward the creation of a pamphlet on conscientious objectors. "The aim of the pamphlet will be to present the facts concerning England's treatment of COs and to urge that we do not repeat England's mistakes. I also wish to offer constructive plans as to how we

⁷⁴⁷ Frost, "Our Deeds Carry Our Message", 10.

⁷⁴⁸ Mary Hoxie Jones, *Swords Into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee 1917-1937* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), 13.

should deal with C.O., what service they are willing to do, etc.”⁷⁴⁹ The letter also mentioned conferring with the Fellowship of Reconciliation on the same matter, and it is likely that the FNPC advertising campaign led to the Quakers being seen as a resource of expertise and interest on matters such as conscientious objection and alternative service.

In a letter written to President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of War Newton Baker, and the Members of the Military Affairs Committee, Cadbury and the FNPC said they would join with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the American Union Against Militarism to address some of their specific concerns regarding an upcoming draft bill. While the Quakers were grateful to have members of their denomination recognized as conscientious objectors under the clause “exempts members ‘of any well recognized religious sect or organization whose creed forbids its members to participate in war in any form,’” yet they and others were concerned that “outside the membership of these designated religious organizations there are, we believe, thousands of men whose consciences forbid them to participate in war in any form.” The committees characterized the conscientious objectors this way: “These men are in no sense unpatriotic.....” The committee asked that the “liberty of conscience” of these men be “preserved from the rough hand of compulsion. If conscription for the ugly business of killing our fellow men must come let it be with as little damage as possible to the moral life of the nation. For this the primary requisite is strict regard for conscience—the life root of moral being.” To the concern that men of

⁷⁴⁹ Agnes R. Wright, letter to the Friends National Peace Committee, May 11, 1917, FNPC collection, Swarthmore Peace Collection.

low morality would take advantage of such liberality, the committees responded that they did not expect large numbers of such “shirkers”: “But apart from this we urge that the principle of free conscience is too sacred to be sacrificed to expediency and that the nation can far better afford to lose a few unprincipled soldiers than to attempt to coerce the consciences of those holding sincere convictions.”⁷⁵⁰

In addition to widening their definitions of conscientious objector to include those beyond the traditional peace denominations, the committees also asked “that provision be made for the appointment by other than military authority of properly qualified civilian boards to pass upon such exemptions and that appeals be allowed from the decisions of such to the United States District Courts.”⁷⁵¹

Unfortunately, the Administration did not heed the advice of the Friends National Peace Committee on the handling of conscientious objectors, and their treatment during World War I was appalling. Moskos reports that “harsh and fumbling experience with COs during World War I” resulted in a nation-wide focus on civil liberties by the time of World War II, and precipitated the creation of “a major watchdog organization, the American Civil Liberties Union.”⁷⁵² This was a crucial moment in history, as it was the first time that such a large and organized national committee representing the Society of Friends was able to make policy recommendations to the American government concerning matters

⁷⁵⁰ Friends National Peace Committee, Henry Cadbury and others, Letter sent to the Members of the Military Affairs Committee and to President Wilson and to Secretary of War Baker, FNPC collection, 1916-1917 folder, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁵¹ Friends National Peace Committee, Henry Cadbury and others, Letter sent to the Members of the Military Affairs Committee and to President Wilson and to Secretary of War Baker, FNPC collection, 1916-1917 folder, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁵² Moskos, *New Conscientious Objection*, 35.

of grave concern to the denomination. It was the first time the organization could use advertising to the extent that it did in this case. It was the first time that the Quakers had a central national organization outside the separate yearly meetings that could network politically with important organizations like the Fellowship of Reconciliation to do the work of the Church in the world. It was also the first time after the schism that the Quakers operated as a unified body to achieve an important goal. The Quakers had entered the twentieth century world of political activism and they had entered it as one body that was temporarily undivided in the interest of a greater good.

