

Indiana Quakers Confront the Civil War, by Jacquelyn S. Nelson. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1991. xvii, 303 pp. Tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95 cloth.

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Through careful research into primary sources, Jacquelyn Nelson has exploded the myth that because of the Quaker testimony against war Indiana Quakers did not participate in the Civil War. She documents that while 2,170 Indiana Friends identified themselves under provisions of the August 1862 draft as "conscientiously opposed to bearing arms," 1,212 served in the armed forces. Most of these enlisted voluntarily. Further weakening the Quaker claim to corporate witness for peace, only 148 of these Friends were disowned, many for multiple digressions from Quaker discipline, while 600 completely avoided disciplinary action. Another 220 acknowledged and condemned their involvement in military activities, thereby regaining good standing in their meetings.

Nelson painstakingly searched Friends' cemetery, and military records, newspapers, county histories, and private papers. She presents the results of this research in two lengthy appendixes which give biographical information on all 1,212 Indiana Friends who were members of the Union forces and the 273 soldiers buried in Quaker cemeteries but not found in Friends' birth and death records. This information will be of great help to genealogists and historians, including those in Iowa, because of migration and family connections between Indiana and Iowa Friends.

The 98-page narrative is divided into six chapters. The first chapter sketches the background of the Society of Friends and its peace testimony. Chapter two gives the meat of Nelson's research on numbers of Friends who served and the meetings' disciplinary actions (or absence thereof). The third chapter describes the motivations of those who joined. Patriotism, love of the Union, "justness" of the war, and economic incentives were the prime motives for Friends as for non-Friends. The invasion of Confederate General Morgan also spurred a flurry of enlistments. Antislavery sentiment was only occasionally mentioned by Quaker enlistees. Chapter four finds Quaker reactions to military life similar to those described by Bell Irvin Wiley in *The Life of Billy Yank, the Common Soldier of the Union* (1951). The fifth chapter, on Quaker activities on the home front, documents a great deal of Quaker financial and matériel support for the war effort. Friends also worked in more traditional Quaker activities by providing aid to prisoners of war, southern white refugees, and freed slaves in the South and North. Friends

distributed a number of Bibles and tracts to soldiers. Chapter six recounts the perhaps more familiar story of Quaker opposition to the war. Nelson concludes that in Indiana Friends suffered very little for conscience' sake. This was due to the sympathetic intervention of Governor Morton and the high numbers of Quakers who enlisted and contributed money and goods to the war effort, or who took advantage of the conscientious objector provisions to pay a commutation fee. Some Friends meetings actually raised money to reimburse those fees. Nelson concludes that "far more Quakers from Indiana fought in the Civil War than has been generally known" (98).

The author's analysis is disappointing. Nelson's understanding of Quaker theology and testimonies is so shallow that her attempts at analysis are simplistic, if not actually misleading. No serious historian of the Society of Friends can ignore the work of Lewis Benson on the theological foundation and understanding of early Friends. Nelson's references to the "Inner Light" incorrectly equate it with conscience and a theology of moral autonomy. She seems oblivious to the fact that by 1850 "Inner Light" was the code word for Hicksite Friends, while the Orthodox branch, her main focus, was beginning its accelerating accommodation to the dominant evangelical religious culture of nineteenth-century America and deemphasizing what early Friends called the "Inward Light of Christ." This accommodation to evangelicalism, ably explained by Thomas C. Hamm in *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (1988), is the main story of Midwest Quakers. Nelson's research could shed interesting light on the process of loosening Quaker discipline, but she does not seem to have the background to place her research in its wider Quaker context. Her primary research results in a valuable collection of biographical sketches and documentation that Friends participated in the war; her understanding and analysis is superficial.

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