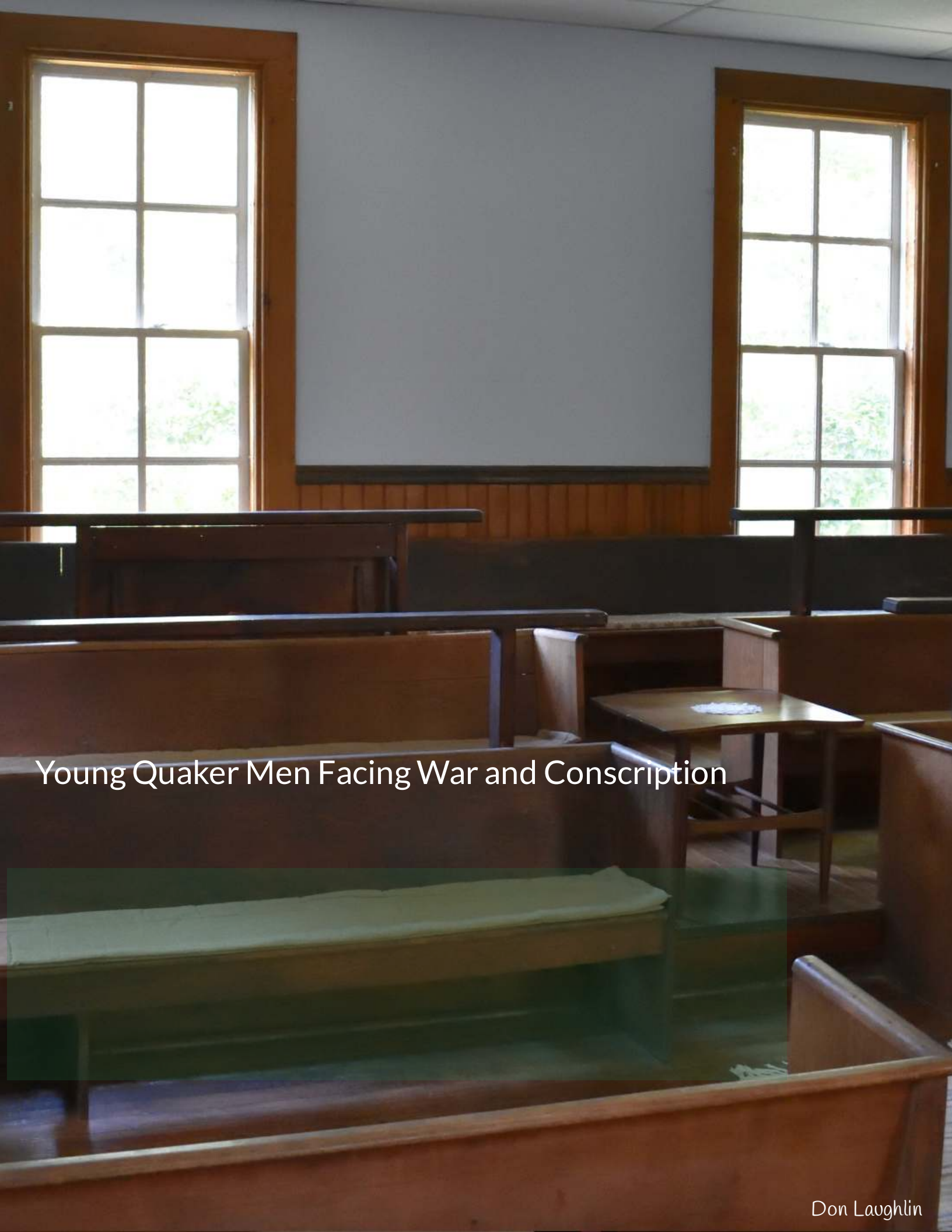

Young Quaker Men Facing War and Conscription

Don Laughlin

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An Epistle to Friends Concerning Military Conscription

Dear Friends,

It has long been clear to most of us who are called Friends that war is contrary to the spirit of Christ and that we cannot participate in it. The refusal to participate in war begins with a refusal to bear arms. Some Friends choose to serve as noncombatants within the military. For most of us, however, refusal to participate in war also involves refusal to be part of the military itself, as an institution set up to wage war. Many, therefore, become conscientious objectors doing alternative service as civilians, or are deferred as students and workers in essential occupations.

Those of us who are joining in this epistle believe that cooperating with the draft, even as a recognized conscientious objector, makes one part of the power which forces our brothers into the military and into war. If we Friends believe that we are special beings and alone deserve to be exempted from war, we find that doing civilian service with conscription or keeping deferments as we pursue our professional careers are acceptable courses of action. But if we Friends really believe that war is wrong, that no man should become the executioner or victim of his brothers, then we will find it impossible to collaborate with the Selective Service System. We will risk being put in prison before we help turn men into murderers.

It matters little what men say they believe when their actions are inconsistent with their words. Thus we Friends may say that all war is wrong, but as long as Friends continue to collaborate in a system that forces men into war, our Peace Testimony will fail to speak to mankind.

Let our lives speak for our convictions. Let our lives show that we oppose not only our own participation in war, but any man's participation in it. We can stop seeking deferments and exemptions, we can stop filling out Selective Service forms, we can refuse to obey induction and civilian work orders. We can refuse to register, or send back draft cards if we've already registered.

In our early history we Friends were known for our courage in living according to our convictions. At times during the 1600's thousands of Quakers were in jails for refusing to pay any special respect to those in power, for worshiping in their own way, and for following the leadings of conscience. But we Friends need not fear we are alone today in our refusal to support mass murder. Up to three thousand Americans severed their relations with the draft at nation-wide draft card turn-ins during 1967 and 1968. There may still be other mass returns of cards, and we can always set our own dates.

We may not be able to change our government's terrifying policy in Vietnam. But we can try to change our own lives. We must be ready to accept the sacrifices involved if we hope to make a real testimony for Peace. We must make Pacifism a way of life in a violent world.

We remain, in love of the Spirit, your Friends and brothers,

Don Laughlin
Roy Knight
Jeremy Mott
Ross Flanagan
Richard Boardman
James Brostol
George Lakey
Stephen Tatum
Herbert Nichols
Christopher Hodgkin
Jay Harker
Bob Eaton
Bill Medlin
Alan and Peter Blood

Richmond Anti-Draft Declaration of 1948 Advices on Conscription and War

:

Friends are exhorted to adhere faithfully to [our] testimony against all wars and fightings, and in no way to unite with any warlike measure such as a Selective Service Draft or Universal Military Training . . .

A living concern having been expressed that Friends' practices be consistent with their professions, Friends are urged:
1. To support Young Friends and others who express their opposition to conscription either by non-registration, or by registration as conscientious objectors. We warmly approve civil disobedience under Divine compulsion . . .
2. To recognize that the military system is not consistent with Christ's example of redemptive love, and that participation, even in a non-combatant capacity, weakens the testimony of our whole Society. . .
3. To extend our religious concern and assistance to all conscientious objectors . . .
4. To avoid engaging in any trade, business, or profession directly contributing to the military system . . .
5. To consider carefully the implication of paying [taxes], a major portion of which goes for military purposes.
6. To ask our Quaker schools and colleges to refuse to accept military training units or contracts . . .
7. To create a home and family atmosphere in which ways of love and reconciliation are so central . . .
8. To help develop the institutions, methods, and to a harmonious and peaceful world . . .

We realize that the basic task in peacemaking is to fill the spiritual void in our civilization by replacing the fear that now cripples all our efforts with a faith in the Eternal Power by which God unites and sustains those who pursue His Will . .
.
In humility and repentance for past failures, we call upon all Friends . . . to examine our possessions, to see if there be any seed of war in them . . .

1968 Richmond Declaration on the Draft and Conscription

We call on Friends everywhere to recognize the oppressive burden of militarism and conscription. We acknowledge our complicity in these evils in ways sometimes silent and subtle, at times painfully apparent. We are under obligation as Children of God and members of the Religious Society of Friends to break the yoke of that complicity.

As Friends we have for many years been granted privileged status within the draft system. This has often blinded us to the evil of the draft itself, and the treatment of those not so privileged. We are grateful for all those who by resolutely resisting the draft have quickened our conscience. We are called into the community of all who suffer for their refusal to perform unconscionable acts.

We reaffirm the "Advices on Conscription and War" adopted at Richmond in 1948. We realize in 1968 that our testimony against conscription is strengthened by refusing to comply with the Selective Service law. We also recognize that the problem of paying war taxes has intensified; this compels us to find realistic ways to refuse to pay these taxes.

We recognize the evil nature of all forms of conscription, and its inconsistency with the teachings and example of Christ. Military conscription in the United States today undergirds the aggressive foreign policies and oppressive domestic policies which rely on easy availability of military manpower. Conscription threatens the right and responsibility of every person to make decisions in matters of conscience. Friends opposing war should refuse any kind of military service; Friends opposing conscription should refuse to cooperate with the Selective Service System.

We call for the abolition of the Selection Service System and commit ourselves to work with renewed dedication to abolish it. We shall oppose attempts to perpetuate or extend conscription, however constructive the alleged purpose, by such a system as National Service. We do not support efforts at draft reform; the issue is not equal treatment under compulsion, but freedom from compulsion.

We recognize how difficult it is to work through these complex issues, and to bear the burden of decision and action. We hold in love and respect each member of our Society as he follows where conscience leads. We know there are spiritual resources available to those who would be faithful.

Friends Are Urged to:

1. Commit our energies and resources in substantial measure to launch a concerted campaign to end the draft. Friends can serve as a catalyst in this effort, in cooperation with groups representing a cross-section of American life.

