WHENEVER advocates of the principles of non-violence begin to examine the historical background of this concept, they are likely to turn at least briefly to the "holy experiment" in Pennsylvania. Conversely, opponents of non-violence sometimes point to the withdrawal of Quakers from government in the crisis of 1754-1756 as an indication of the failure of these principles. Thus it is apparent that it will be useful to examine this interesting and controversial episode of American history.

The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers as they were nick-named in derision, was founded by George Fox in England in the middle of the seventeenth century. Rejecting all of the conventional forms of Protestantism, Fox emphasized the direct, personal relationship between God and man which was manifest in the statement: "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." The faith in the inner voice of Christ, and the realization that no outward thing can help man achieve peace with God, are at the core of Quakerism.

These early Friends not only accepted the conventional Christian belief that all people are the children of God, they took a further step in proclaiming that there is "that of God in every man." They believed in a brotherhood, a spiritual kinship, of all mankind. Their adherence to the principles of non-violence grew logically out of this belief. If all human beings are blessed with divine spark, a Christ within, they will be ruled by love, and there will be no room for coercion, hatred, and violence in their dealings with one another.

A fundamental outgrowth of this belief was opposition to war. Although pacifism developed slowly during the troubled years

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1 "A Journal or Historical Account of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, ... of George Fox" (Philadelphia: Cambridge Bi-centenary Edition, Friends Bookstore, 1891), I, 8.
preceding the Restoration in 1660, it was widely accepted among Friends in 1682 when Pennsylvania was established. It was not just a negative attitude toward war, but included a positive approach to problems of society. George Fox expressed the Quaker peace testimony when he said that he "lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars."²

William Penn expected his "holy experiment" in Pennsylvania to be guided by Quaker peace principles, and believed that the new government would not become involved in warfare. He assumed that with virtuous people and a virtuous government there should be no serious trouble with the Indians or with white neighbors, and hoped that the colony would be an "example to the nations" of the way pacifism could be practiced.

William Penn put his non-violent principles into effect in other ways in establishing his new Commonwealth. During his first visit to Pennsylvania, beginning in 1682, he joined with the General Assembly in enacting more than 150 laws. The first of these guaranteed religious freedom, and promised that all should "Live peaceably and quietly under the civil government [and shall not] in any case be molested or prejudiced for his, or her Conscientious persuasion or practice." The death penalty was required for only one crime, premeditated killing, in contrast to the long list of capital crimes in England. One law called for the appointment of three persons in every precinct as "Common peacemakers . . . and their Arbitrations may be as Valid as the judgements of the Courts of Justice." While Penn intended to use police power to maintain law and order, and to imprison those found guilty of various crimes, he provided "That goalers shall not oppress their Prisoners." Another law stated that the prisons should be workhouses and not merely places of incarceration. A clear indication of the way Penn would deal with the Indians was found in a law which provided that when an Indian committed a crime against a white, or when a white committed a crime against an Indian, the trial would be heard before a mixed jury made up of six Indians and six whites.³

Thus it is apparent that Pennsylvania was planted as a model colony where it was hoped that the principles of New Testament

² Ibid., I, 68, 69.
Christianity would prevail. Early Friends believed in the perfectibility of man, and hoped to achieve a perfect society in the new Commonwealth. The Quakers maintained a dominant position in the government until 1756. They controlled the legislature and were extremely influential in the judicial branch during all of that period. The proprietors, who controlled the executive branch, were Quakers until nearly the end of this period, but they used non-Quaker deputy governors to represent them in the Colony. On the other hand, the General Assembly, through control of the purse strings, exerted substantial influence on the deputy governors.

In many respects the Friends were able to put their principles into effect. Pennsylvania practiced religious toleration during the entire colonial period, and there were never serious doubts about the acceptance of this ideal. Members of most Protestant denominations flocked to the Colony. The Roman Catholics held services in the Commonwealth as early as 1708 and built St. Joseph’s Church in the early 1730’s. A Jewish congregation, Mikveh Israel, began to meet on the Sabbath a few years later, probably in 1747. Occasionally during these years, there were temporary exceptions to the tolerant spirit of the Colony, but these lapses did not damage the permanent policy which Penn inaugurated.

Relations between the colonists and the Indians remained friendly until the outbreak of hostilities in the 1750’s. William Penn wrote a letter to the Indians in 1681, a year before he arrived in person, in which he expressed the hope that “we may always live together as Neighbours and friends . . . not to devour and destroy one an other.” While he was in Pennsylvania on his first visit, between 1682 and 1684, Penn met with the Indians many times and signed several treaties with them. Even though the traditions about his famous treaty with the Indians under the Treaty Elm at Shackamaxon on the shores of the Delaware may be apocryphal,

1 William Penn was proprietor until his death in 1718. His widow, Hannah Penn, took over control in 1712 after Penn’s health gave way and ran the affairs of the Colony until 1726. Her three sons, John, Thomas, and Richard, took charge—John, who held a half interest, died a Friend in 1746. Thomas, who inherited John’s portion, and thus dominated the proprietary interests, remained at least a nominal Quaker in 1756, although he began to attend Anglican services after his marriage in 1751. None of the children were consistent Friends in the way their parents had been.

