

*Who are the
Quakers?*

Beginnings



*George Fox at Swarthmoor Hall
by Robert Spence (1870-1964)*

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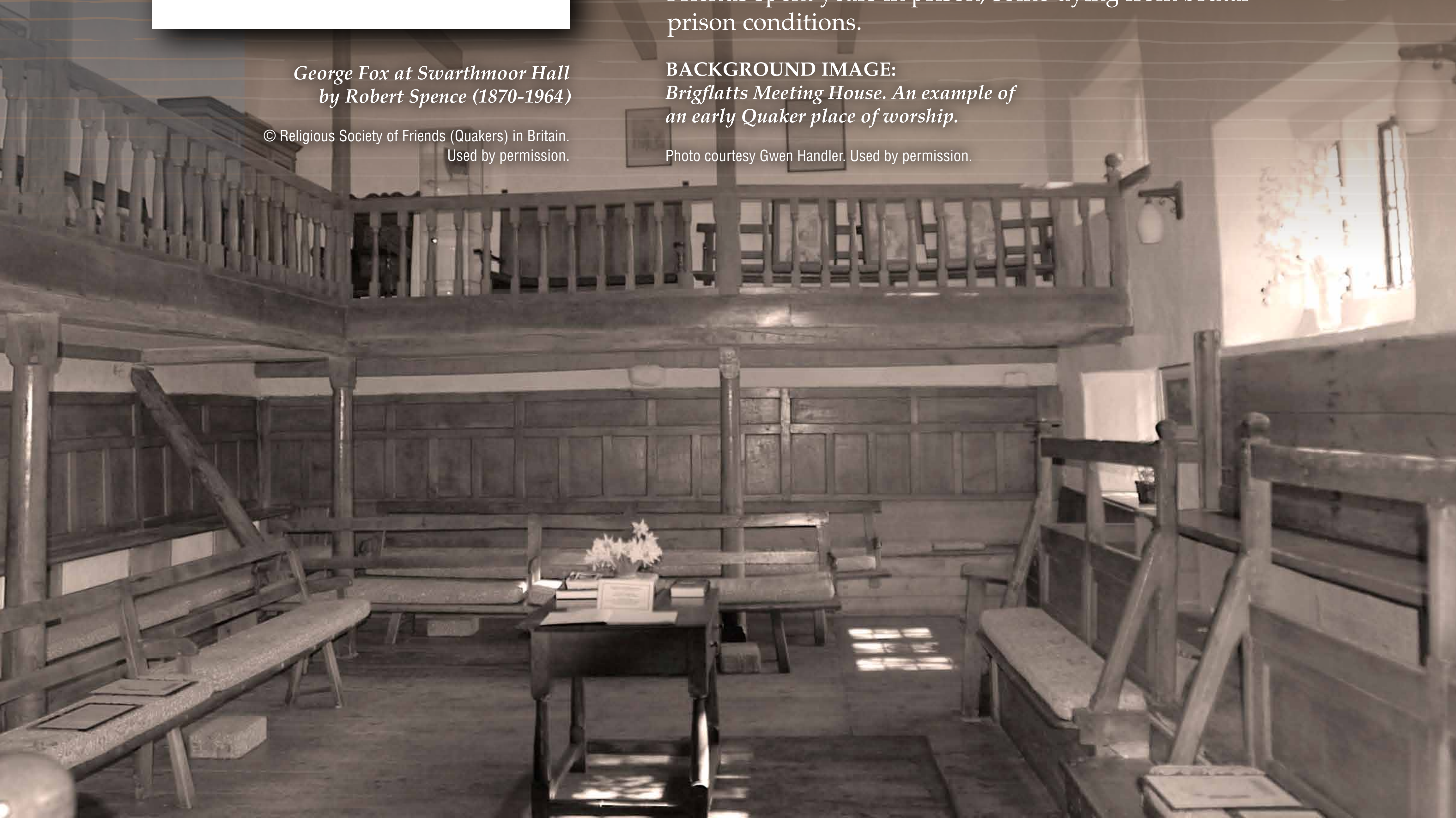
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) was founded in northern England in the mid-seventeenth century when small groups of religious 'seekers' came together under the leadership of George Fox (1624-1691).

These 'seekers' were trying to find a more authentic form of Christianity other than that provided by the Church of England and other religious groups of the day. These 'seekers' believed that Christ speaks directly to everyone, and what was required for ministry and guidance was to listen to the still, small voice within.