2. Prepare for Monthly Meetings three sets of queries designed to:

a. clarify the responsibility of the Meeting to all young men of draft age.

b. help young Friends think through their alternatives.

c. assist Friends not directly subject to the draft to decide what actions they should take.

3. Appoint in each Monthly Meeting a Clearness Committee to assist all its young men in their search for clarity as they face the draft.

4. Set up procedures for called Meetings for Worship to share the affirmation of young men who engage in such acts of resistance as refusing to register, or disaffiliating from Selective Service or the Armed Forces.

5. Establish Meetings for Sufferings to provide for such needs of resisters as:

a. jobs for those awaiting sentence

b. help for families

c. bail and legal aid

d. meeting places for groups of resisters

e. hospitality and shelter

f. formation of a Resisters Service and Action Corps for those who choose to witness in this way.

6. Consider engaging in corporate acts of support for resisters in Friends schools, colleges and organizations, even when such acts involve conflict with man-made laws.

7. Provide draft information and counseling centers in the local community, supported by their Meetings, schools, colleges or organizations.

8. Respond to the needs of young men whose conscientious resistance to conscription and military service leads them to courses of action other than open disaffiliation. Included are some men in such situations as these:

a. those who may become refugees in other lands for conscience sake

b. AWOL military personnel

c. men still on active military duty.

Affirmation of Action

We commit ourselves to validate our witness by visible changes in our lives, though they may involve personal jeopardy. We cannot rest until we achieve a truly corporate witness in the effort to oppose and end conscription. Let us hold each other in the Light which both reveals our weaknesses and strengthens us to overcome them.

[Friends Coordinating Committee on Peace organized a Friends National Conference on the Draft and Conscription, held in Richmond, Indiana, Oct. 11-13, 1968. This declaration was used by many Friends who took the noncooperator position at their trials. It was reprinted in *Quakers and the Draft,* Charles Walker, editor: 1969.]

Note: While I was a student at Scattergood Friends School, I traveled to Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana to attend this draft conference. Jeff Kisling

Friends Coordinating Committee on Peace has announced a national conference on the draft and conscription to be held at Earlham College (Richmond, Indiana), October 11th through 13th. It is primarily planned as a working conference, with about 180 representatives from Yearly Meetings, Friends schools and other Friends' organizations and seventy to a hundred additional Friends appointed at large. A detailed program and other information may be obtained from FCCP, 1520 Race Street, Philadelphia, 19102. Friends Journal 8/15/1968

It is unclear from the records in this collection exactly when the Friends Coordinating Committee on Peace was organized. By 1951, it was agreed that the FCCP would be strictly a consultative and coordinating group for the peace efforts of Yearly Meetings and such Quaker entities as the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the Peace and Social Order Committee of the Friends General Conference, and the Friends Peace Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The annual meeting of the FCCP gave Quakers an opportunity to spend a day together sharing experiences and making proposals for cooperative projects. The FCCP only got involved in actions that had a groundswell of support from the Friends Yearly Meetings: it held conferences on topics of interest to Friends, and helped the thousand Yearly Meetings in the U.S. to re-examine the Quaker stance on peace during the Vietnam conflict, among others. It had no paid staff, but relied on volunteers such as George Hardin, Lyle Tatum, Bob Rumsey and Bob Oldham. In 1986 it was decided that the role of the FCCP was no longer viable and was being taken over by other agencies, so that it was disbanded. Swarthmore College Peace Collection

SCATTERGOOD SCHOOL
SAT. NOVEMBER 15, 1969

OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO EDUCATE INDIVIDUALS ABOUT ALTERNATIVES TO COMBATANT SERVICE, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE YOUNG MAN FACING REGISTRATION.

AGENDA

9:30 REGISTRATION--$1.00 fee for lunch and expenses

9:00 Opening presentation by a veteran of the Armed Forces with experience in Vietnam; followed by a panel which will present, discuss, and answer questions pertaining to the following alternatives to combatant service in the Armed Forces:

1. Conscientious objection (I-O) Todd Eastin, Christian Scientist, now doing alternative service at Goodwill in Iowa City
2. Noncombatant service (I-A-O) Damon Gross, graduate student in Philosophy at the University of Iowa
3. Non co-operation Dan Clark, Hesston College, Kansas, has refused I-O and II-S classifications
4. Emigration John Casey, graduate student in Philosophy at the University of Iowa

10:30 FILM "The Magician"

11:00 DISCUSSION GROUPS--Discussion groups will meet to consider various aspects of alternatives to military service. Some of the topics covered might be noncombatant service, conscientious objection, jobs for alternative service, etc.

12:45 LUNCH

2:00 SPEAKER Cecil Hinshaw, Executive Secretary of the North Central Office of the American Friends Service Committee

3:00 DISCUSSION GROUPS--A chance to consider some other aspect of alternatives to military service

4:30 PLENARY SESSION--FILM "Where the People Are" After the film summaries of the discussion groups will be presented to the assembled conference

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND, PLEASE WRITE:

JEFF KISLING
SCATTERGOOD SCHOOL
WEST BRANCH, IOWA 52358

Civil War

Seth Laughlin

Marlboro meeting of Friends is in the western part of Randolph County, N. C. It was organized many years ago, a church in the wilderness, but the principles of peace had been firmly planted and carefully cultivated. The people listened regularly to the query from their discipline, from quarter to quarter, from year to year, generation after generation. Are Friends clear of bearing arms or other military matters?" It was important to have this, as well as other subjects queried after, answered "clear." When the time came that many of the members were taken to the army by force of arms, these queries were still read, and the overseers were expected to produce answers for absent members as well as for those at home. Jesse Hill, William Hill, D. W. Milliken, Clark Milliken, William F. Ball, John R. Beckerdike, Seth W. Laughlin and others of their members were taken for soldiers; but they could not in duty to their Lord be soldiers in this sense. As soldiers of Jesus Christ, they expected to be loyal, and had accepted the Bible teaching, "Ye cannot serve two masters."

The following letter, written to their meeting at home, is of interest 10th month, 6th day, 1861. To THE SOCIETY of FRIENDS OF MARLBORO AND SPRINGFIELD MEETINGS:

You are no doubt wondering where we are and what we are doing. We are in the entrenchments near Petersburg, in Company F, 27th regiment. We have thus far refused to take any part in military duty, for which we are hours, a soldier standing by with a bayonet to pierce him, should he fall asleep. Finding that this did not overcome his scruples, they proceeded for three hours each day to buck him down. He was then suspended by his thumbs for an hour and a half. This terrible ordeal was passed through with each day for a week. Then, thinking him conquered, they offered him a gun; but he was unwilling to use the weapon. Threats, abuse and persecution were alike unavailing, and in desperate anger the Colonel ordered him court martialed. After being tried for insubordination he was ordered shot.

Preparations were accordingly made for the execution of this terrible sentence. The army was summoned to witness the scene, and soldiers were detailed. Guns, six loaded with bullets and six without, were handed to twelve chosen men. Seth Laughlin, as calm as any man of the immense number surrounding him, asked time for prayer, which, of course, could not be denied him. The supposition was natural that he wished to pray for himself. But he was ready to meet his Lord; and so he prayed not for himself but for them Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Strange was the effect of this familiar prayer upon men used to taking human life and under strict military orders. Each man, however, lowered his gun, and they resolutely declared that they would not shoot such a man, thereby braving the result of disobeying military orders. But the chosen twelve were not the only ones whose hearts were touched. He who holdeth our lives in his hand melted the hearts of the officers as well, and the sentence was revoked. He was led away to prison, where for weeks he suffered uncomplainingly from his severe punishments. He was finally sent to Windsor Hospital at Richmond, VA, where he was taken very sick, and after a long, severe illness, during which his Christian spirit and patience won the hearts of all around him, he quietly passed away, leaving a wife and seven children.

A letter was written to his wife by one of the officers, an extract from which may be a fitting close to the account of this worthy man's suffering.

'It is my painful duty to inform you that Seth W. Laughlin died at Windsor Hospital, at Richmond, on the 8th of December, 1 864. He died as he had lived, a true, humble and devoted Christian; true to his faith and religion. We pitied and sympathized with him. He is rewarded for his fidelity, and is at rest.'

World War I

Arthur Standing

Arthur Standing was drafted into the military in World War I. He refused to serve, and was placed in a noncombatant service. He was sent to France to help with the clean-up after the war and to help with rebuilding. He appreciated this experience which lasted a year.

The small Conservative Friends Meeting in which Arthur had grown up had a liberal bent. The Standing family were sensitive to peace and social issues of the times. They lived in a small farm community where you knew your neighbors.

It was alarming to all, when on April 6, 1917, war was declared and a Selective Service Act was passed May 18, 1917. Conscription was to be universal and all men from 21 to 30 years of age were to register for military service.

Before the conscription act had been passed, there had been efforts on parts of some groups and individuals to include liberal provisions for conscientious objectors. But while the act was slated to provide for members of religious sects to enter noncombatant service, efforts to further liberalize provisions were not successful. The dilemma of CO's was clear--accept noncombatant service or suffer the consequences whatever they were. Many people in the outside community were not friendly toward this pacifist viewpoint. With the declaration of war, it was agreed to create a central clearing house for peace policies, which eventually came to be called the American Friends Service Committee. So, with an outer atmosphere of war hysteria in the country, cradled in a culture where nonviolence was an established principle, urged to listen to the "still, small voice" within him, probably frightened by whatever path he chose, Arthur faced a dramatic change in his life.