5 Albert Cook Myers, William Penn, his own Account of the Lenape Lenape or Delaware Indians (Moylan, Pa.: A. C. Meyer, 1937), p. 60.
the spirit immortalized by Benjamin West and Voltaire was present in these gatherings. When Penn returned in 1699 for his second visit, once more he met with the Indians on several occasions. The Colony was careful to purchase from the Indians whatever land was needed for expansion of the settled area, and land was purchased from more than one tribe of Indians if conflicting claims were filed. Recent scholars have suggested that even the famous Walking Purchase of 1737 may not have been as nefarious a scheme as has been believed in the past. They have pointed out that there were few protests by either the Indians or the Quakers about the episode until after hostilities broke out in 1755.

James Logan took over the responsibility for dealing with the Indians after Penn was no longer available. Under his leadership Pennsylvania turned to dealing with the Six Nations, the overlords of the Delawares and other Indians of the Commonwealth. Negotiations with the Six Nations were usually successful in the years before 1755.

All affairs did not turn out exactly the way Penn and his Quaker leaders had hoped. Even in the early years the colonists were not always as virtuous as they had been expected to be, and as the population grew it became apparent that human nature had not been transformed by the new location and climate. The Colony was a part of the British Empire and could not exist as a separate and distinct government. It became involved to a greater or lesser degree in the wars of the period, and was forced to abandon its position on capital punishment.

The Quakers had gloriied in their refusal to compromise their principles from the very beginning of the movement. Friends had gone to jail rather than remove their hats to government officials.

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They had suffered persecution for holding religious meetings, for refusing to take oaths, and for other beliefs which ran counter to law and custom. Now, however, when they controlled the government, when they constituted the authority of the state, Friends found that it was necessary to compromise in order to achieve their purpose and to maintain themselves in power. Aside from the matter of defense, which will be discussed later, the outstanding example of compromise involved the right of affirmation.

Friends took literally the injunction of Christ, "swear not at all" (Matt. 5:34), and they were frequently persecuted and discriminated against for their refusal to take an oath. When Pennsylvania was established, the first laws provided that it would be legal to "affirm," in place of swearing, both as witnesses in court and as officeholders.9

When Pennsylvania was seized by the Crown in 1692, Benjamin Fletcher, the royal Governor who came down from New York to control the Colony, objected to the practice of affirming instead of swearing, but he did work out a compromise. He said they might subscribe to a declaration of fidelity, "Provided this be entered in the Journalls of your house as an act of grace" and not taken as a precedent.10 The province returned to Penn's hands in 1694, and affirmations were once more completely acceptable. Early in the eighteenth century the English government began to express concern, fearing that justice was sometimes denied by this practice, and eventually declaring that oaths would be required in Pennsylvania as elsewhere in the British Empire.

However, Sir William Keith, Deputy Governor of the Common-wealth, worked out a compromise. If the Quakers would agree to accept conventional English laws regarding capital crimes, the crown would agree to allow the Friends to continue their practice of affirming. Of this compromise, Daniel Boorstin has written: "Thus, to remain 'pure' in the matter of oaths, the Quakers bargained the lives of all those men and women who might be convicted of any one of a dozen miscellaneous crimes." He has labelled this an indication of a concern for the "overweening purity of their own consciences."11 Bearing out Boorstin's assertion, the records

10 Bronner, William Penn's "Holy Experiment," p. 159.
indicate that only two persons were executed in the thirty-six years before 1718, and twenty-eight were executed in a similar period after that date.\textsuperscript{12}

The most serious test of the Quaker belief in non-violence came in the area of international relations. Pennsylvania was not an isolated entity, but one of a group of British colonies which faced a threat from the French to the north and northwest. The relationship between the English and French colonials was not determined on this side of the Atlantic, but in England and France. Even these two nations did not determine to wage war or sue for peace except in conjunction with their European allies. Accordingly, it is seen that pacifist Pennsylvania could be swept into a state of war by events taking place in central Europe which precipitated hostilities between England and France. During the seventy-five years between 1681 and 1756, the British, and presumably Pennsylvania, were at war for thirty years.\textsuperscript{13}

Pennsylvania was planted in a period of peace that lasted until the outbreak of the War of the League of Augsburg in 1688. News of this event arrived in Philadelphia along with word of the Glorious Revolution in 1689. Lieutenant Governor John Blackwell read to the Provincial Council a letter from the Secretary of State at Whitehall, announcing that war had broken out. The letter urged the government “with all possible diligence [to] take effectual care for the opposing & resisting any attempt of the French upon his Ma'ties Province of Pensilvania.”