Authorities disapproved of the Quakers, who called themselves 'Friends' and so passed a number of laws restricting Quaker meetings and practices. Many Friends spent years in prison, some dying from brutal prison conditions.

BACKGROUND IMAGE:
Brigflatts Meeting House. An example of an early Quaker place of worship.

Photo courtesy Gwen Handler. Used by permission.



Who are the Quakers?

Testimonies

“Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all.”

- George Fox (1667)



Jack and Susan Smith of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative).

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Quakers adopted a number of practices based on their religious experiences and understanding of the Bible. These were called testimonies and dealt with truth, integrity, equality, peace and simplicity.

- In seeking always to speak the Truth, Friends called places of worship meetinghouses rather than churches. The people assembled in worship were the Church.
- Friends regarded the taking of oaths as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and setting up a double standard of truthfulness.
- Friends refused to bow or take off their hats to social superiors believing all people are equal under God.
- Quakers refused to serve in any military organization, citing Christ's commandment to love one's enemies; Quakers have been conscientious objectors during times of war.
- Quakers emphasized plainness in dress and speech. The pagan names of months and days were replaced by numbering; January was First Month and Sunday was First Day.

The testimonies continue today as an integral part of the life of the Society of Friends. Although the testimonies continue to be adapted to respond to the changing world, the underlying principles remain unchanged.

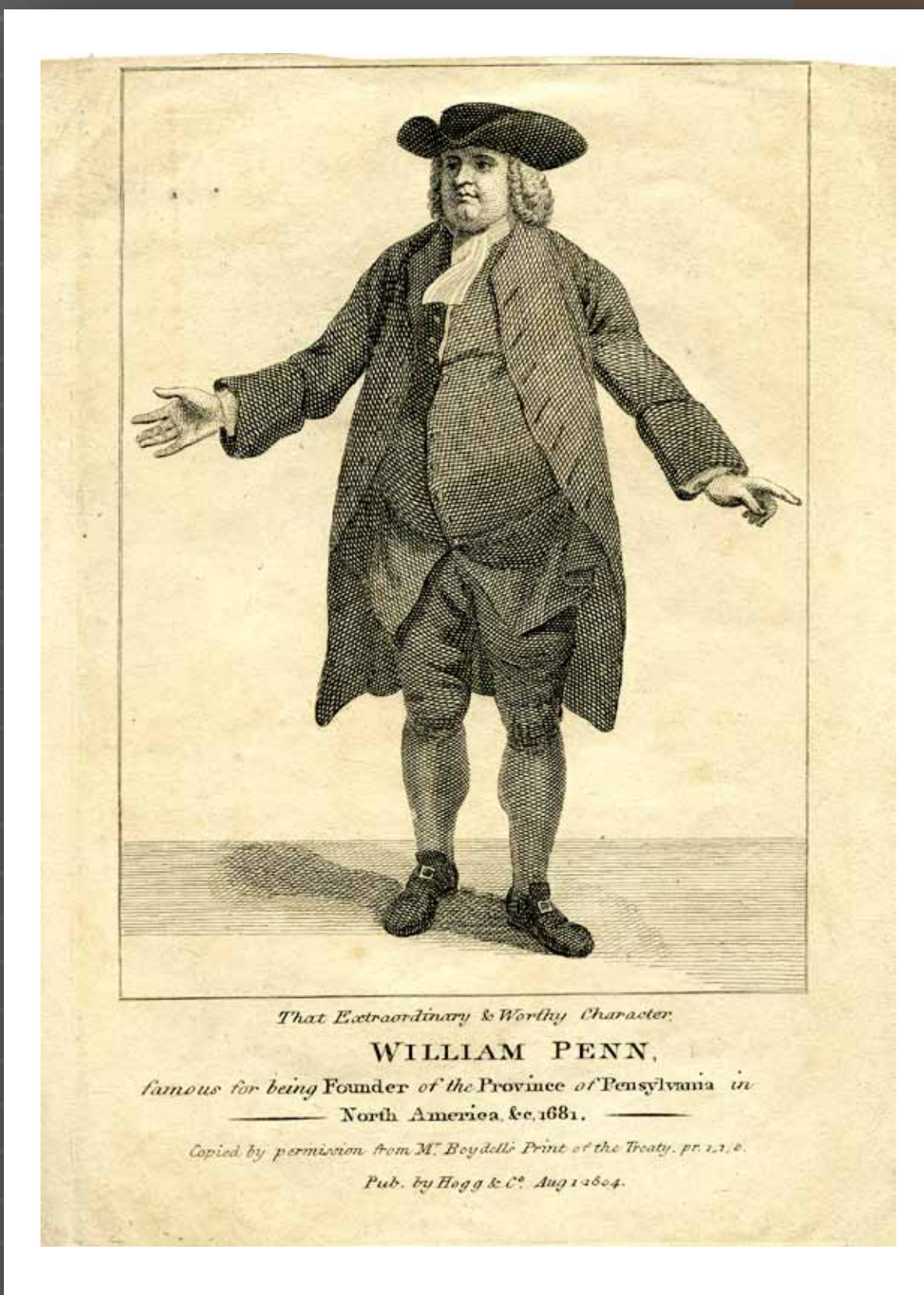
“Friends, keep out of vain fashions of the world. Let not your eyes, minds, and spirits run after every fashion in apparel of the nations, for that will lead you from the solid life.”