There is no written information as to how or when he reached his decision to be a conscientious objector. It seems reasonable, given the circumstances, that it was not long after the passage of the Selective Service Act maybe even before. If there was a question in his mind, it might have concerned whether to accept noncombatant service in the military system, or to resist being under the military in any way, hoping for alternative service of some kind. It is likely that from the first, the later alternative was his choice. He registered and applied for a CO classification. Arthur then immediately applied for American Friends Service Committee alternative service. He was sent to camp Gordon, which is located in Georgia, where he got acquainted with Army routines and met other COs as they waited for assignments. While waiting here there are many discrepancies in writing and it seems things were not going well, but could not be communicated. The American Friends Service Committee shed some light on this.

On May 31, a judge ruled furloughs might be applied to CO's. In a series of orders from June 1 to June 30, furloughing was permitted for farm service, for Friends Relief Unit in France and for some industrial work. Treatment depended upon the camp, the officer in charge, and on the objector himself. Norman Thomas wrote that time dragged because the barrack tasks were soon done; discussion often times became monotonous, and the ridicule of other men in camp was often unbearable.

Arthur appreciated his time appointed to Service in France. Later in life is oldest daughter was given a middle name of a young lady he met in France. He was fortunate that his home community cared for him and were tolerant and accustomed to having Conscientious Objectors in the area. He was welcomed home as any of the young men who had been drafted. His uniform was interesting for a man of his belief to be wearing. His family stored the uniform for a keepsake of the times.

Merlin Chamness

A notice came to me about the nineteenth of Seventh Month, 1918, to report myself at Tipton, Iowa, on the 22nd of the same month for military service. Accordingly, my mother and I sold such stock as she and the girls did not feel like looking after; also procured such articles as I would need during my absence from home.

The last first day I was at home I was under a very deep concern to know what was my duty to do in this grave situation; And after a season of solemn weight and darkness, it opened up to me in clearness and peace that I must go and stand for the truth there and be an encouragement to others, as might be required of me in word and example.

As the train load of boys started out.... this took place on the 23rd of Seventh Month. We were on the train from about 9 p.m., the 23rd of Seventh Month till 2 o'clock a.m. the 25 of the same. Our train reached about 11 coaches before we left Iowa, and had about 500 men on it for the army. About three men went violently crazy, and three made their escape during train stops. We arrived at camp Pike, Arkansas.

C O,s were only required by said rulings to just keep themselves and their surroundings clean and healthful also to prepare their own food. I asked him if I might show him the ruling. He said "yes" but upon seeing it, he tried to see everything else but the points I mentioned; so i pointed to it and said it to him myself. He said the Quakers had written that and forged Baker's name to it. "A big lie." I was then ordered to gather up my things and was taken to the guard house where i was put in a room that had a framework of heavy timbers, and over this a close meshed, heavy woven wire, between which and the wall an armed guard continually walked. The doors were padlocked. Many of the inmates of this place were deserters, thieves and other rough, unruly men. Two of them were C.O.s and were sentenced, one to five years and the other to twenty years at Ft, Leavenworth. In the morning after breakfast we were taken out and placed each under a guard who was ordered to make us work. I told the guard that this work I felt was aiding the military machine and that I must refuse to do it. He told the guard to take me and run the bayonet through me if I would not work, and took me by the collar and gave me a shove. I went out before the guard to a large stone; he ordered me to take it: I refused; thereupon he grabbed me by the shirt collar and violently jerked me about. I had a good, heavy strong shirt or else he could have torn it from me, I believe. He again ordered me to pick it up, I refused, telling him I could not conscientiously do any military service, which I felt that was. He then struck me under the jaw a hard lick with his fist. He next told me to get on my knees and pick up the stone. I kneeled but would not take the stone. He laughed and said to some working men who were near that I was saying my prayers. Then he took a stone and said he would beat my brains out if I would not. I said "if such be the case just go ahead." Then he said he would shoot me if I would not obey. I said "I would not". About this time the sergeant came down and ordered the guard to take me back to the office.

Next I was taken to the stockade again and put into a room about 14 by 40 feet, I would judge, with all sorts of military offenders, There I stayed until the next morning. After breakfast I was again put under the care of a guard, he being ordered to make me work and run his bayonet through me if I refused. We went out about three quarters of a mile to a stone pile where I was ordered to pick up some stones. I refused. He then violently struck me on the shoulder with the stock of his rifle repeating the blows six or seven times, hitting me once on the back of the head which nearly caused me to lose control of myself. Then he stood and watched me till I straightened up a little, Then the sergeant came, also two autos, one a touring car and observed the performances. Then the guard hit me with his fist on my stomach which doubled me up and brought me to the ground, taking my breath for a while, When I recovered the guard ordered me to stand up and take some stones. I still declined. He then struck me very violently on my shoulder blade with the stock of his rifle and turning his bayonet toward me, drew it back and made two or three thrusts toward me, shaking with madness. The sergeant then ordered me back to the stockade again. On the way in the guard struck me two or three times with his bayonet to make me go fast, but I just kept a moderate steady gait. When we reached the road just in front of the building the sergeant told me to double time up and down the road. I told him that was productive of no good and that I would not do it. I was then taken inside the yard and hand cuffed with my arms around a tree and left there about twenty-five minutes, I expect. While in that position I was told that I would be shot in an hour, and asked if I would like to write to my mother. When I was out by the stone pile refusing to work, the guard said he would shoot me and run his bayonet through me if I did not work. I replied "If that is the only way out of it, just go ahead, for I had rather die feeling that it was in the right than to give in and become a soldier and more than likely take someone's life that was not prepared to die, and also die myself unprepared."

Next I was put into a dark, dungeon and allowed only bread and water to eat. The heat was so great that I found it necessary to remove clothes and keep my face close to some small air holes in the wall. All that day I was asked at close intervals if I was ready to work. I continued to declare my preference to suffer persecution rather than to suffer condemnation. In the morning this question was again put to me. But I still felt resolved to trust in God for my comfort. I prayed and prayed to God to be with me and guide me aright, and that He would be with all that are trying to serve him; especially those that who are placed in like circumstances as I was. Then I felt the peace and calm and assurance that relief was near at hand, although I could see no brightness ahead except from the way I felt. In about three hours the sergeant came and, opening the door, said to gather up my stuff" for we have a bunch of your pals over here, who are a bunch of yellow dogs like yourself," This greatly rejoiced me although I hid it from him. I was put into a light airy, , guarded room with my former CO companions. I immediately affectionately shook hands with each one of them, and they would hardly let go of my hand, God was with us. The sergeant then said that I was the king of the bunch. We then dropped into a deep prayerful silence and were greatly comforted.

These boys were being tested out in the mule sheds while I was in the dark cell, shovel axes, spades, etc. being put into their hands and their fingers being put forcefully around the handles but the tools dropped as soon as the ruffians let go of them. They were also put violently down into deep ditches and told to go digging. Some of them were hit some with sticks and jerked about a great deal. One boy was stood up beside a wall while a ruffian violently struck the wall with a club just above his head. Well they did not give in so they were taken here where I again met them. I was in the dungeon about thirty-six hours, and we were together in the guard room for forty-one hours, when were taken to the train about five o'clock on the evening of the 17th of Eighth Month. A happy bunch we were then, although we knew not what we would have to meet before we were again set free, although I had a secret faith that we had passed through the worst for some time. This was the 7th day.

First day was a very peaceful time for me. After thirty-six hours we arrived at Ft. Riley, Kansas at about five in the morning. We were taken into a large dining room and given a very good breakfast, equal in variety and abundance to a thrashing dinner, it seemed to me.

We were then taken to our barrack building, where we were individually asked closely what we could accept. We all refused to do anything except that would be for our other C.O.s benefit. We were then issued cots and pillows and left unguarded to go almost where we pleased. Here we found about 26 other C.O.s. We have been working some on the C.O.s mess hall and tents, also another small building, all of which are for the use of the C.O.s at present at least. Other days we have taken walks with chums or those we have learned to admire, and also hikes for some miles into the country. I here found a nice conservative Friend whose name is Sheldon Smith. He and I hold meetings together off to ourselves somewhere on 1st and 4th days. We told some of the boys they would be welcome to meet with us.

8/3/1918. Today finds me still waiting to meet the board of inquiry. I have felt some uneasiness in regard to accepting reconstruction work, but have not as yet felt anything against accepting a farm furlough provided I may give my wages (which are more than a private's pay) to some charitable institution, not connected with the military.

Orders finally came from Washington to discharge the C,O.s and they were released but not without delays and more harassment.

Franklin Clark

Yes, my dad was a CO. Unfortunately, our house fire in 1975 would have destroyed any papers that he might have kept related to that segment of his life. I'll reflect on this some though, and add whatever may come to me as the memories percolate.

One thing I could say immediately (not exactly on-point, but related) is that my dad's upbringing was within a rather "hard core American" home environment. The militarily-oriented mindset didn't resonate with him. He felt ideologically isolated with respect to his family. Feeling constrained to follow his own conscience, he broke with family traditions and entered seminary. So, although not particularly confrontational within his family (his three brothers all pursued military careers, followed by their own sons -- all several years older than me, since my own parents didn't marry until they were thirty-seven years old, he clearly was the rebel. He clearly was the one within our family who broke the ice, in choosing to take his own stand as a CO, with very little support from family or from within his own town.

And it's quite likely that without the awareness of my dad's earlier willingness to butt heads with Selective Service; and without having had the benefit of his example to grow up with, of living a life that involved "speaking truth to power," my own adult career and those of my brothers would have gone along quite different paths from those where we've all walked. (I do have distinct childhood memories of playing soldier, "cowboys & Indians," etc., with siblings and playmates -- when we all were still young enough not to have yet gained a grasp of the larger picture of life on Earth. My parents' rules were strict, forbidding weapon-related toys and play. But we found ways around their ground rules. And (as in the words of the Viet Nam War era song "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?") without the sometimes unpleasant "course corrections" from our parents, along with their lessons relating to the underlying purposes for some of those unpleasant parent-child experiences, we might easily all have ended up going off "to be soldiers, every one.")