The initial response of the Quakers was that of complete pacifists with no thought of compromise. Samuel Carpenter said, “The King of England Knows the judgemt [sic] of quakers in this case before Governor Penn had his patent. But if we must be forced to it, I suppose we shall rather choose to suffer than to do it, as we have done formerly.” The next day Carpenter added, “I had rather be ruined than violate my conscience in this case.” John Simcock voiced the same thoughts: “I know not but a peaceable spirit, & that will do well,” but he added one other dimension to the question. He maintained that there


\textsuperscript{13} King William's War, 1689-1697; Queen Anne's War, 1702-1713; War with Spain (Jenkins Ear), 1740-1743; King George's War, 1743-1748; French and Indian War, 1754-1763.
was really no danger, and thus it was unnecessary to do anything:
“I see no danger but from the Bears & wolves.”

A third response was made by Griffith Jones, a Friend who was frequently not in agreement with his fellow Quakers. He declared that “Every one that will may provide his armes. My opinion is that it be left to the discretion of the Governor to do what he shall judge necessary.” However, when Governor Blackwell asked the Council to pass a resolution granting him authority to raise a militia or do whatever was necessary, the Council refused.

This incident clearly points up the contradiction between the expectations of the Crown on the one hand, and the Quakers of Pennsylvania on the other. Penn’s charter from Charles II in 1681 granted him the powers of a Captain General in the colony. Because of the potential danger from nearby “Barbarous Nations, ... the Savages themselves, as of other enemies, pirates and Robbers,” Penn was empowered to “levy, muster and traine all sorts of men, ... to make warr and pursue the enemies and Robbers aforesaid, as well by Sea as by Land, yea, even without the Limits of the said province.” Penn had accepted this provision in his charter, but when he described this section in his promotional brochures he wrote that he had the “Power of safety and defence in such way and manner as to the said William Penn, &c., seems meet,” a masterpiece of vagueness.

For the next three years the colonists dealt with requests for aid in defense in a manner which to the Quakers “seems meet.” When two non-Quakers, William Markham and the Swede Lacy Cock, asked permission to organize a defensive force, the Council replied that a militia could be formed if it promised full obedience to civil authority, and was free from “all Cursing, Swearing, drunkness, debauchery, & pillaging (the Crying evills of Camps, Such Societies),” which are the “bane & shame of a Christian Profession.” In addition, two requests from New York for funds to defray the cost of defending the colonies against the French from Canada and their Indian allies were rejected on the grounds that the Colony had no money.

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15 Some Account of the Province of Pennsylvania (London, 1681), p. 9; and A Brief Account of the Province of Pennsylvania (London, 1682), p. 5 in the Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library.
The British government, deciding in 1692 that it could no longer tolerate the existence of a Colony which did not share in the defense effort, seized the Colony from Penn and turned it over to Governor Benjamin Fletcher of New York. Fletcher arrived in Philadelphia in April, 1693; he soon made it clear that he was primarily interested in obtaining funds from Pennsylvania to aid in the defense of New York from the French. Aware of the pacifist principles of the majority of the colonists, he promised that the money they gave would be used for non-belligerent purposes, "& shall not be dipt in blood." He reminded Friends that they used locks, "Mastiff doggs," and other protections against thieves and robbers. Governments also used "forts, garrisons & Souldiers," Fletcher noted, in exactly the same way to protect crown property.

The Quakers in the legislature were not convinced, and it seemed for a time that no action would be taken. However, after a struggle over power and prerogatives, the colonists agreed to a compromise. In exchange for Fletcher's approval of their laws, the General Assembly levied a tax which was expected to bring in £760. In 1694 the Quakers once more voted to raise the money for Fletcher, but tied a number of provisos to the bill, and the Governor refused to accept it. The important thing was that during this period of royal control the Friends had backed down from their original position of 1689, when they utterly refused to consider any defensive or military action.

In the meantime, back in England Penn had been able to improve his position; he petitioned for the return of the Colony to his own hands. Penn pointed out that the Colony had appropriated money for the support of the English government in 1693, and promised that the province would in the future obey all requests for "Supplying such Quotas of Men or the defraying of their part of such charges as their Ma [jes]ties shall think necessary for the Safety and Preservation of their Matys Dominions in that part of America." Knowing that the colonists would be very unhappy about this promise, he wrote to them: "Wee must Creep when wee cannot goe and it is as Necessarie for us in the things

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8 William Penn, hounded by accusations that he was guilty of treason because of his friendship for the deposed James II, was in hiding during this period, and could do little or nothing about the situation in Pennsylvania.

of this life to be wise as to lie Innocent [ . . ] a word to the wise is enough." It was this set of circumstances which prompted the Mennonite scholar, Guy F. Hershberger, to write:

In private life Penn would have been willing to lift up the banner of peace at all cost. This is what a martyr must do. . . . But martyrdom is more easily suffered in private life than in public. . . . William Penn, out of unselfish devotion to his holy experiment, became willing to compromise his principles and started down the slippery path of dual morality, . . . [a] road which eventually leads to a renunciation of the ethical position of Quakerism, or a withdrawal from public life.