- George Fox, A Declaration From the Harmless & Innocent People of God Called Quakers (1660)



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THE MOVE TO North America



William Penn (1644-1718)

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A number of early Quaker men and women felt compelled to spread their unique faith and form of worship beyond England. Quakers also wanted to live according to their beliefs in free and tolerant communities.

The earliest Quaker visitor to British North America was in 1656, when a woman 'Publisher of Truth' visited the English fishing fleet in Newfoundland.

In 1681 King Charles II granted a large tract of land to William Penn, a leading English Quaker and associate of George Fox, with the understanding that the tract would be called Pennsylvania, in honour of Penn's father. After securing the permission of the Delaware Lenape First Nation inhabitants, Penn continued to settle the colony.

William Penn drafted a Frame of Government (1682) for his colony which embodied Quaker testimonies. It established a governing assembly, free and fair trial by jury, freedom of religion, freedom from unjust imprisonment, and free elections. This became a building block in what later became the U.S. Constitution.

AT RIGHT:
**The Peaceable Kingdom, by Quaker
artist Edward Hicks, based on Isaiah
11:6-8 and commemorating Penn's
treaty with the Lenape Indians.**

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,
Philadelphia. John S. Phillips bequest, by exchange
(acquired from the Philadelphia Museum of Art,
originally the 1950 bequest of Lisa Norris Elkins).



*Who are the
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Quaker Whalers OF DARTMOUTH



ABOVE:
Timothy Folger (1732-1814)
Painting by John Singleton Copley

Courtesy Nantucket Historical Association
Accession # 2003.0018.001

BELOW:
Going On by Gordon Grant

Courtesy of Old Dartmouth Historical Society -
New Bedford Whaling Museum
Accession # ODHS1933.3.33

Quakers Timothy Folger and Samuel Starbuck of Nantucket arranged with Nova Scotia Governor Parr in 1785 to establish a whaling base in Dartmouth. Together with other Quaker families, they built homes and a meetinghouse and had a thriving business.

Nantucket seamen were the best whalers in the world. They sold their whale oil to Britain and France. Whale oil from the Quaker whalers lit the streets and homes of London, England.

The British government ordered Governor Parr to close the whaling business in Dartmouth. Funds were offered to take the Quaker whalers to Wales. In 1792 Folger and Starbuck, their families and crews, sailed to Milford Haven in Wales where they set up a new whaling base.

Some Quakers left Dartmouth to go back to Nantucket. Others stayed. Of those who stayed, Seth Coleman ran a successful boat building business, and Lawrence Hartshorne built a gristmill and bakery.

There are few reminders today of the Quaker presence in Dartmouth other than the Commons, the William Ray House, and a plaque at the Post Office, which was the site of the Meetinghouse.



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Faith & Worship



ABOVE:
*Arch Street Meeting House,
Philadelphia*

“*And when my hopes in men were gone, I heard a voice that said, ‘There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.’ And when I heard it my heart did leap for joy.*”

- George Fox, Journal, 1647

The early Quakers were principally farmers and tradesmen. They became excited and inspired by reading the Bible for themselves. As a result, they sought a direct, personal experience of faith like that in the time of Jesus, which they called ‘primitive Christianity’.