One of the Quaker women who characterized that world and that work was Carolena Wood, discussed earlier as a member of the executive committee of the Friends National Peace Committee. A letter from Wood to Henry Cadbury giving him advice about obtaining a lobbyist reflects a woman who is comfortable and experienced in the world of national political activism: “A permanent lobbyist [sic] must take six months to know the congressmen personally.” She suggests that he “must have social gifts—entertain & be a good mixer. Hollysworth is just beginning to do this....” In addition, “a lobbyist who talks to a few congressmen attending two or three hearings on armament questions and listens to a few jingo speeches in the house can go home at the end of a week with a preparation for service in his own district which is worth all it costs...”⁷⁵³

Yet apparently Carolena Wood was more than a hard-nosed savvy political activist. In addition to lobbying, her work with the Friends National

⁷⁵³ Carolena M. Wood to Henry Cadbury, 2-20-16, Mt. Kisco NY, Friends National Peace Committee Collections, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Peace Committee would take her to do relief work in Germany, China, Nicaragua, and to several locations in her own country. In 1936 the Mount Kisco *Recorder* eulogized her by saying “her neighbor was the one who needed her help...to them she came with her universal and radiant message of good will to men. Her conviction was that such friendship put into action would conquer the world.”⁷⁵⁴ Wood wrote home from Germany in 1919, saying that she needed wool for her relief work: “Mothers here are very clever at knitting and if we put our love in the yarn, they can put their love in the knitting and the stocking will surely be doubly warm.”⁷⁵⁵ At a time when relationships between America and Germany were particularly chilly, it may have been appreciated.

The practice of relief work for noncombatants in war was not a new idea for the Society of Friends. As early as 1870 histories of the Quakers noted that “we, the members of the ...Society of Friends...believe all war to be contrary to the Will and Spirit of our Heavenly Father... we desire to alleviate, as far as may be in our power, the misery of non-combatants, irrespective of nationality, remembering that all are children of one Father and that one Saviour died for all.” The distinctive red and black star, which would come to represent the relief activities of the American Friends Service Committee, can be traced back to this time.⁷⁵⁶

Lucy Biddle Lewis, the other Quaker woman on the Executive Committee of the Friends National Peace Committee, served as secretary to the committee.

⁷⁵⁴ Mount Kisco “Recorder” March 27, 1936, in Emily Parker, *The Silent Fellowship: A Devotional Booklet for Young Friends*, 22, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁵⁵ Carolena Wood, in Parker, *The Silent Fellowship*, 12.

Lewis' letters from Europe provide a powerful record of their relief work, and the breadth of their role. In a letter of "5 mo. 24, 1919", she writes: "it is a happiness to find one's self in the midst of a company who come together from so many parts of the world to help lay the foundation of mutual understanding and confidence in place of hatred and fear. Fifteen countries are represented with a total of 126 accredited delegates...."⁷⁵⁷ Lewis described their war relief work: "...As you go along you meet them returning, some walking with bundles, others with a horse and cart-hay- a few pieces of furniture, a some clothes, a sad spectacle in the rain that seems to go on indefinitely. Our relief workers meet them, try to find their needs, and help supply them...."⁷⁵⁸ Lewis would also serve as a trustee for Swarthmore College, and acted as one of the delegates to the Women's International Congress on Peace at the Hague in 1915.⁷⁵⁹

In addition to the work in Europe, the American Friends' Service Committee's Committee on Women's Work, chaired by Florence Yarnall, reported sending female nurses and social workers to France and sewing and knitting hundreds of thousands of garments for the relief effort. Committee member Lucy Lewis noted that "consignments have come in from every New

⁷⁵⁶ William K. Sessions, *They Chose the Star* (London: Friends Relief Service/Friends Book Centre, 1944), 8-9.

⁷⁵⁷ Lucy Biddle Lewis, letter of 5 mo. 24, 1919, Biddle manuscripts, Series 5, Box 8, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁵⁸ Lucy Biddle Lewis, letter of Grange-le-comte, April 10, 1919, Biddle manuscripts, series 5 box 8, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁵⁹ Mercedes M. Randall, *Improper Bostonian, Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1946* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc.), 143-144.

England State except Connecticut, from six other eastern States, nearly every middle-western State and from the three Pacific coast states.”⁷⁶⁰

In one of her letters, Lucy Biddle Lewis criticized President Hoover’s foreign policy towards Russia, as she felt it was actually inhibiting the success of their humanitarian efforts. She believed that the American Red Cross was not being sent to the locations where it was most needed, in this case to Russia, “for while these diseases will spread to the rest of Europe from Poland if not checked there, it is from Russia they are coming owing to starvation and want of sanitary supplies for which we are directly responsible...” she continued, “for disease and plague know no boundaries, and why should not it be attacked at the source? Eventually the world must come to rue its present policy and future generations will marvel at our stupidity and inhumanity.”⁷⁶¹