In the years that followed, the Quakers in the General Assembly would, under pressure, appropriate small sums for defensive purposes. They would first plead poverty, and later fall back on their conscientious scruples. If the request for funds was very persistent, a nominal sum would be raised. Often the colonists were able to gain additional liberty for themselves as a part of the bargain. In 1696 they appropriated £300 for the defense of New York at the time that the new constitution, called Markham’s Frame, was granted by Deputy Governor William Markham. In his *A Quaker Experiment in Government*, Isaac Sharpless wrote that “Caesar must have his dues as well as God, and a call for money . . . was generally responded to, after its potency as an agent in procuring a little more liberty was exhausted.”

While William Penn felt it necessary to make promises to the royal officials about military matters, he did not work very hard to carry out those promises. When he was ordered to return to Pennsylvania from England in 1699 to straighten out a number of situations in the colony, he was told to establish a militia in the province. He made no move in that direction, but he did approve of establishing a watch at the mouth of Delaware Bay to keep a lookout for pirates. In 1701 he transmitted to the General Assembly a request from the Crown for a contribution of £350 for the defense of the colonies. After dodging the issue for several

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days, the legislators refused to appropriate the money but protested their complete "Loyalty to our Sovereign." They also asked Penn to assure the King "of our Readiness (according to our Abilities) to acquiesce with, and answer his Commands, as far as our religious Persuasions shall permit, as becomes loyal and faithful Subjects so to do." Neither Penn nor his colonists were above practicing dissimulation in dealing with the Crown.

From this summary of the initial contacts between the province and the Crown, between pacifism and militarism, three conclusions can be made: (1) William Penn was a pacifist, but was willing to compromise his principles when his "holy experiment" was threatened; (2) the Quakers in the government were pacifists, but were willing to modify the absolutist position slightly if they could obtain an advantage for the Colony in exchange; and (3) the royal officials had adjusted to the fact that Pennsylvania was different from other colonies, and gave evidence that they would be content with occasional grants of money to defray the cost of defense.

This was a compromise with absolutist principles of non-violence, but only a small compromise. English Quakers had accepted the same compromise and were quietly, and apparently willingly, paying taxes to the government even though it meant that their money went for defensive purposes. The Quakers might have decided to withdraw completely from government rather than make this slight compromise, and they were urged to do so in the 1690's by George Keith, a Scottish Quaker who became extremely critical of the operation of the government of Pennsylvania by the Friends.

For the next half-century the Quakers were able to live with this compromise. There were difficult times during Queen Anne's War, especially while John Evans was Lieutenant Governor, but nothing arose which could not be handled. The outbreak of the war with Spain, the so-called War of Jenkins Ear which merged into King George's War, also stirred up problems. In these years the practice of Pennsylvania was not very different from that of several other colonies. An anonymous defender of the Quaker

24 Ibid., p. 181.
25 Ethyn Williams Kirby, George Keith (1638-1716) (New York: Appleton-Century, 1942), pp. 57-60, 72, 73.
policy wrote in 1755 that if the Friends did not defend Pennsylvania "they have not done worse than most of the other colonies . . . from New York all the way to South Carolina there are no fortifications along the coasts." Herbert L. Osgood, the great colonial historian said that only small groups of "fanatics" and "zealots" on each side favored the colonial wars, with everyone else waiting for others to do the fighting and pay the costs.26

Pacifism was never the only motivation in the actions of the legislators in these years. Economic issues began to creep into the position of the colonists along with the earlier pacifism and the desire to obtain political advantages. In addition, some Quakers began to differentiate between defensive and offensive wars.

The new deputy Governor, George Thomas, arrived in 1738, and soon found himself embroiled in a dispute with the Assembly over defense matters when the Crown called for contributions of both men and money for the War of Jenkins Ear. Unable to obtain assistance from the Assembly, Thomas began in 1740 to recruit a militia force on his own. He promised indentured servants their freedom if they would enlist; Pennsylvania merchants and farmers condemned this action since their servants were deserting their contracts to join the army. The Assembly refused to appropriate money for defense. When pressure for financial support increased, the Assembly sent £3,000 directly to England for "the Use of the King," bypassing Governor Thomas.27

In addition, the Assembly began to use the matter of appropriations for defense as a lever to obtain additional issues of paper money. Pennsylvania, like the other colonies, was plagued with a shortage of specie and resorted to issuing paper money to ease the situation. British merchants objected to the use of paper money in the colonies and urged Parliament to control or even eliminate the practice. Governor Thomas in order to obtain the funds he needed for the military measures of King George's War decided to ignore his orders to prohibit further increases in paper

28 Ibid., p. 44.
money. It was during this same period that the Assembly voted money for the “purchase of Bread, Beef, Pork, Flour, Wheat, or other Grain.” The Governor took the term “other Grain” to mean gunpowder; there was no protest. Sharpless wrote of the Assembly in this period, it “cannot be excused from the charge of a certain amount of shiftiness.”