Like that song that says, "you're gonna need a little water from another time." Very true.

Written from memory by Ben Clark.

World War II and the Peacetime Draft

Ray Millett “My Position as a Conscientious Objector during World War II”

Both of my parents were born in the West Branch community and took all of us children as a family to the Friends Church for Sunday school and worship regularly. My Sunday school teachers have had a great impact on my life over the years. In my early years they helped me as a young boy in their classes learn responsible behavior by their teaching and example.

The husband of one of my Sunday school teachers was the teacher of my father’s Sunday school class. He took a stand as a conscientious objector during World War I. This had a significant impression upon me.

According to Rufus Jones, a well-known Quaker associated with relief work during World War I, “conscience” is the “sense of doughtiness.” The meaning of conscience is carried over in the expression, “I ought to do so and so.” A conscientious objector is one who conscientiously feels he should object to all war. In addition, he should be ready to pay any and all costs for his belief.

When I was a young boy, God spoke very plainly to me that I should not be a part of a military organization that prepared me to take any person’s life. One of the dominant teachings of the New Testament for me is that God’s love is extended to ALL people. This teaching, in my opinion, means that as a follower of God, I should live in brotherly love with all people everywhere. The commandment in the Bible, “You shall not murder,” “Love your neighbor as yourself,” and “Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other” were

principles I wanted to live by.

When I was about 21, I went to a Young Friends gathering at a nearby Friends church. The speaker talked about the need for young people to decide for themselves their response to the draft. This speaker definitely helped with my decision to register as a conscientious objector, often referred to as a CO. Some that heard him also decided to to take the CO stand, but others were not convinced to register as conscious objectors. The local Friends churches supported both in their positions of conscience.

At age 21, I registered with the draft board as a conscientious objector. There were three classifications for registration: 1-A for those who went into military service, 1-A-O for those who went into military service as noncombatants, 1-O for those who because of religious beliefs were assigned to civilian service of national importance as conscientious objectors.

Since my father was at the age of retirement and I was the older son at home and farming in partnership with him, I was entitled to an agricultural deferment. About two years later when my number was called, I went to St. Louis for my physical exam with a group from Cedar County. Since this was near the end of the war, I don't think any of this group was called for active duty.

Courage is required of a conscientious objector because he often must take a stand against hostile attitudes of the power structure and of the nation and his community, people in the community, and sometimes his church and his family as well. Usually conscientious objectors worked without pay, sometimes they had to pay their own living expenses. And , of course, they received no benefits under the GI Bill of Rights.

The Society of Friends name comes from John 15-14, "You are my friends if you do what I command." For me a part of this command was to take a stand as a conscientious objector. Many Friends were conscientious objectors to war, but we were also concerned about the safety of our relatives and friends who served in the military.

I have resource materials to share and would be glad to talk with any teen or their parents who might be interested in considering taking a conscientious objector stand if the draft is reinstated. Conscientious Objector Public Forum--April 4, 2002

Don Laughlin

Why am I a conscientious objector?

I graduated from High School in 1940 just as WW II was beginning. During my H.S. years, Harold Guthrie was my English teacher and part of the time, my Sunday School teacher. He grew up in West Branch as the son of Irma and Taylor Guthrie who were the ministers of the Friends Church here.

He was the first to make me understand that there was another way to approach international conflicts than with violence. About that time the three historic peace Churches--Mennonites, Brethren and Friends-- were beginning to talk about setting up camps for their members who could not participate in the military. These camps were allowable, by law. They were to be administered and financed entirely by private contributions and government agencies for whom the men were working-- Forest Service in the Western states and Soil Conservation in the Dakotas, and some mental institutions in Iowa and the East. They were called Civilian Public Service Camps.

Conscientious Objectors were inducted into these camps just as others were into the military. They were required to be there and were eligible for leaves and furloughs much as military inductees were.

The military registration program was a federal mandate, but actual assignment of a classification to a man was done by locally appointed county draft boards. On the registration form that a young man filled out was a box which he could check indicating that he wanted to claim conscientious objector status. Those forms were sent to the local draft board, and it was up to them to decide what classification each man received. Many draft boards made it very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to get a 4-E--conscientious objector--classification. With other draft boards, when you listed your religious membership as Quaker, Mennonite or Brethren, it almost automatically guaranteed a 4-E. In most cases a 4-E applicant had to meet in person with the draft board and justify why he should be classified as a conscientious objector.

Other classifications were: 1-A--available for military duty, 4-D--Ministerial deferment, and 4F--physical disability. There was also a classification for agricultural deferment, and some others.

I was in California at the time I was inducted and was sent to a CPS

camp in central California. It was a Forest Service camp and our main work was forest fire suppression. But I was also part of a mapping crew where we were making maps of the Eastern California and Western Nevada mountains from aerial photographs. A year later I transferred to another Forest Service camp in the San Demas National Forest east of Pasadena.

Young Quaker Men Facing War and Conscription

After WW II, when the peacetime draft act was passed in 1948 there were about 20 Quaker young men in Iowa that refused to register. This was a military act and we decided we could not participate. Even the act of registering was part of the military system, and to accept that was to accept part of the system.

At that time the usual sentence was 18 months. That was my sentence and I think most of the other men's too. The standard practice was to serve 1/3 of a sentence then be released on good time, and be on probation for the rest of the sentence. We were all out after about six months.

But all this history should take a back seat to the question of "why am I a conscientious objector?"

When I was first involved, all CO's, that I knew, were religious men and women with Christian backgrounds who strongly believed and wanted to follow the non-violent teachings of Jesus. As time went on we found that there were other equally sincere people who had deeply held reasons for being conscientious objectors. I now feel that the brotherhood of humankind is too large and precious to be relegated to any one religion or sect or society. All world religions, and many individuals who claim no religion, accept the brotherhood of all people. I believe strongly in the religious basis for pacifism, but at the same time I want to recognize that that may not be the only valid basis.

The Christian bases for pacifism are many and clear. Jesus was unequivocal in his directions to "love one another", "turn the other cheek", and "do good to those who despitefully use you". He said "he who loves God, loves his brother". He was unwilling to give these up. Sticking to these principals was more important to him than saving his young life.

If I think of myself as part of the human family, how then can I destroy another member of the same family? The goal of war psychology is to dehumanize the enemy--reduce people to a universal name--" Huns," "dirty Japs," "the enemy," etc. Modern warfare even dehumanizes civilian people--they are known simply as "collateral damage" and forgotten. The military calls it "the price we must pay". As a human being and pacifist, I cannot accept this terrible dehumanization and destruction of part of my family.

I think that most people, whether consciously religious or not, adhere to sets of principles of what is right, just, and loving. There is a report of Israeli soldiers refusing to carry out orders to demolish Palestinian homes. What is their motive? Are they following ancient ideals of loving one's enemy and being fair and just? Or is their action based on purely contemporary experience of observing, and believing in certain standards of human behavior?

Catholic Worker: So we do not defend human life because it is particularly comely or talented or promising or fine of form. We defend life because we are all creatures and, as such, life is not ours to take.

Noncooperation

I spent two years--May 1944 to August 1946--in California Quaker CPS camps under the Forest Service. During that time, I made two trips to Europe, under the United Nations Relief Administration. One trip took cattle to Danzig and the other horses to Trieste. During this time, I accepted a CO classification under the draft.

I was on the staff at Scattergood School at the time of the 1948 peace time military draft and felt differently about the governments right to impose such. On my twenty-fifth birthday in December, 1948, I became illegal. Shortly after that an FBI agent showed up. We drew up a statement of my position which I signed.

Harold Burnham, teacher at Scattergood School, and I had our trials together in Waterloo, Iowa. We made the trip there on a cold February day, accompanied by Leanore Goodenow, Scattergood Head, and my wife, Lois, and our six-month-old son, David. Leanore spoke as a "friend of the court" asking that we be given probation, rather than a prison sentence, since we were essential to the operation of the school. We both got eighteen month sentences instead. We were offered the opportunity to go home and "settle our affairs" and return in a month to start our sentences, but we were prepared to start that day. Our tearful good-byes were said then and Hal and I were escorted to the Waterloo County jail.

Following is the letter I wrote to the U.S. Attorney General:

August 30, 1948

Mr. Tom Clark, Attorney General

Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Clark;

At a time like the present when international relations are so upset, in the interests of world peace we need to be indicating in every way possible that we are a peaceful people; our expanding military program and peacetime draft are indicating exactly the opposite of this.

Military training is the poorest kind of training for citizens of a democracy. The best soldier, the man who is willing to do the least critical thinking and accept the orders from higher officials makes the best citizen of a totalitarian society and the poorest citizen of a democracy.

In the eyes of other nations, we are getting stronger and stronger and are becoming a nation to be feared, thus encouraging the armament race among all nations. I believe any government or political philosophy whether democratic or totalitarian that maintains its support through military might is violating the laws of God and therefore I cannot support its military policy. I feel that if we are to secure the world from destruction we must have faith in man and God and repeal our expanding military program before it even gets under way. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

Because I believe the military program of the United States government to be a violation of the laws of God I feel I cannot take any part in such a program, even to the extent of registering. So I did not register on August 30, as required by law, and will be at my home in West Branch in case a government official wishes to talk with me.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Laughlin

Herb Smith

I was a senior at Olney when I first heard of the idea of non-registration for the draft.

It was the summer of 1948 and I was a year out of Olney Boarding School before I had to decide what my response to the first peace-time draft in U.S. history was to be.