In a later letter Lewis takes up the same subject: “The remark was made that Germany might be occupied or the blockade extended and made worse. I was pleased to hear Mr. Hoover say emphatically ‘no more blockade if I can help it, of course they did lots of outrageous things, but it is not right to make the individual suffer.’ I do not see why he does not apply that sentiment to Russia.”⁷⁶² It is interesting to see how these early efforts in American “faith-based initiatives” played out, and the conflicts they inevitably brought up between the government making the political policies and the religious bodies carrying out the

⁷⁶⁰ Reports of the Committee on Women’s Work (“F”) 11-13-1917 to 1-15-1918, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁶¹ Lucy Biddle Lewis, Letter of 5 mo. 24, 1919, p. 3, Biddle Manuscripts, Series 5 Box 8, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁶² Lucy Biddle Lewis, letter of 5 mo. 1919, dupl. p. 2, Biddle Manuscripts, Series 5 Box 8, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

work of relief, particularly because Herbert Hoover was a member of the Society of Friends.⁷⁶³

Lewis' letters include dramatic testimonies against war by the people who had been most closely involved in it: "...almost invariably I hear the same thing 'never again for me, we must settle it some other way.' All glamor of war is gone and they have seen enough to know all right is not on one side and all wrong on the other."⁷⁶⁴ Lewis also shared experiences from her time at the Women's Congress held in Zurich. She related the story of a French woman whose home had been devastated in the war, and who concluded that these tragedies would continue to happen "so long as war is permitted, and now we women from all over the world must join hands and hearts and help make such terrible things impossible." Lewis reported that "there was hardly a dry eye when she finished, then Miss Balch stepped out held up her hand and vowed to devote the remainder of her life and all the means at her disposal to this end, and the whole house rose as one body and joined in the promise."⁷⁶⁵

Another prominent Quaker female reformer who made an important contribution is Hannah Clothier Hull, a member of the Philadelphia Yearly

⁷⁶³ William J. Frost, "Our Deeds Carry Our Message", 12; Hoover had Quaker ancestry on both his mother's and his father's sides. Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 1; He was the first Quaker to run for President, and when he ran against Al Smith in 1928, he said in his acceptance speech, "I come of Quaker stock. My ancestors were persecuted for their beliefs....I stand for religious tolerance both in act and in spirit." Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920-1933* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 207; For a more detailed treatment of Hoover's relationship with the AFSC and food relief during W.W.I, see David Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 134.

⁷⁶⁴ Lucy Biddle Lewis, letter of 5 mos. 1919, dupl, p. 2, Biddle Manuscripts, Series 5 Box 8, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁷⁶⁵ Lucy Biddle Lewis, 5 mo. 1919 dupl., Biddle Manuscripts series 5, box 8, p. 3-4, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Meeting (Hicksite)⁷⁶⁶. A Swarthmore graduate from the class of 1891, Hull joined Lucy Biddle Lewis, Jane Addams and others in forming the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and served as its President from 1924-1939. ⁷⁶⁷ Quaker historian Frederick Tolles notes that "when the United States entered the war in 1917, Hannah Hull, convinced that it was the religious duty of Friends to perform 'a service of love in wartime,' threw herself into the humanitarian work of the American Friends Service Committee, which was to be one of her abiding interests over the next forty years."⁷⁶⁸ Hull was also a suffragist.⁷⁶⁹ Like Orthodox Quaker Hannah Johnston Bailey before her, Hull was one of countless women who drew the connection between the cause of women's suffrage and the cause of peace. When Nobel Peace Prizewinner Jane Addams was asked to name her key advisors, the first two names she mentioned were Hannah Clothier Hull and Lucy Biddle Lewis.⁷⁷⁰

In 1919, America sent a delegation of twenty-six women to the International Conference for Permanent Peace held in Zurich, Switzerland in May 1919, to "heal the wounds of a war-torn world". Delegates included leader Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, Carolena Wood, and Lucy Biddle Lewis. The goal of the group was to generate positive criticism of the League of Nations

⁷⁶⁶ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 454.

⁷⁶⁷ Frederick B. Tolles, "Partners for Peace: William I. Hull and Hannah Clothier Hull, *Swarthmore College Bulletin* Dec. 1958, 44; and Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1986), 214; and C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 460.

⁷⁶⁸ Tolles, "Partners for Peace", 44.