The leader of the Assembly during these years was John Kinsey, who was Speaker of the body and also clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He remained as firm on the pacifist issue as possible under the circumstances, but was sometimes motivated by personal desires to act in ways which were detrimental to the reputation of Friends. In 1741 James Logan sent his well-known letter to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting urging that Friends should accept the distinction between offensive wars and defensive wars. This epistle was officially ignored by the Friends, but in the next few years there was evidence that Logan’s position was acceptable to many Quakers in the government. In the 1750’s the Speaker of the Assembly was Logan’s son-in-law, Isaac Norris II, who embraced Logan’s position. Furthermore, when a petition was drafted in 1748 demanding better defensive measures for Pennsylvania, it was said that sixty-two of the petitioners had hitherto been against defensive measures.

In the year 1754 the western part of Pennsylvania, across the Alleghenies, was sparsely populated by a few bands of Indians who were vassals of the Six Nations. While there were traders who roamed the area buying furs, there were virtually no European settlements. The proprietors of Pennsylvania were not interested in developing the region for farming and were content with the profits gained from the fur trade. Some of the Scots-Irish on the frontier would have liked to cross the mountains to seek new land, and some squatters did cross, but these people lacked political

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30 Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, VI (1882), 403-411.
31 Davidson, War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania, p. 61.
influence and their wishes were ignored. The proprietors had purchased little land from the Indians in that area, and had not even bothered to settle the boundaries of the colony. Despite the fact that this was the policy in 1754, it was only a matter of time before the relentless pressure of population would force the settlers over the mountains in large numbers. In the years following the French and Indian War, thousands of families crossed the Alleghenies and took up land in violation of the edict which established the Proclamation Line of 1763.

In the meantime, the French began to move south into Pennsylvania from Presque Isle on Lake Erie in 1753, portaging to the waters of the Allegheny, and moving down toward the magic spot where the Ohio River is formed by the joining of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. In addition, Virginians, who claimed the western part of Pennsylvania for themselves, were also edging into this region. And in the early 1750's the Ohio Company, which was formed in 1747, sent explorers, surveyors, and finally a few settlers into what is now southwestern Pennsylvania.

It became clear that Pennsylvania would be faced with a crisis when the French and the Virginians collided. Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia sent young George Washington with a message to the French ordering them to abandon their plans to move into the upper Ohio Valley. After the French rejected this message, each group sent troops to intercept the other. The surrender of Fort Necessity at Great Meadows in July, 1754 forced Washington and the Virginians to retreat. The Indians were bewildered by these events and became very uneasy. They did not turn to the government of Pennsylvania for reassurance, for the close ties which had existed between the Indians and William Penn had been replaced with a more formal and distant relationship. The Proprietors had turned in recent years to settling problems related to Pennsylvania Indians by negotiating with their suzerains, the Six Nations.

In Philadelphia the government of Pennsylvania was immobilized by a conflict between the Assembly and Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton. The Assembly was willing to support Virginia in its struggle with the French if it could raise the money by increasing the amount of paper money in circulation. The Governor had been instructed to refuse such a compromise. The
Assembly did not even consider recruiting troops and sending an army to defend Pennsylvania soil from the French invaders.\textsuperscript{33}

The year 1755 was the crucial one. The British government decided to meet the challenge of the French in western Pennsylvania. To this end, it sent General Edward Braddock with two regiments to America. Braddock landed in Virginia, recruited colonial troops to join his regulars, and collected his forces at Cumberland before starting through the mountains for Fort Duquesne, which the French had built at the forks of the Ohio. In July of 1755 the French and their Indian allies demolished the English army. During the fall of the year following this catastrophe, the Indians of Pennsylvania—seeking to revenge real as well as imagined wrongs—began to raid the Pennsylvania frontier.\textsuperscript{34} Refugees from the outer settlements of the Colony began to pour into the towns and older regions of the Commonwealth with tales of death, outrage, torture, and scalplings.\textsuperscript{35}

Now the position of Pennsylvania was entirely different from the one which the government had faced for three-quarters of a century. War was no longer something originating in Europe, no longer a struggle on the frontier of New York or New England, now it was in Pennsylvania. Furthermore, it was not even a distant struggle between the French and the British over the forks of the Ohio River, it was within the organized counties of the Colony. Pennsylvania men, women, and children were being killed and tortured. Would the Assembly turn every effort to defend the lives of the colonists, or would there be temporizing, debating, and inaction?