I attended a peace conference at Earlham College that summer and associated steadily with Eston Rockwell. Eston was still planning non-registration. My question was, should I do the same or register as a C.O.? At the time, C.O.'s were not being drafted at all. I was relatively sure I would have no difficulty in getting C.O. classification. for our local board had had considerable experience with Quaker C.O.'s. However, as I thought and heard more about civil disobedience it became clear to me that this course was a definite protest against the draft law. I saw that to register as a C.O. could be constructive but it was not a protest of the law.

During the several weeks of inner struggling and searching that summer, I became aware that the prospect of my taking a way of civil disobedience excited me deeply. It seemed so clear-cut, strong, and right. It seemed to me that it must be God's will. I had the conviction that no matter what the apparent odds, right action always has an effect for good. But I was scared stiff. This position of non-registration was a new one to my family and Meeting and was not at that time viewed with much favor by them. It was pointed out to me that the protest of one person was futile, and that prison was a gross waste of time, that one might crack under the strain of prison, that it was possible that I might get maximum sentence of five years in prison and $10,000 fine; what then? One First day afternoon I was on the enclosed back porch at home struggling over the idea. I was wondering whether I could know God's will for me in the way that I knew many people felt they did, when my inward doubts and confusion rather suddenly re-arranged and fell into place. I unexpectedly and rather joyfully realized that I could refuse to register, and that I felt all the more deeply that I wanted to take this course. I was still scared but I felt assurance that I could do it and that it was right.

Having the association of Eston Rockwell helped a great deal. I obtained advice from Lyle Tatum on how to proceed with non-registration. Lyle was an Iowa Friend who had been in prison and was then doing C.O. counseling work. Eston and I decided that if it were possible, we would like to get probation rather than go to prison. We applied for work in Mexico with the American Friends Service Committee and were accepted to go if we were given probation.

At the time we were to register, we wrote letters to the draft board. We may have written letters of explanation to the paper, too; I don't remember now. We were due to register in Ninth Month, but we were not called before the Assistant Attorney General until Twelfth Month and were not tried until Second Month. This long period of uncertain waiting was quite difficult. We wondered whether the Justice Department might have intended it that way, hoping we would change our minds. I don't remember much about the conversation with the assistant D.A. and the young F.B.I. man. We were released without bond on our promise to appear in court.

At the time of the trial my family were out of the state. Eston's family took us to Cedar Rapids to the Post Office and the Federal Building. We wore our best suits and put some other clothes in the car to wear in jail if we failed to get probation. The court room was full. A naturalization proceeding was taking place for about a dozen immigrants. Uniformed American Legion or National Guardsmen were marching up and down the aisle with dummy rifles, halting, turning on their heels, snapping their guns to attention, hen banging the butt down on the floor in a show of welcome for the new citizens When Judge Henry Graven came in and the people stood up to honor him, two men from our Meeting remembering the Quaker testimony of equality, refused to stand.

The trial was short with Lyle Tatum pleading for probation for us. We both made short statements. In mine, I said that I felt that it to be my patriotic duty to obey a higher Law than the law of the nation when I felt the latter to be detrimental to the best interest of the country. I had decided earlier to not prepare a statement ahead of time but follow the Biblical injunction "do not be anxious how are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour..." Matt, 10:19. The words that I did speak came to me while I was sitting in the court-room waiting for the trial. I was told later that it was an effective statement.

Some C.O.'s plead not guilty, but we both pleaded guilty--for we had certainly broken the law. We were almost immediately taken to a small barred room near the court room and locked in. The old familiar Cedar Rapids Post Office had become our first jail.

We waited awhile, making jokes and discussing our lost Mexican plans. Soon a U.S. Marshal came to walk us the two blocks to the county jail. On the way we met someone we knew and spoke pleasantly to her. Soon we were on the third floor of the jail in a "tank," a barred-in area with several cells along the side. Three or four other men were there, too. In a week we were handcuffed and taken be car to the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners t Springfield. Missouri. We spent another week in individual cells there; this was quarantine. we were given medical I.U. and psychological tests and had to work two hours a day moping or scraping paint. Ee were allowed to visit a small library once and to play basketball in the "yard" a couple of times. The old prisoners were very interested in us but followed the prisoners code of not being overly curious. We were immediately aware of a predominance of homosexual jokes, jibes, and banter. The prison was neat and clean, and well-built as an up-to-date college or hospital. Guards wore no guns and were neat. Their attitudes ranged from courteous and friendly, to slightly surly and antagonistic. We were treated very well physically. The food was of good quality--at least before it was cooled. The beds were comfortable. We were to get plenty of sleep and fresh air. Most prisoners lived more healthfully than they did on the outside.

In a week we were moved from quarantine to a large dormitory which had a capacity of 100 to 200 men in one room. We were assigned work on the farm; Most prisoners worked seven hours a day, six days a week. We settled quickly into a routine and our world gradually shrank to the confines of the prison. We went weeks without seeing a woman. We could write three letters a week and receive seven. We had no, or only petty, decisions to make. Little things became more important to us. We learned that we had little wright of free movement; doors and gates were locked everywhere. Our days, weeks and months were fully planned for us. We spent many hours in line waiting; we waited to march in a double column to lunch; we waited to go to work and to come in from work; we waited to go to the weekly movie; we waited in line several times a day to be counted. We wore identical clothes. We knew nothing of any decision involving us until the event happened. If breakfast hour was changed, or a visitor arrived, or the warden wanted to see us, we learned of it at the moment; we were taken there and we would wait. We could take correspondence courses, we could study typing, we could go to the library once a week, we could play in a softball team, we could read and do hand work. It was a vegetative, easy life, physically; psychologically it was more difficult, especially for the married men. We C.O.'s questioned many times whether it was worth it; whether we'd do it again. Some said no, others yes. Some felt it was a waste of time. I didn't, I was seeing life from perspectives I had never realized before; it was a real and highly valuable experience for me. I still value this experience as a highlight of my life, but I would like to underscore the fact that this was an unusual point of view. The value I found in prison was partially due to exciting association with other C.O.'s.

The other prisoners' reactions to us range from indifference and mild hostility to warm friendliness. Mainly thy took us in stride and called us all J.W.'s (Jehovah's Witnesses---there had been many of these in prison during the war). Many men languished in prison, doing dozens of years with little or no hope of a different life. Prison can push one toward being a vegetable, toward selfishness, and certainly toward a dismal, quiet, hardly noticeable kind of despair; however, it is not likely to have this effect on a young C.O. One can do "hard time" or "easy time" meaning fret a lot, or yield to the tide. To do "easy time", long timers advise "do your own time and nobody else's" and "do a day at a time."

A "good" prisoner seldom does the full term of his sentence. One receives do many days per month (usually three) of "good time." This means that for good behavior you get out sooner. This is a powerful incentive, for as one "sits" in prison, the outside grows on one's mind to become more and more of a heaven of freedom. With my 18- month sentence, I could have gotten out in 16 months and seven days on good time. One becomes eligible for parole when one-third of his sentence is served. One must apply to the national parole board. Waiting to hear from the parole board is like a small boy waiting for a new bicycle, which he knows may or may not be given to him. I applied for parole on schedule but received it only after I had done over one-half of my time. I wish now that I hadn't taken parole. For one thing it seems more clear-cut to wait until one is released fully free. Under parole you must make monthly reports to the district parole officer. In practice, we C.O.'s were given complete liberty of action under parole, but the onus of commitment to the Federal Prison machine is always present. I had as hard a struggle about whether to accept parole as I had about whether to register. I felt it was not completely to make an agreement designed for the more typical criminal and did not fit me at all. I did manage to get a conscience clause inserted in the parole agreement. Still I violated my conscience when I took parole and I have sharply regretted it.

On leaving prison, one is registered for the draft by the warden who has power of attorney over the prisoners. This shuttles one from the Justice Department back into the lap of Selective Service. My next communique from the draft board may have been a questionnaire, I'm not sure. If it was I returned it unopened. Soon I received a notice to appear at the Cedar Rapids bus station at 6:00 a.m.one day in fifth month to ride off to army camp with a bus load of other inductees. I suppose the usual pre-induction physical was skipped in my case because of physical exams given in prison--I never heard. I wrote a statement of explanation to the paper and I wrote to the draft board and I stayed at home.

A precedent had been set in Iowa for the relatives of the C.O.'s to supply information to the Federal Authorities who used the information to fill out questionnaires for the violator, and the board then issued a deferred classification. The Assistant D.A. called me in and asked some of the family to accompany me. I did not approve of this method but left it up to my family to decide their own response. My brother wished to accompany me and did give information which was apparently used to complete a questionnaire. Eventually I received a card in the mail stating my classification to be

4-F which means physically (or morally) unfit for military service. Another F.B.I. man came to see me at home during this second go around. It was quite a pleasant visit and he even admitted that if he held my beliefs he might have to take the same action.

Bob Michener

On his birthday on May 26, 1949, he sent a letter to General Hershey of Selective Service, to the Kansas State Selective Service and to the Ellis County Draft Board informing them he declined to register for the draft because e was a conscientious objector--objecting on the basis of his religious training and belief. He was a member of the Religious Society of Friends, First Friends Church in Wichita, Kansas Yearly Meeting.

Subsequently, on a fall day in 1949 the United States Marshals found him on campus, arrested him and took him to Wichita--without giving him an opportunity to tell anyone he was leaving Hays. A Grand Jury in Wichita had issued an indictment charging him with refusal to register under the Selective Service Act of 1948. He was booked then released on his recognizance signature. soon he found himself on a Wichita street without a bus ticket or money to buy a ticket to return to Hays--181 miles away--so he hitchhiked home.