⁷⁶⁹ Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 214.

⁷⁷⁰ "Letter from Jane Addams to Carrie Chapman Catt, 5-31-27", Document 14: Library of Congress, National American Woman Suffrage Association Papers (Jane Addams Papers Microfilm, reel 18, #1861-1867), <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/milit/doc14.htm>, accessed 10/18/2008, 5.

Covenant. Their requested resolution included “the admission of all nations on equal terms, worldwide reduction of armaments, and.... a permanent women’s bureau to be established at Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, with Emily Balch...as permanent Secretary.”⁷⁷¹

From its earliest beginnings, some Quakers saw the potential for organizations like the FNPC and the AFSC to transcend some of the Society’s bitterest divisions. In his piece on the early history of the AFSC, J. William Frost notes: “A significant number of younger Friends had concluded that the divisions in Quakerism were a disgrace. They repudiated what they saw as obsolete nineteenth-century theologies...” Rather, they felt that Quakers “should seek the unifying religious experience underlying all varieties of credal formulations.”⁷⁷² Throughout the schism, it was theology that divided the Quaker women reformers, but it was their work and their reform values that brought them together in spite of theological and hermeneutical differences.

In a letter to the relief workers in Europe, Rufus Jones made a spiritual charge to the group and in doing so put into words the inseparable relationship between the religious belief of the Quakers who joined the American Friends Service Committee and the works of service to which they dedicated themselves: “May He who said, ‘Wherever any man raises the stone or cleaves

⁷⁷¹ “Women as ‘Permanent Peacemakers’: An Account by One of Them of the International Gathering in Switzerland Which Denounced the Allies’ Treaty Terms,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 1919.

⁷⁷² Frost, “Our Deeds Carry Our Message”, 7.

the wood there am I', be present with you in your toil and may your hearts burn as you give your service to those who need it...."⁷⁷³

Although the AFSC was "born out of" World War I, as the war ended the members considered their reasons for existing and decided that there was more reason than ever to continue the work of the American Friends Service Committee. In the Executive Minutes of the Committee for November 8, 1918, Secretary Wilbur Thomas concluded that the work of the American Friends Service Committee had just begun: "Friends should...show the world that instead of objecting to service Friends are seeking ways to serve. The work of the Committee will not cease with the end of the war, for it is not a war work. It is hoped that there will always be Friends Service Committee."⁷⁷⁴ At this point in history, the Committee began to see their role in domestic as well as in international service, helping young people to work in Government service on forestry, reclamation, or Indian affairs: "in lieu of military training, or can enlist for a period of service in some one of the great organizations of the country which look toward social reform, such as the National Prison Association or Associated Charities."⁷⁷⁵

Again returning to the recognition that the Committee has transcended the Hicksite schism, they conclude: "For the first time in its history the Society of Friends are united in one work. It is a strength to all to know that there is one

⁷⁷³ Rufus Jones, Letter to the Members of the American Friends Unit, Haverford, Pa., 1-22-1918, American Friends Service Committee Archives, Philadelphia.

⁷⁷⁴ Executive Board Minutes, American Friends Service Committee, 11th month 8th, 1918, AFSC Archives.

⁷⁷⁵ Proposed Minute on the Future Work of the American Friends Service Committee, Nov. 27, 1918, AFSC Archives.

organization that can give concrete expression to that part of their faith which they hold in common.”⁷⁷⁶

Yet, let us not paint too rosy a picture to the point where we imagine the lines of the schism were totally erased within the AFSC. Careful scrutiny of the executive minutes of AFSC for January 13, 1921 shows the following budget item: “In view of the valuable service of *The Friend* (Philadelphia) to the American Friends Service Committee in the past and the anticipated continued support of that paper, the Board authorized payment of \$500. To *The Friend*.”⁷⁷⁷ Since *The Friend* is an Orthodox publication, the next month’s minutes judiciously noted the following: “In order to equalize the contributions to Friends’ papers, the sum of \$250. was appropriated for *The American Friend* supplementing an earlier contribution of the same amount and 500\$ for the *Friends’ Intelligencer*. This amount to be our contribution for the year 1921.”⁷⁷⁸ (The two publications are Hicksite). The notation informs us that even in 1921 some Quakers were still concerned with the question of who was on which side in the schism, and whether the needs of each one’s particular side were being met fairly.