Friends emphasized the interior spiritual life, which they called the ‘Inner Light of Christ’ that ‘enlightens every man...’ (John 1:9).

Turning away from the rituals of the churches, Quakers developed a form of worship based on stillness that emphasized the importance of the individual worshipper listening to the inner voice from God and sharing this with the gathered group. There was no music; no rituals or creeds; no paid or specially-trained minister or priest. These meetings were times of ministry and prayer given spontaneously by men or women Friends.

Over time different strands of Quaker belief and practice emerged, each emphasizing a certain facet of the original spirituality of Friends. These strands have resulted in Evangelical, Holiness, Universalist, Liberal, and Conservative Quakers.



RIGHT:
J. Doyle Penrose
Presence in the Midst 1916

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in Britain. Used by permission.

Who are the
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THE Peace Testimony

“We utterly deny
all outward
war and strife
and fightings
with outward
weapons for
any end or under
any pretence
whatever...the
Spirit of Christ
which leads us
into Truth will
never move us
to fight and
war against
any man.”

- 1660

From the earliest days of the Religious Society of Friends, there has been a testimony against war and the preparation for war. In 1660, the Friends wrote to the British government stating their opposition to war.

Quakers, along with the Mennonites and Brethren, have opposed conscription and the draft and have encouraged others to declare themselves as conscientious objectors. As a result, some have been imprisoned, worked in non-combatant units, served with the Friends Ambulance Unit or the Mennonite Central Committee, or have volunteered with other relief organizations.

Friends have spoken out against injustice and inequality, two of the roots of conflict. They have provided appropriate programs to help to alleviate suffering and to restore community life. They were among the early opponents of slavery.

The British Friends Service Council and the American Friends Service Committee were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 for their humanitarian work.

RIGHT:
Statement of Peace
Testimony, 1660).

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(Quakers) in Britain.
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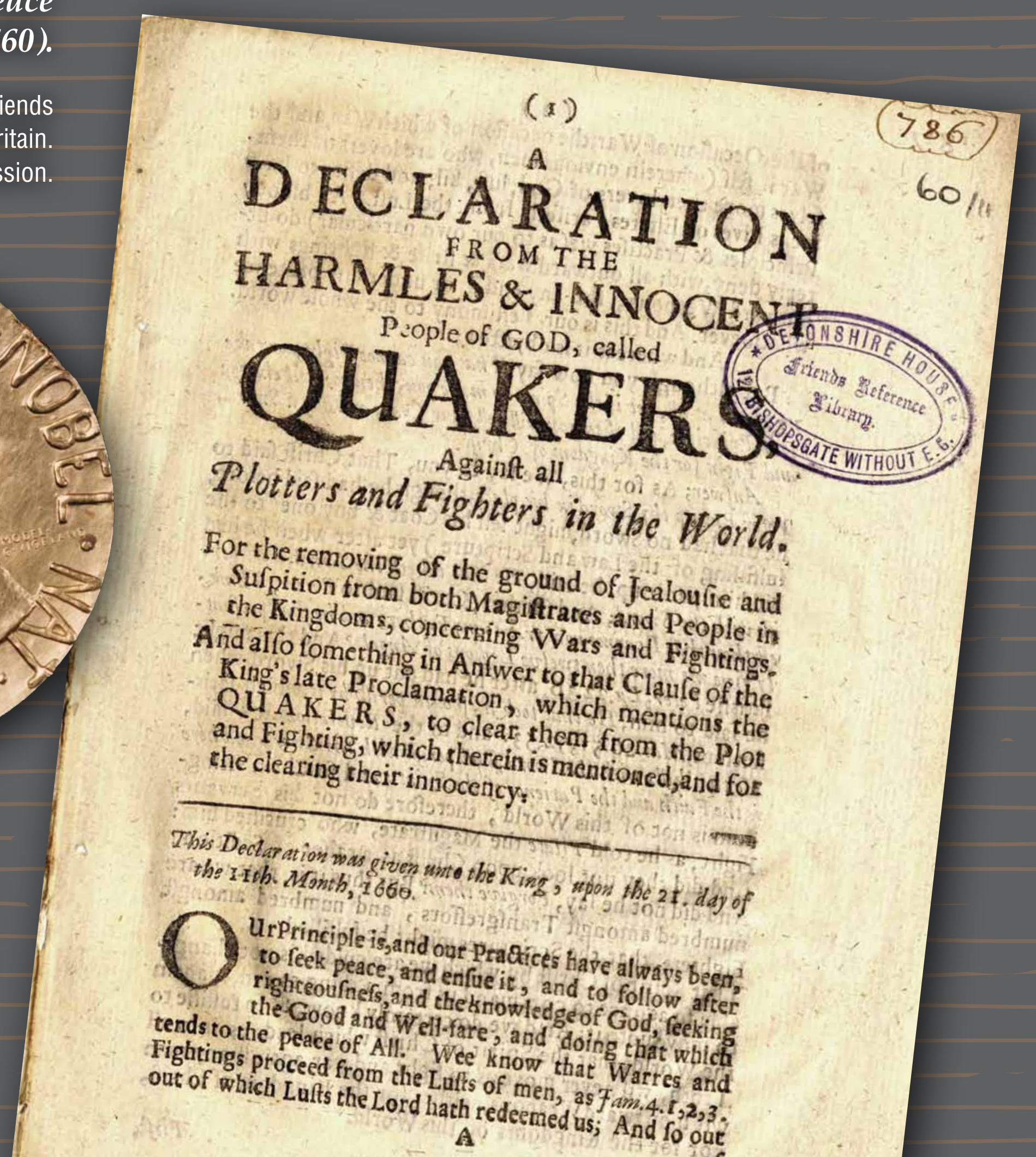
RIGHT:

Quaker star first used
in the 1870s. A modern
version by the Quaker
Peace and Social Witness
Committee.

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(Quakers) in Britain. Used by
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ABOVE:
Nobel Peace Prize Medallion
awarded to British Friends Service
Council in 1947.

Picture © Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
in Britain. Used by permission.



*Who are the
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Let Your Lives Speak

“*True godliness
doesn't turn men
out of the world,
but enables them
to live better in it,
and excites their
endeavours to
mend it; not hide
their candle under
a bushel, but set
it upon a table in
a candlestick...*”

- William Penn, 1682

In every generation Quakers have responded to important social and environmental issues. The global climate change crisis that we are facing today challenges Friends as individuals and as communities to take decisive actions to reduce our impact on the earth to a sustainable level.

Individual Friends realize that they can do only a small part of what is needed, so they are working through the Canadian Friends Service Committee, individuals and other organizations to continue to put into action the testimonies of simplicity, integrity, equality and peace.



*Who are the
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Quakers in Canada



ABOVE: *Sparta Friends Meeting House, Sparta, Ontario (1865)*



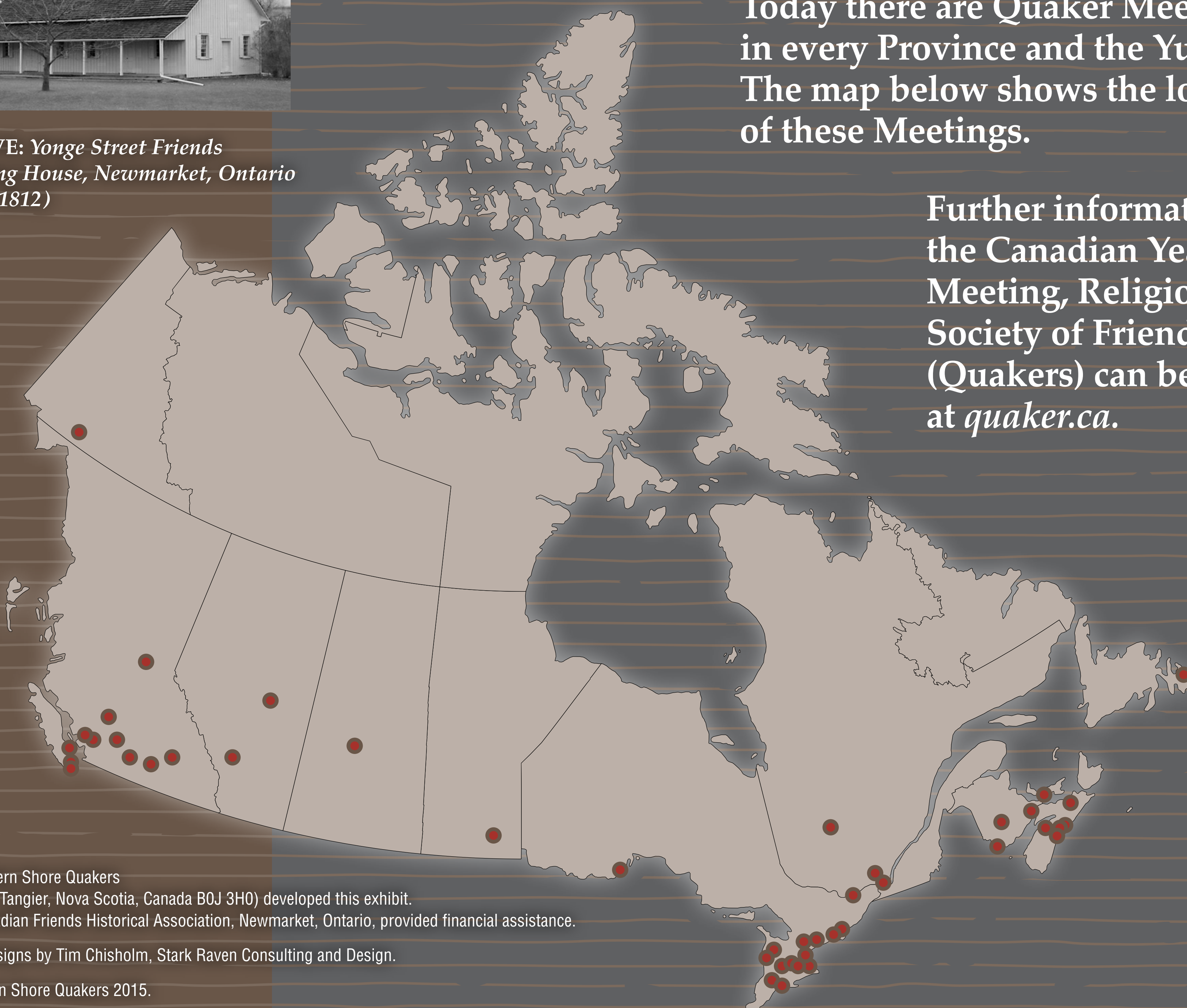
ABOVE: *Yonge Street Friends Meeting House, Newmarket, Ontario (1810-1812)*

By the mid-1700s Quakers in North America numbered in the tens of thousands, almost all of them in the thirteen American colonies.

In the early nineteenth century, Quakers in the US moved westward and northward. As part of the northward movement, Quakers moved to Upper Canada (now Ontario) where they established Meetings in communities near the U.S. border. Some of these Meetings still exist and some of the meetinghouses are still in use.