He was scheduled to appear in Federal District Court in Wichita on January 24, 1950. Bob's case had gotten the attention of Harrop Freeman, a Quaker and scholar of constitutional law at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

In the federal district at the District Court level Freeman had won his challenge to the constitutionality of the 1940 Selective Service Law. In order to get his challenge before the United /states Supreme Court he needed to lose a similar case in a different District. Anticipating a loss in the Federal Court in Kansas, he wanted Bob's case to be the counter point to the one he had previously won---thereby getting different verdicts in different Federal districts. Opposing results from different districts is a criterion for the Supreme Court to hear a case. Bob's plea was 'not guilty'.

However, the Judge found him guilty, sentenced him to a year and a day--beginning immediately. In few days he was taken to the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners at Springfield, Missouri. He lived in the 200 bed dorm in an area of the prison that housed the men who did the day-to-day work at the prison. His assignment was to the in-take office because he could read and he could type.

He was let out on parole 4 months later--during the week Truman sent US troops to Korea. Prison officials registered him for the Draft. He ended Harrop Freeman's appellate work because of the cost of taking his case to the Supreme Court.

On August 22, 1950, he and his Scattergood sweetheart, Matilda Henderson were married under the care of the Paulina (Iowa) Friends Meeting.

He enrolled at Drake University where he completed a semester of work. During the fall he received his Selective Service Questionnaire; he declined to fill it out. He received his notice to appear for a physical examination; he refused to appear. He was told to appear for Induction into the Army; h did not appear.

In January 1951 the US Marshals found him on the Drake Campus, arrested and booked him, telling him to appear in a few days in Federal District Court in Topeka, Kansas. He was charged with three indictments: failure to fill out the questionnaire, failure to get a physical and failure to report for induction.

Before Judge Hill he pled guilty to two counts read in open court; Hill sentenced him to 5 years in prison on each count--to be served consecutively i.e. 10 years for being a conscientious objector by reason training and belief. The Court recessed.

During this recess, the prosecution found one indictment that had not been read. Bob was called back to Court. Third indictment read; sentence 5 years to be served concurrently with the two consecutive 5-yr sentences. This was the longest sentence received by a conscientious objector since the court martial days of World War I. The public response to the sentence was monumental in opposition to the Judges' decision.

After 'cooling his heels' in the lock-up in Topeka for 59 days, Judge Hill changed the 'consecutive' part of the sentence to 'concurrent'. Thus the sentence was 5 years.

When Bob again got to the Medical Center at Springfield, Missouri, they were very busy in the in-take office; he was told to type his own admission papers. This was when he learned the Judge had shortened his sentence.

A short time later he got a better 'office job' assignment which he described as follows: "I had a great time in my work assignment with the psychologist, George Geil. He was very supportive of me--liberal with a humanistic perspective. We had a standard interview; we tested everyone who came in. I did scheduling and testing.

"....Judges were able to send men to us for evaluation prior to sentencing. We had 60 days to complete our work. I tested the ordinary prisoners, while Geil worked on the more complicated cases..."

This work with Dr, Geil provided the initial experience for his own professional work as a psychometric psychologist.

After 22 months Bob was released on parole on Christmas Day, 1952.

John Griffith

John Griffith--clerk of Iowa Yearly Meeting from 1984 to 1989.

The following is from his paper (1996) "War Resistance in World War II":

An Amendment to the Selective Training and service act of 1940, approved December 20, 1941, required the registration of all male citizens of the USA between the ages of 18 and 65. Nineteen years old at the time, with a registration date of June 30, 1942, I wrote a registered letter on June 29, 1942, to General H. B. Springs, head of Selective Service in South Carolina.

In this letter I wrote:

"I take this opportunity to inform you of my position. I am conscientiously opposed to war, for any cause whatever, and shall refuse to comply with this act, or any act in the future which I feel to be a contradiction of Christian teachings, democratic liberty and individual freedom."

Ralph Altmaier

My contact with the draft board was short. When I turned 18 I called to find out how to register. They told me everyone turning 18 the first half of the year would register on the same day. I wasn't interested in registering so I just skipped it when the day came. The draft board never bothered me about it and I never reminded them.

I believe some years later there was a blanket pardon issued for draft dodgers if they would register. I did not and again they never followed p and I didn't remind them. I'm not sure if I qualify for social security or not as that was the penalty for not registering.

Maybe I shouldn't be bringing this all up??

Dick Fawcett

Yes, I was a CO. I remember writing my application and taking it over to Tipton. The person there commented about how I was Quaker, not being surprised about my application. I don't have any paperwork or even the original draft card but I was granted CO status. I remember thinking about what I wanted to do for alternative service, I guess not even knowing if I would have any choice.

When I was a senior at ISU I was called up for an army physical. Not too surprisingly I flunked because of my back. I remember playing guitar and singing for a large campus-wide event in the Great Hall of the Union that night. I had told the MC about flunking my physical. So when he introduced me he started by saying something like the audience should be sorry for me because I just flunked --- followed by appropriate pause --- my army physical. Wild applause followed as anti-war sentiment was high.

Later when the draft lottery was held my number was 320. So I was a CO, flunked my physical. and got a high lottery number. I had never really considered 1-AO status, but a friend at ISU who attended Ames Meeting was 1AO, was drafted, went to Viet Nam as a medic, and was killed.

Roy Knight

PRISON CAMP #3236

Written by Roy Paul Knight (1989)

Earlham, Iowa Born June 26, 1928

In the summer of 1948 there were a few liberal young Quaker men, who were pondering how to respond to the U.S. government's decision to draft men into military service. Living, with wife and baby son, in a rural Quaker community in Northwest Iowa, I was among a number of such young men. Several were nearly beyond draft age and had already spent time in Civilian Public Service Camps for conscientious objectors, supposedly to do civilian work of National importance. Mostly the reality of such camps was a place for the government to hide from public view these objectors to military service. Part of the work was made up and irrelevant.

The feeling that we wanted no part of any alternative service work of any kind, and that we wanted to absolutely say to the U.S.A. that the military draft and reliance on military power was in opposition to our Christian pacifist belief in the Power of Love, pushed about twenty of us in Iowa to refuse to register for the draft. I wrote my area draft board and the U.S. Attorney General's office telling of my plan not to register. There was no reply from the draft board, and the Attorney General's office sent a note of warning that refusal to sign up for the selective service was punishable by 5 years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

Then came a period of waiting for the Justice Department to move. As I recall the F.B.I. showed up in about 6 weeks with an invitation to appear before a Federal Judge, who tried to persuade us to register to avoid being prosecuted. Since we had decided that taking the penalty was the route to go, we were soon given a sentence of 18 months in prison and hauled off to Springfield, Mo. Federal Medical Center.

Sometimes we were handcuffed, sometimes not. We soon learned that the Springfield Prison was a place where prisoners with serious physical and mental problems were housed; however, it had a small farm and vegetable production facility for helping them make use of the few able minimum custody inmates. After three weeks of being locked up on individual quarantine cells for the purpose of being checked over, we were assigned jobs in various parts of the prison and quartered in a prison camp bunkhouse dormitory. About 20 of us non-registrant types had bunk beds fairly close together. We quickly adjusted to being treated as potential escapees, with being counted several times each day, being frisked going out to work and coming back in, and being usually confined within high fences or lock-ups.

The prison farm manager used to good advantage the farm skills among us; the business office made use of those who could be of help to them; the prison basketball and softball teams appreciated the athletes in the group. We also developed a choral group, which sang on the radio from the prison.

As religious objectors to the war machine, most of us were spiritual seekers, so we established an early morning time and place for meditation and worship. Which was a time of refreshment in the midst of confinement. We were fortunate to have each other to lean on when various tensions developed in prison and in our back home scenes.

We had some famous Quaker leader visitors, some of whom applauded our position, others who thought we were wasting our time. One disappointment to me was to find that our own Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, as well as several local Meetings gave no support to non-registrants. I believe it was widely felt by Quaker groups that we should accept some kind of alternate civilian service, which would have been available to us had we signed up for the draft, and would avoid the stigma of a prison record. My Father and Father-in-law had both served under the American Friends Service Committee in France doing reconstruction work right after World War I as an alternative to military service.

Generally, we were all paroled after eight months in lock up and were happy to return to our families and to get on with our lives. I turned to carpentry and woodworking as a vocation and within a few years became a self-employed building contractor. I have had a kind of paranoia about people disapproving of my prison record, but mostly have blended into the American mainstream.

My civil rights were taken away as a felon, so I am not allowed to vote and do not speak out politically. A presidential pardon for this felony has been granted to some, and no doubt would have to me. . .. I don't want to tell the Government that I'm sorry, so have not applied for a pardon.

John Dickey

When the first rumblings of WWII were felt I was in a work program in Mexico run by Quakers. Waking to the sound of the braying of burrows and donkeys, my job was to pour mud into molds to dry in the hot sun. The bricks were to be used to build adobe huts for the co-op village. At the end of the day I thought the treat of the trip were bull sessions with my fellow volunteers where the discussion invariably turned to the war clouds forming over Europe and what would happen next.

As it turned out I had a low draft number and had to leave Mexico a week early to report to the draft board in Wabash, Indiana. I took a bus to Laredo and then hitch hiked the rest of the way home. Someone stole what little money I had so I was dependent for food and shelter on the kindness of drivers who picked me up.

At the selective service board in Wabash I was assigned to a former CCC camp in Walhalla, Michigan. I had grown up in the Church of the Brethren and had then gone to Manchester College, a COB school. I was aware that three churches: the Mennonites, the Friends, and the Church of the Brethren had succeeded in getting an alternative phrase inserted in the Selective Service Law providing a choice to do work of national importance instead of joining the military service. I was told that the choices before me were: becoming a smoke jumper in Oregon which meant fighting forest fires, becoming a guinea pig in a program to study hunger at the University of Minnesota, being infected with a serious disease or working in an understaffed mental hospital.