In 1922, after much success in their service work, members of the AFSC organized a Committee on Reorganization of the AFSC. One of their first tasks was to take inventory of the service committee by section. This showed that “at the present time the American Friends Service Committee is composed of 20

⁷⁷⁶ Proposed Minute on the Future Work of the American Friends Service Committee, Nov. 27, 1918.

⁷⁷⁷ Minutes of the Executive Board of the AFSC January 13, 1921, AFSC Archives.

⁷⁷⁸ Minutes of the Executive Board of the AFSC February 4, 1921, AFSC Archives.

members from the Hicksite group, 14 from the Orthodox and 16 from the Five Years Meeting.”⁷⁷⁹ The Committee discussed their future and their reasons for existing outside of war, and this issue came to the fore of the Committee’s concerns in 1924.

This chapter’s activities will conclude with that year, and in a sense the larger story concludes here as well. Technically, the Hicksite schism would not be completely healed and the Quakers united until 1955. However, in terms of reform activity several important milestones were accomplished by 1924. First, the American Friends Service Committee gained recognition not as a temporary response to World War I, but a permanent ongoing expression of Friends’ dedication to peaceful world service as a form of devotion and worship. Frost’s history of the American Friends’ Service Committee highlights 1924 as the year that the Committee made its transition to becoming an institution of the Society of Friends.⁷⁸⁰ In a call to meeting by the Executive Board, Secretary Wilbur K. Thomas wrote: “the meeting was agreed in concluding that the American Friends Service Committee should not only continue its present activities, modifying them according to time and circumstances, but might expand them to include some few things that are of common interest to Friends as a whole in America....”⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ Letter of AFSC to the Committee on Reorganization of AFSC, Philadelphia, June 28, 1922, AFSC Archives. NOTE: Five Years Meeting was an offshoot of the Gurneyite Quakers, who, in turn, were an offshoot of the Orthodox. Five Years Meeting began in 1902. Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 239.

⁷⁸⁰ J. William Frost, “Our Deeds Are Our Message.”

⁷⁸¹ Letter of the Executive Committee of AFSC, Philadelphia, 10th mo. 9th, 1924, AFSC Archives.

1924 was also the year when various minutes of the American Friends Service Committee dealt explicitly for the first time with the issue of the Hicksite schism and reunification. Friends were beginning to realize that AFSC had acted as a unifying force for the Society, and that they could continue to do so, perhaps to an even greater degree, in the future. In a meeting of the Message Committee (a subcommittee of the AFSC designed to analyze and convey the religious messages transmitted by the service activities of the AFSC), Quaker Caroline G. Norment put forth the following: “.... At this juncture, I should like to interpolate the question, 'Is the next and most crucial work in Europe, or in America?’” Norment’s answer was in America, and she followed, “Can we hope to be of real use as peacemakers in Europe, or can our testimony long be accepted at its face value there, while there are traditional, recognized, and unconquered antagonisms among us?”⁷⁸²

Rufus Jones expressed similar thoughts at an Executive Committee meeting of the AFSC three months later. In discussing his hopes for the future of the Committee, Jones noted: “...the most important thing of all is the work of interpreting our ideals, especially our peace ideals and spirit to our own membership and to those who are near and kindred to us in spirit. America has not learned the lesson of the war, nor has our own Society learned it.” Jones suggested that Friends needed to summon their best leaders to “the business of uniting and unifying our own membership.”⁷⁸³ In the same meeting, Quaker L. Hollingsworth Wood discussed “the difficulty that many people outside

⁷⁸² Caroline G. Norment, in Message Committee Meeting notes, June 11, 1924, AFSC Archives.

⁷⁸³ Rufus Jones, in General Meeting Notes of AFSC 9th mo. 25th 1924, 10-11, AFSC Archives.

of the Society of Friends are experiencing, who wanted to have fellowship with us, but did not want to join any particular branch.”⁷⁸⁴ This is the same difficulty that Emily Greene Balch had expressed when she felt the desire to join the Quakers by conviction but did not wish to have to choose one side or the other. J. Barnard Walton “expressed the hope that some way might be found, perhaps under the Service Committee, whereby people could get into active religious fellowship with Friends without limiting themselves to association with particular groups.”⁷⁸⁵ In an addendum, Levi T. Pennington wrote: “The advantages of an organization through which all Friends can speak with one voice is to me very clearly apparent.... We can do much more altogether than we could as separate organizations... these things constitute a very strong argument for the continuance of a united organization.”⁷⁸⁶ The reform branch of the Quakers would lead the way to the healing of the Hicksite schism.