According to Daniel Boorstin, “It would be difficult to find a more tangled story in all American history than that of how the Quakers,\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{34} Julian P. Boyd wrote: “The abuses in the Indian trade, intercolonial rivalries, jealousies and hatreds among the Indian nations themselves, particularly between the Delawares and the Mohawks—all these factors produced the defection of the western Indians and consequently that of their brethren on the Susquehanna.” “Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, 1736-1762,” \textit{Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin} (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1938), p. lxxxiii.
\textsuperscript{35} William A. Hunter in \textit{Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758}, reports that there were 318 killed east of the Susquehanna and 174 west of the Susquehanna between the beginnings of hostilities and November, 1757, p. 211.
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in 1756, finally made their choice." There was the pacifist dilemma, but that was only one aspect of the situation. "Taxation, paper money, and politics" rather than pacifism, as Theodore Thayer states categorically, were the central issues. We have seen how the paper money question had been an integral part of the conflict between the Assembly and the governors of the Colony for a decade.

The Assembly realized that the governors in resisting the colonists merely did the will of the Penns, and a great deal of mistrust and suspicion had been generated against the proprietors by 1755. The lands of the Penns had been exempt from taxes since the beginning of the Colony, but when the Assembly voted to raise $50,000 after Braddock's defeat, they included a provision for taxing proprietary lands along with the other real estate of the Colony. The new Deputy Governor, Robert Hunter Morris, refused to accept this provision and the tax bill did not become effective.

The supporters of the proprietors tried to prove that the impasse over providing proper defense for the colony rested on the pacifism and the desire for power of the Quakers. William Smith in a pamphlet, *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania*, asserted that all of the ills in the colony were "owing to the Infatuation and detestable Policy of a Set of Men who mind no Consequences, provided they can secure their own Power and their Seats in the Assembly." He suggested that the Quakers were really papists or French sympathizers. "Cabals in their yearly Meeting, which is convened just before the Election," Smith argued, "is the finest Scheme that could possibly be projected, for conducting political Intrigues, under the Mask of Religion." He went on to denounce the Germans as an ignorant people who could be seduced by Jesuits such as Christopher Saur, "who was once one of the French Prophets in Germany, and is shrewdly suspected to be a Popish Emissary, who now prints a Newspaper" in German and read only by Germans. Smith concluded by demanding that an oath of allegiance be required of members

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37 Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy, p. 32. He quotes Charles Stillé, Herbert Osgood, and Winfred Root to support his position.
38 (London, 1755.) I have used an 1865 reprint (New York).
40 Ibid., pp. 28, 29.
of the Assembly to eliminate the Quakers and that Germans be disfranchised until they learned English and understood the English constitution and law.

A petition was drawn up in Pennsylvania late in 1755, which was presented to the Lords of Trade in February, 1756, denouncing the Quakers for their pacifism and demanding that they be excluded from the Assembly. The petition pointed out that the Quakers were outnumbered four to one, and yet they governed. "Are they to enforce the Rest of the King's Subjects, to set still, & have their Throats cut? Are they to give up Pensilvania, & perhaps, in Consequence, all America, into the Hands of his Majesty's enemies?"41

Meanwhile, the "weighty" members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting began to reproach the Quakers in the Assembly. Twenty Friends, including Anthony Morris, Israel and John Pemberton, Anthony Benezet, and John Churchman, protested the taxes which were being laid for the defense of the Colony. They said that the tax was "inconsistent with their peace testimony, and an infringement on their religious liberties." They referred to the fact that some Friends had refused to pay the tax and had suffered distraint of their goods as a consequence.42 Samuel Fothergill, a brother of Dr. John Fothergill the important physician and influential Quaker in London, was in the Colony and lent his weight to the protest.

English Friends were deeply concerned to learn of the difficulties their fellow Quakers faced in Pennsylvania. When they heard Parliament contemplated disfranchising the Quakers by demanding that they take an oath of allegiance, their anxiety increased. Dr. John Fothergill proposed to the Meeting for Sufferings, meeting in London in April, 1756, that an epistle be sent to Philadelphia urging Friends to resign from the Assembly before they were forced out by law. British Friends accepted this proposal, and also sent two Friends, John Hunt and Christopher Wilson, to Pennsylvania to labor with Quakers in political office if they would not retire voluntarily.43

Before the letter could arrive in Philadelphia, six members of

41 Charles J. Stille, "The Attitude of the Quakers in the Provincial Wars," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, X (1886), 301.
43 Ibid., pp. 250-254.
the Assembly resigned their seats. Ever since the Governor and his Council had declared war on the Delawares in the spring of 1756, it had been apparent that conscientious Friends had no business serving in the government. They said in resigning:

As many of our constituents seem of opinion that the present situation of public affairs calls upon us for services in a military way, which from a conviction of judgement after mature deliberation we cannot comply with, we conclude it most conducive to the peace of our minds, and the reputation of our religious profession to persist in our resolution of resigning our seats, which we now accordingly do.44

Several men who were nominally Quakers were voting with the war party by this time, and the resignation of the six meant that the Friends no longer controlled the Assembly. Although the voters had elected twenty-six Friends out of a total of thirty-six members in 1755 after Braddock’s defeat, only twelve or possibly sixteen Quakers were elected in 1756, and four of these were persuaded to resign. The domination of the Assembly by members of the Religious Society of Friends had ended. Interestingly enough, the popular party, headed by Benjamin Franklin, which opposed the policies of the proprietors, continued to be called the Quaker party until the American Revolution even though the Quakers never again controlled it.