I had to decide which option to take. The hunger study meant being starved and then studied. I didn't like that idea. I have since learned that two of my friends died from being infected by a serious disease. I decided to work at the mental institution in Norwich, Connecticut. It turned out to be a 20,000 bed hospital which was supposed to be a model facility but turned out to be a hell hole.

I was assigned to an area for 200 elderly men. Some of these patients were suffering from Alzheimer's but most were mentally ill. A couple of patients were in charge of handing out meals. You cannot imagine the noise and the confusion. It was truly bedlam. There was plenty of incontinence so there were always messes to clean up. Fortunately for me there was a retarded Italian man who cleaned up the messes, either because he wanted to please me or just because he liked to do it. At night there were always fights to break up. Patients would get up to go to the bathroom and then get confused and try to get into someone else bed. There was never a quiet evening. I was relieved that in the three and a half years I was there, no patient died on my shift so I never had to prepare a body for the funeral director.

I had a great roommate named Warren Dugan. He was a CO and was an engineer who graduated from the University of Illinois. After a couple of years, he was transferred to Yale Medical School where he was to take care of monkeys that had been given a very deadly disease. On the second day there he was bitten by a monkey and died in two hours.

After the war ended and I heard about the death camps, I wondered if I had done the right thing.

Many years after I was discharged, I returned to visit the hospital. It was completely empty. I understand that today the mentally ill are either living on the street or in prison. Lesson: never become mentally ill now.

Harold Burnham

(Excerpts Related to Conscientious Objection from Autobiographical Stories by Harold Nichols Burnham, Jr.)

However, I struggled with ambivalence. Jesus as a role model for my teenage years was too close to being a wimp. I saw him as a sort of angelic hero, not like my camp counselors, or athletes I admired and in whose footsteps I might actually walk. To be a pacifist and nonviolent in my society seemed too passive. Then at one Yearly Meeting at Ocean Park, three virile young men visited, as guests of the Young Friends, from a nearby Civilian Public Service camp in which they had drafted as conscientious objectors to war. As I played games on the beach with them, experiencing their competitive athletic skills, watching the one who was a gymnast with splendid muscles, I began to perceive another image of what a man of peace—a real MAN of peace—might be like. I began to think then that I ought to be a nonviolent pacifist and not go into the U.S. Army.

Right away I ran into a challenge to my convictions. In our senior year, my class decided they would collect some scrap metal by organizing a Key Drive. This was a big project for everyone in the class to donate old keys for the purpose of getting all the metal we could for military armaments. I felt that I could not contribute to that Drive. It turned out that I was the only one in the class who did not bring in some keys. But that was not all! The girl I was dating at the time was the daughter of L.C. Andrew, owner of the largest lumber company in Southern Maine. I had been working at their house part time. She was the head organizer of the project, so we had some rather heated discussions about my views about war-making. She certainly was vigorous in opposing my views and trying to get my cooperation to achieve 100% class participation without breaking up our friendship, but somehow my message reached her. The next year after our graduation, she went to Smith College, where she studied under a famous pacifist author, her English professor, and became herself a lifetime pacifist. That was a little known outcome of that key drive!

I then went to Bowdoin College in Brunswick. I would have liked to go to one of the Quaker colleges, perhaps Earlham, Haverford or Guilford; but they were far away. Since it seemed likely that I would be drafted as a conscientious objector very soon after I left high school, I agreed with my family to stay near home as long as I could. I had to wear glasses and so was given a draft classification of 4-F, which meant that I was deferred for some physical reason. I started Bowdoin expecting to be drafted later, but it turned out that I went all through college without having any contact with the draft. However, during that time the armistice occurred. Both Germany and Japan surrendered, so by the time I got to my junior year in college the Congress instituted "draft holidays" during which they would stop drafting for months at a time. In the summer just prior to my senior year, they resumed drafting again, and I received notice to report on September 18th to the Civilian Public Service Camp (CPS) in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. But another draft holiday was declared on the 15th and others on and off allowed me to finish the year and graduate in 1948, with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a major in Biology.

At that time, there were several alternatives for pacifists. One could be drafted into the military and assigned to non-combat service, such as medical units or cooking where one did not have to use guns or engage in combat. Unfortunately, draftees found out that commanding officers often did not honor those scruples. There was also a wide network of CPS camps. These were not always camps outside. Some of these were hospitals where the draftees cared for the sick or volunteered for medical experiments such as exposure to Yellow Fever. Some of them went to units where they worked as aides in the mental hospitals which were short of staff. Almost all institutions were short of staff as many men were being drafted, and many women were in the military as well as making war products in factories. However, I was planning to choose my own civilian service project, since apparently I might not be drafted, but the Selective Service draft law was still registering young men while we were occupying Japan and Germany. I didn't feel right about cooperating with that legislation.

In the summer after my junior year of college, I had embarked on a project that was to be of great significance to my spiritual development, my Quaker activity, and my career. I took part in an international Young Friends Caravan project. It began at Earlham College in Indiana with youth from every Yearly Meeting in the United States and about five or six outside: Canada, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, England, France and Spain. We all attended a conference at Earlham for a week; then we split up and went out as small travelling units into every Yearly Meeting in the country, and a group went to Canada and a group to Puerto Rico also. I spent the next six weeks in Iowa, and by chance one of my early Quaker role models, T. Canby Jones, travelling in Kansas, joined us for the last three weeks. I had first met him when he visited as a counselor for Young Friends at Yearly Meeting.

Canby, perhaps more than anybody else, set the most appealing model of Quaker manhood for me personally, although I was fortunate to have many good models. He was a quiet man with a rich sense of humor and a relaxed and confident faith that God is fully able to take care of our lives if we are willing to follow that Will. I was so impressed by him that I even tried to comb my hair like his. Before the summer was over, I had been relieved of my mother-driven fear of being late for buses or trains and had even started imitating his gentle Tennessee drawl. He later became a professor at Guilford College. His father was Tom Jones, a past president of Earlham College.

For this caravan by chance I had been assigned to travel with Canby's wife, Eunice, and a British Young Friend, John Hawkins. We attended both the Conservative and Progressive Yearly Meetings in Iowa, both Young Friends conferences, each for a week, and stayed in homes with families of both Yearly meeting groups. This gave me an incomparable overview of Iowa Quakerism as well as detailed acquaintances with profoundly devout Quakers and their families. It was while visiting the Five Years Meeting Friends (Progressive) that I overcame the prejudice bred in New England against "Evangelical" Christians. Iowa Quakers had been split badly by the Evangelical revivals of the 1800s and were just beginning to repair those wounds.

Also on this Caravan we stayed a week at the Scattergood School founded in West Branch, Herbert Hoover's birthplace near Iowa City, and operated by the Conservative Yearly Meeting with cooperative help of Progressive Friends, both of whom still send their children there for a boarding, coed high school education. There I first met the director, Leanore Goodenough, who was later to become a major influence in my life and another one of my role models for teaching.

Getting back to the Draft and my idea of a personal civilian service project…I had not been drafted, and as I explained earlier, my conscience didn't feel right about cooperating with a Selective Service Act which continued to register men for the occupation armies.

After I had inquired of the American Friends Service Committee if they had any opportunities for me to work with them for two years, they proposed to send me to China as a lab technician on one of their medical relief teams. That sounded dramatic to me—exciting work with some risk of harm in a job that needed doing. They had established relief teams across a civil war front from the Communists in the north to the Nationalist armies in the south. Thus the AFSC was on both sides of the war. I was looking forward to being part of this peace effort when I received a letter from Leanore Goodenough stating her desperate need to hire a single man to work as a teacher and sponsor in the boy's dormitory by September. I would have to be willing to study education courses while working on site to allow them to satisfy their accrediting board.

I thought this request over for nearly a month before concluding that the Service Committee as larger international organization probably had better access to personnel than did one headmistress of a small boarding school. The romantic challenge of the Orient looked tempting, but I felt God was pointing me toward giving my two years' service to the school through Leanore's seeking me out with a direct request. I chose the school and have never had any regrets. It was an extraordinary community, and I spent five years there during which I became accredited for secondary school teaching, my first professional career.

I went to Iowa later that summer as a conscientious violator of the draft law—not carrying a draft card and not having obtained a physical exam which had been required by the law. I had written the draft board of my intentions, to make it clear that I was not trying to escape the law but willing to endure whatever penalties were due (which usually had been imprisonment from one to three years). I informed Leanore Goodenough of my action.

I registered for education courses at the State University of Iowa and started teaching plane geometry, which I had loved in high school. In December the Maine Draft Board sent my whole case to the Iowa District Attorney, who had already heard of the same civil disobedience by our school farm manager, Don Laughlin. Don and I were technically arrested and left on our own recognizance to appear at the Federal Court in Waterloo, Iowa in February. There we each were sentenced to 18 months at the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Missouri. We stayed in the Waterloo jail about ten days, waiting transportation.

Springfield was the maximum security prison to which any men in all the federal prisons who were chronically or seriously ill were transferred. This included a whole ward of homosexual men, since homosexuality in those days was considered a behavioral illness. Don and I were assigned (along with 25 or 30 other conscientious objectors (COs) to draft registration—Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren—from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas and Iowa) to the prison camp, which was actually a farm that provided most of the food for the prison. Since we were housed inside the prison compound, a maximum security "pen", we had to be searched each time we went in and out. When outside, we were on our own to stay within the farm boundary, probably about 200 acres.