Finally, after a century of schism, which was and would continue to be painful to Friends for many years to come, some good came in addition to the pain. Friends had discovered the hard way that there was at least one enduring characteristic that went to the heart of what it meant to be a Quaker, and that could not be shaken even by the most violent of schisms-- the identity of the Society of Friends with peaceful service to their fellows in America and around the world, regardless of race, class, nationality, or theological stance. I believe it

⁷⁸⁴ L. Hollingsworth Wood, in General Meeting Notes of AFSC 9th mo. 25th 1924, 17, AFSC Archives. L. Hollingsworth Wood was the brother of Executive Committee member Carolena Wood. He, too, was a founding member of the American Friends Service Committee. “L. Hollingsworth Wood Papers, 1903-1953”, Biographical Sketch, Haverford Libraries Special Collections, <http://www.haverford.edu/library/special/aids/wood/> (accessed 10/19/2008).

⁷⁸⁵ J. Barnard Walton, in General Meeting Notes of AFSC 9th mo. 25th 1924, 17, AFSC Archives.

is this understanding to which the Committee refers when it says in its minute on the future work of the AFSC as early as 1918, “It is a strength to all to know that there is one organization that can give concrete expression to that part of their faith which they hold in common.”⁷⁸⁷ The active aspect of Quakerism—the working toward peaceful social reform and social justice, which expressed itself through the work of Hicksite and Orthodox women and men in the abolitionist movement, in the women’s movement, and in the peace movement, found its concrete embodiment in the organization of the American Friends Service Committee.⁷⁸⁸ In 1947, eight years before the Hicksites and Orthodox officially reunited completely in America, the American Friends Service Committee was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for their work.⁷⁸⁹

This century also brought Quaker women together in ways that were particularly characteristic of the era. It was women like Jane Addams who first recognized and tackled the difficult problems of America’s growing cities. It is women who had traditionally spoken up for peace, and in this century Quaker women had the opportunity to network with other women around the world who shared the same concerns. Not only did Hicksite and Orthodox women try to prevent war, but they worked to protect young men whose consciences

⁷⁸⁶ Levi T. Pennington, Letter in Addendum to General Meeting Notes of AFSC 9th mo. 25th 1924, 20, AFSC Archives.

⁷⁸⁷ Proposed Minute on the Future Work of the AFSC, Nov. 27, 1918.

⁷⁸⁸ From the fellowship of members of the AFSC committee grew the first united yearly meeting after the schism. Members of AFSC from both sides of the schism started a Quaker meeting in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania in 1924. In 1933 this meeting was officially recognized as a united meeting by the authority of Abington Quarterly Meeting, under the care of Arch Street Yearly Meeting. *Silent Witness: Quaker Meetinghouses in the Delaware Valley, 1695 to the Present: Historic American Buildings Survey Recording of Friends Meetinghouses Within the Region of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and The U.S. National Park Service, 2002), 48.

prevented them from participating in combat, and they helped give voice to hundreds of Americans from a variety of religious backgrounds who did not believe that war was an acceptable solution to international conflict. Women like Carolena Wood and Lucy Biddle Lewis took the lead in healing the wounds of war through relief work, another traditional female pursuit. In all of these activities, Hicksite and Orthodox women worked together, and in the creation of the Friends' National Peace Committee and the American Friends' Service Committee they could now even *formally* work as one.

⁷⁸⁹ C. Stoneburner, Appendix I, 464.

Appendix: The Problem of Where the Grimkes “Belong”

The question of which side of the schism the Grimke sisters “should have taken” is symbolic of the problems with stereotyping Hicksite and Orthodox women in a simplistic way using the concept of “liberality”.