While it is clear to this writer that the Friends had no alternative to withdrawing from government when they did, there are those who hold a different view. Isaac Sharpless concluded that the Friends had three courses open to them. First, they might have given up all religious scruples and joined the war effort. Second, they might have stayed in the government, remaining true to their principles and accepted whatever consequences came to them. Finally, they might have resigned from the government. “One cannot but wish,” Sharpless argued, “that in the spirit of the Pembertons, the Fothergills, the Woolmans of their day, they had kept their public places in absolute obedience to their religious

44 Ibid., 221, 222. The six were James Pemberton, Joshua Morris, William Callender, William Peters, Peter Worral, and Francis Parvin. The four who resigned in the fall were: Mahlon Kirkbride, William Hoyl, Peter Dicks, and Nathaniel Pennock.
principles.”

This position has merit, but ignores the plight of the people on the frontier who were in need of defense. The Quakers had every right to maintain a position of non-violence even unto death, but it is doubtful whether they had a right to condemn unwilling Scots-Irish Presbyterians to the same fate.

Some students of this situation have tended to be very hard on these Pennsylvania Quakers. One recent writer, Brent E. Barksdale, has been especially critical. He maintains: “Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, there was increasing evidence of a decline in the integrity of individual Quakers, in government and out. . . . Material wealth, even in time of peace, tends to distract men from the spiritual life and a strict morality. In time of war, piles of lifeless goods seem to have a voice of their own, demanding military defense despite their owners’ erstwhile profession of non-violence.”

According to Frederick B. Tolles, describing the Quaker Community in the 1750’s in his perceptive study Meeting House and Counting House, “The spirit of compromise and concession was seen to have overtaken Philadelphia Quakerism in almost every phase of life—in business, in politics, in intellectual pursuits, in social intercourse, most insidiously and thoroughly perhaps in the very manner of living—the houses, furniture, and clothing—of the weightiest Friends.”

If Friends in Pennsylvania lacked the religious zeal of their ancestors, they were not alone in that condition. John S. Rowntree wrote of eighteenth-century English Quakers: “The Society of Friends was no longer an advancing, aggressive body, aspiring to universal dominion . . . [its members] retreated within their own borders, and endeavored painfully and fruitlessly to isolate themselves from the world they had hoped to conquer.” It was entirely natural for the third and fourth generations of a religious

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48 Forty years ago Margaret E. Hirst was not as critical in her book, The Quakers in Peace and War (London: Doubleday, 1923), p. 382.
movement to be more refined, and less given to enthusiasm than their ancestors.

Actually there were Friends in 1755 who were just as pious, just as dedicated to the principles espoused by George Fox as any of those who had been his contemporaries. John Woolman was an important figure at this time, as well as Anthony Benezet, and it is evident from the minutes and epistles of that period that there were many less well-known Friends who were faithful to their heritage. It is obvious that there were different degrees of faithfulness to Friends' principles among the membership of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. We have seen that a number of men who called themselves Quakers remained in the Assembly after Friends had decided that they should withdraw. Tolles in *Meeting House and Counting House* referred to the "wet Quakers" who were allowed to attend meetings for worship, but could not participate in meetings for business.

In order to compare my generalizations with the records of the period, I read the minutes of Warrington Monthly Meeting for the years 1754 to 1757 to discover how Friends stood on the peace testimony during these crucial years. Warrington Monthly Meeting, which included several meetings in what are now York and Adams counties, was the westernmost meeting in the colony. Five meetings belonged to Warrington Monthly Meeting: Huntington, Menallen, Newberry, Warrington, and York. The reports of marriages, new members joining, and old members removing to North Carolina would indicate that there were at least 250 members of the meeting.

In January, 1756, Menallen meeting reported that two members "at report of Indians doing mischief at a great distance from them went out in a warlike manner to meet them Contrary to our Peaceable principles." Friends dealt with the two erring brothers and one appeared in May to "signify his Sorrow for giving Occasion of reproach to truth and friends by appearing in a warlike manner." The other apologized to the August meeting.

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49 Sharpless suggested that in regard to the peace testimony there were three groups of Quakers: the spiritual leaders who headed the yearly meeting, the followers of the principles of James Logan who justified defensive wars, and, finally, "Between these two stood the 'Quaker governing class,' who controlled the Assembly." *A Quaker Experiment in Government*, pp. 240, 241.