Today there are Quaker Meetings in every Province and the Yukon. The map below shows the location of these Meetings.

Further information on the Canadian Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) can be found at quaker.ca.



The Eastern Shore Quakers
(Box 41, Tangier, Nova Scotia, Canada B0J 3H0) developed this exhibit.
The Canadian Friends Historical Association, Newmarket, Ontario, provided financial assistance.

Panel designs by Tim Chisholm, Stark Raven Consulting and Design.

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Who are the
Quakers?

Beaver Harbour

New Brunswick



ABOVE:
Free Black settlers comprised part of
the Beaver Harbour community.

“No Slave Master Admitted.”

Quaker Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution signed their names to an agreement that stated, “No slave master admitted,” before sailing to what was then Nova Scotia in 1783.

They also agreed that “no slaves shall either be bought or sold, nor kept by any person belonging to the Society on any pretense whatsoever”.

Their new settlement Beaver Harbour/Pennfield, named after William Penn, was the first avowedly anti-slavery settlement in British North America.

The first group arrived on the ship “Camel” in September and included Quakers, fifteen free Black settlers, Anabaptists and seven indentured servants. They were ill-prepared for the harsh winter. Severe cold and hunger caused much suffering and some lives were lost. Help came from the Peskotomuhkati who welcomed the colonists to their territory. By 1785 the community had 800 residents, but in 1790 a forest fire burned all but one house. A few people rebuilt, but most moved on to found and strengthen other communities along the Fundy Coast.

We honour the
memory of these
settlers and their
determined stand
against slavery.

RIGHT:
Horace Nicholas, c. 1921

Photo courtesy of
the Peskotomuhkati Nation.

LEFT:
Document signed by the
original Quaker settlers
of Beaver Harbour.

(Ganong F532(12), New Brunswick
Museum- Musée du Nouveau
Brunswick, www.nbm-mnb.ca)