In her work on the Grimke sisters, Gerda Lerner writes, “One might wonder why the sisters never considered joining the Hicksite Quakers, especially in view of their frequent contact with Hicksites...” Lerner guesses that by the time of the sisters’ disownment “when they might logically have moved into a more liberal Quaker sect, they were already far gone toward a radical ‘come-outerism’ and a distaste for all organized churches.”⁷⁹⁰

Biographer Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin seems to share Lerner’s assumption that the Grimke’s might have been better off Hicksite. She writes of the schism in relation to Angelina: “She might and did at first espouse one side as right. As it chanced, it was the side on which she would feel least at home.” The Hicksites, according to Lumpkin, “were insisting on liberty of thought,” whereas the Orthodox “took refuge in the other extreme, some leaders even viewing the final disunion as a ‘winnowing away’ of those of unsound doctrine, with themselves the remnant that was ‘pure in faith.’...Lumpkin adds that “many Hicksites were active abolitionists; the Orthodox were more passive, their tones restrained.”⁷⁹¹ Here, she references Rufus Jones (see citation), but this reference in Jones does not really deal with the issue of abolition.

⁷⁹⁰ Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters*, 193.

⁷⁹¹ Lumpkin, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke*, 59, also citing Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Period of Quakerism*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1921), 1:461, 468-469.

I believe that Lerner, Lumpkin, and many other historians have made the error of being influenced by the liberal theological beliefs and hermeneutics of the Hicksite Quakers into the assumption that all Hicksites were liberal in every way, and that especially when it came to their reform activities on issues like women's rights, abolition, and peace witness, and that they were necessarily more involved in these types of social reform than their Orthodox counterparts. The real history is far more complicated.

Lerner and Lumpkin, for example, don't mention some of the other theological issues that characterized the Grimke sisters' belief. For example, Catherine Birney notes that even in their later lives when the sisters "came at last to reject the so-called orthodox creed, and to look only to God for help and comfort", they were still very Jesus-centered. Birney notes that Sarah "could not...give up this Christ at whose feet she had learned her most precious lessons of faith and meekness and gentleness and long-suffering, and whom she had accepted and adored as her intermediary before an awful Jehovah."⁷⁹² In my experience with the writings of Hicksite and Orthodox women, this kind of Jesus-centered orientation and language was often more characteristic of the Orthodox women. Meanwhile, Birney notes that (like many Hicksites) Sarah "found it difficult to accept the doctrine of the Atonement." (Perhaps like Elias Hicks and others she found it difficult to believe that a peaceful God required the sacrifice of the crucifixion). Yet her reaction to that trouble is purely Orthodox—"yet she professed and tried to think she believed it, but only because the Bible, which

⁷⁹² Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 269.

she accepted as a revelation from God, taught it.”⁷⁹³ Angelina handled the issue of atonement in a very similar way to her sister. This passage from her diary illustrates both the degree of disdain for the Hicksite perspective at one point in her life, and her Orthodox handling of the Biblical issue: “Two Hiscksites [sic] came to see me yesterday & openly avowed their sentiments. I actually trembled from head to foot & tho’ sitting very near the fire felt as cold as ice...” Angelina notes, “the mercy of the Lord [preserved] me from the least degree of harshness—my heart was lifted in prayer for preservation whilst I listened to their subtel [sic] reasoning for really I could have formed no idea of their cunning craftiness...” Angelina gave her visitors a Biblical text, which she notes, “they did not know what to do with...—‘Hereby, perceive we the love of God that He laid down his life for us’”... The Hicksite claimed that the text “implied an absurdity for if I believed that He who created the world & formed myself had actually died upon the Cross then no God existed now.” Angelina responded that “I certainly must believe that the body of Christ who the Apostle told me ‘was over all God blessed forever more’ had been offered as an atonement for sin on the Cross...” Further, “as to reasoning about a thing so far beyond my capacity I could not do it but that I desired in the humility of a little child to believe all the bible taught.”⁷⁹⁴

Catherine Birney does not address the Hicksite schism in detail. She says only that Sarah’s mind was occupied in part by “the strife then going on in the Quaker Church...which called forth all her sympathy for the Orthodox portion,

⁷⁹³ Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 268.

⁷⁹⁴ Angelina Grimke, Diary, January 12, 1829, in Wilbanks, *Walking By Faith*, 35.

and her strong denunciation of the Hicksites.”⁷⁹⁵ Wilbanks notes in commentary to Angelina’s January 12 quotations about the Hicksites that “Interestingly, Angelina would eventually embrace their philosophy.”⁷⁹⁶ He does not elaborate on what he means by this in any greater detail. However, this is clearly far too complex a question to just assume in retrospect that the sisters might have been better off in the Hicksite camp.

⁷⁹⁵ Catherine Birney, *The Grimke Sisters*, 66.

⁷⁹⁶ Wilbanks, *Walking By Faith*, 223.

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