50 P. 142.
Newberry meeting informed Friends in April that Thomas Noblits "has Enlisted for a Soldier and taken the oath." In August he sent a letter "as a testimony against my disorderly proceedings." The November minutes indicated that Henry Underwood of Warrington meeting "has gone and Enlisted for a Soldier." He did not repent, and in January, 1757 a minute was drawn which stated: "Henry Underwood was Educated in the way of truth but for want of keeping to the true guidance thereof run out into Swearing and Bearing of Arms in order to kill his fellow Creatures ... [contrary to the] rules and precepts of our Christian Religion." He was then disowned. One other Friend was reprimanded for drinking too much in the town of York and for appearing "among the Soldiers with a Cockade in the hat he had on." Apparently these five men were the only ones who violated the peace testimony of Friends in this frontier region during the emergency.

Another indication of the sincerity of Friends was the organization of the Friendly Association in 1756 for the purpose of continuing to treat with the Indians even though Quakers had withdrawn from the government. The representatives of the Friendly Association attended conferences between the government officials and the Indians to protect the interests of the aborigines. In addition, Friends collected some $25,000 to purchase gifts for the Indians during these crucial years. One critic wrote that the Friendly Association should have been organized a quarter of a century earlier, and then "there would have been little Indian discontent in Pennsylvania for the French to exploit and mobilize." This interpretation does not take into account all of the pressures at work in the 1750's. On the other hand, it is true that the Friendly Association, despite the good intentions of the

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51 Warrington Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1747-63 (microfilm), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. A study of the minutes of Exeter Monthly Meeting at Reading, Berks County, where the Indians were active on the east side of the Susquehanna, revealed virtually the same number who enlisted or embraced the war effort. However, Exeter Friends were not able to persuade their members to confess the error of their ways, and had to disown those who took a militant position. Microfilm records at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.


organizers, was not very successful, and it was broken up by the Paxton affair of 1763.44

After the difficulties of 1755 and 1756, Friends withdrew from many aspects of society, believing that "public life was unfavorable to the quiet, Divine communion which called for inwardness, not outwardness, and which was the basic principle of Quakerism." Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was "strenuously engaged" for several years in persuading its members to keep away from public affairs.55 Some Friends turned to various humanitarian interests at this time, but many more withdrew into private activities and often turned their energies to their business concerns.56 The official expression of the new spirit was found in the epistle from London Yearly Meeting to Friends in Pennsylvania in 1758:

Now is the time for the lamb's meekness to appear, for our light to shine, and by our fruits demonstrate that we are subjects of the Prince of Peace whose kingdom is not of this world, who has called us unto a spiritual warfare against the inward lusts, and corruptions of the heart, which the Holy One of Israel is come to destroy by the fire of his word.57

The Quaker effort to operate a government on the basis of non-violence had come to an end. The "holy experiment" which William Penn launched with such faith and hope in 1682 was shattered in 1756. It has been said that if the Quakers had been more faithful to their ideals, they could have avoided the cruel dilemma they faced in that fateful year. While willing to admit that Friends in politics did not always remain true to their testimonies, I believe that Pennsylvania was caught in an international conflict which could not have been avoided by changes in the policy of Pennsylvania alone.

From the beginning, from the time Penn received his charter giving him the power of a Captain General, Friends had to decide

44 Thayer, Israel Pemberton, pp. 190 ff. Boorstin, in The Americans, The Colonial Experience, pp. 54-58, says that the Quakers saw the Indians through rose colored glasses and did not really understand the complicated issues of the day, pp. 54-58.
57 Barksdale, Pacifism and Democracy in Colonial Pennsylvania, p. 50.
whether they would remain firm in their convictions or make small compromises with their principles in order to carry out their program for the colony. Pennsylvania existed in a world at war, and the Quakers were fortunate to be able to govern as long as they did in such an environment.

Some critics have said that the Friends failed in the end because they had compromised. It is true that they failed to remain in control, and it is true that they compromised, but there is not necessarily any connection between these two facts. There are many occasions when men must compromise, and politics is known as “the art of the possible.” The trick is to know when to compromise and when to remain faithful to one’s convictions. It is relatively easy to agree upon a set of principles and remain rigidly faithful to them. It is much more difficult to live in a foggy, indistinct and usually uncomfortable area where decisions must constantly be made between different degrees of good and of evil.

These Quakers in colonial Pennsylvania lived for three-quarters of a century in that hazardous and unsettling arena, with one foot in this world and the other in the world of ideals and principles. Eventually they found it impossible to make further accommodations to this world, and retreated to the world of the spirit. Ultimately they failed, certainly in the eyes of the world they failed, but we still write about them, we still engage in vigorous disputes about their efforts, and some of us still admire them.