The farm work could be hard, especially in the heat, but usually it was a relief to be outside all day. Inside I enjoyed most reading, visiting with other inmates, and singing in a chorus. We held a silent worship meeting each morning before breakfast, often joined by other prisoners. I felt far from my home in Maine, but Scattergood became a second home and family. Leanore orchestrated support from the students and faculty to send us letters and gifts, driving down from Iowa herself nearly every month to visit us. She managed to get permission as a Quaker minister to meet with all the COs there.

I would rather have been out of prison, but I was not resentful as I believed I was there by direction of the Power of God's Love, which sustained me every day. Much of the experience was enjoyable, and I and the other COs looked for ways to demonstrate nonviolent goodwill in a population of men I probably would not have chosen for myself.

On one occasion, another prisoner tried to provoke me into a fight by accusing me of betraying other inmates through the Inmate Council to which I was elected. He got rough, throwing me down on a cot several times. I had seen him angry and fighting at other times, so I was very apprehensive. But I simply kept standing up each time, continuing in a friendly way to explain what I had really been doing and why. After several assaults, he walked away in disgust without hurting me.

In contrast to most of the other inmates from the South, we COs tended to mingle freely with the blacks, as we got to know some of them, as well as with the whites. So much so, in fact, that the guards became suspicious that we might be setting the stage for a riot; and the parole officer began to try to arrange for us to leave sooner than the legal eligibility for parole, which in my case would have been about 9 months.

Leanore managed to get Don released to get farm crops started early in the summer. I and several other COs declined to sign a statement required before release on parole, which promised not to associate with any known ex-convict. Since this would have applied to all of the COs as well as to other friends I had made, I explained that I was unwilling to make that promise. Finally after a number of sessions with the parole officers pleading with me to leave, they agreed to let me add the words, "to the extent that my conscience will allow". My release was prompt, and I returned to Scattergood for the Halloween party that night.

Taking education courses from the University of Iowa which I continued in prison and in summers at the University of Maine, in addition to my B.A. degree, it took two years to get certified for high school teaching. Having used up my planned two years getting trained to do a decent job, I remained another three years at Scattergood to actually do it.

It was a great institution. We were all—faculty and students—responsible for everything at the school. There were no hired maintenance personnel, so we all did the labor for the farm and school. My teaching responsibilities were mostly in the sciences, but the benefit of that for me was that I was able at last to learn the fundamentals of chemical bonding. I had gone through no high school chemistry, struggled through chemistry in college managing to memorize the formulas enough to pass one course. But in another advanced course, the formulas were too many and too complex for memory. I had never learned the fundamentals on which they were constructed. I had to repeat this second course in order just to pass it. But at Scattergood, Leanore wanted me to teach freshman science! The freshman science textbook had a very detailed section on what atoms and molecules are, why they stick together and why they separate, and I finally learned how chemistry works. I had to take some other chemistry at the University of Iowa later to enter Medical school—quantitative analysis and organic chemistry—in which I made all A's. But before I left Scattergood I was having fun with chemistry, my old "enemy".

In my last three years I noticed I was teaching junior biology mostly as *human* biology, using the nurses' physiology textbooks from the university library. I realized I was working off my medical ambitions on my students and thought I probably ought to get on with my medical training, which I did. I went to the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, eventually specializing in Family Practice with a holistic preventive emphasis, followed by addition medicine, and am now semi-retired working part time.

Life as a Convict: Imprisoned for Conscience Sake

In the summer of 1948 I graduated from Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, with honors on the "Dean's List". War with Germany and Japan had ended but the government kept the selective service law in force. I had already decided to stop cooperating with the draft law, had disposed of my draft card and informed my Draft Board that I would not be reporting for their mandated physical. However, due to "draft holidays", these infractions were not processed until my senior year had ended.

The Draft Board did then assign me to get a physical exam and enter the Civilian Public Service (CPS) camp at Gatlinburg, Tennessee that September, and I informed them that I would not. Now that the war was over, and had planned to work two years for the American Friends Service Committee as a laboratory technician in their medical relief teams in China, crossing both the Communist and National fronts from the north to the south of China.

But a letter from Leanore Goodenough, director of Scattergood School in Iowa, convinced me that I should spend my two years of personal peace-building service at that Quaker boarding high school in West Branch, birth place of Herbert Hoover in Iowa. I informed my draft board in Portland, Maine of my decision. They turned my case over to the District Attorney's office in Portland, who sent the information to the District Attorney in Iowa. At Scattergood, I met the farm manager who had taken a path similar to mine. Both of us were called to appear at the circuit court in Waterloo, Iowa, arrested officially and released on our own recognizance to return for sentencing in February 1949. We did not contest the charges, but did not acknowledge guilt either. We each were given 18-month sentences.

We were placed in the county jail in Waterloo and 10 days later we, and a Native American Steve Silk from a tribe in North Dakota, were driven by U.S. Marshalls to Springfield, Missouri, and entered the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners just outside the city.

We had to go through the hospital to get to our dormitory in the Camp Unit, so we undressed for examination. A similar pat-down, less involved, was done daily when we left the farm work to come back into the "Camp". In most CPS camps, the grounds were all open to come and go, but in our situation security for the hospital was paramount.

The first job given me soon after arrival for the next few weeks in February and March was transplanting lettuce and seedlings into their hot bed frames. I can still feel the biting prairie wind, terribly chilling, as I tried to work lying down inside the six-inch bed frames to keep as warm as possible with little success. More pleasant was the transplanting of the tomato seedlings in May and laying out the wire supports. Many hours were spent during the tomato harvest picking the tomatoes, and loading them into buckets for the truck.

Two other memories stand out among all the pleasures of working outside with my buddies. One day the boss assigned me alone to dig holes and place fence posts in a large field, which I completed before he returned. With nothing to do, I was uncharacteristically moved to lie flat down in the grass of a small knoll, watch the clouds float by and soak in the total silence of the prairie. I felt a powerful sense of the vast cosmic reality of Divine Presence, holding me lovingly in its lap for half an hour until the boss arrived to take me back to the reality of the prison walls, in which I miraculously never felt trapped. I understood that because of the high security status of the hospital, there was a fence around the edge of the prison property, but I never saw it.

Another smaller joy was to join the haying crews out after hours! Hot work, but we were provided an appetizing lunch from the cafeteria!

The relationship between the 25 (plus or minus) C.O.s and other inmates in the prison camp was generally very good, and we made many friends, although most prisoners were not inclined to be anti-military. Many would also try to avoid military discipline if they could, which was comparable to prison discipline, e.g., about stealing, attempting to break out and abusing other inmates by homosexual attacks in the night.

My own personal encounter with violence occurred in connection with my activity on the Inmate Council, the few men chosen by inmate approval and that of the guards. The council was useful for the administration—Warden Steel and the Captain of the Guards—to encourage inmate cooperation with policy items and to build inmates' wishes or negative reaction into plans for policy changes. This was an important factor in the relative peace in this prison since Warden Steel was hired 3 years earlier to replace a seriously corrupt administration.

When I returned from a meeting one day of the Council, I was confronted with a prisoner who was known to be hot-headed and in many fights. He was angry about some decision we had just made on the Council. He had some good points for objecting, but all of his issues had been discussed, and the inmate members had decided that the ideas of the administration would be best in the long run. I started to explain these reasons to him, but he didn't agree. He struck me hard enough to knock me down on the cot behind me. I stood back up, still simply describing our discussion at the Council meeting. He got angrier and pounded me harder down on the cot. But I stood right up again, continuing in a friendly way to explain our meeting details. This was too much for him—getting no resistance. Swearing angrily, he turned away in disgust. There appeared to be no sequel from this encounter, where nonviolent resistance and goodwill had won out; and he never confronted me again.

One of the events of the summer was a track meet for the "camp" inmates. In high school I competed in the high jump, so I entered that event. The area for our landing was dirt dug up in the grass lawns, but had not been calculated for sufficient area. Consequently, as the bar got higher, we were landing closer and closer to the edge of the firm lawn. We were all landing in the soft dirt area, I paid little attention to this until I came down with my feet on the lawn, and heard a sharp snap in my right ankle which became painful enough to stop my jumping. The guards advised me to see the infirmary doctor, who diagnosed a severe sprain, which he strapped and provided crutches with no weight-bearing.

Gathering my toilet and personal equipment, I was sent to the hospital. As I got off the elevator, I was met by a swarthy-faced wiry, energetic man, who introduced himself as Bernard Paul and explained he heard about my coming from Arlo Tatum, one of our C.O.s who worked in the prison kitchen. Arlo was one of my favorite C.O. friends. He was a professional singer from Chicago and an important mainstay in the hospital's inmate chorus, which sang every Sunday at church service, and gave regular concerto of secular songs, spiritual and other folk songs. He had a marvelous baritone voice, and I was particularly moved by his rendition of "Danny Boy". (After his release later from prison, he was severely injured in an auto accident in Chicago, which damaged his face and neck severely enough to prevent his singing! I lost track of him after that, but I did hear that he had continued in the music business.)

But to continue with Bernard Paul, who welcomed me enthusiastically, showed me to the dormitory floor where he resided and introduced me to his sidekick, Frederick Joubert Duquesne, an older man who was not very sociable. It seemed that he paid attention to me because of Bernard's interest, and Bernard's interest in Duquesne was the possibility that he (Duquesne) might pay a lot of money for help to get a writ of *habeas corpus* (which is an order for a judge to let someone back to court to review a previous negative judgment and present new data). Paul, it turned out, had been an assistant District Attorney in Chicago when he became involved with two other lawyers in a theft of money. In return for their letting him keep all the cash, he agreed to confess to the crime and exonerate them entirely. Duquesne now was hoping to present new evidence that the FBI (which arrested him for plotting to aid Germany to make a new submarine to fight Britain and the USA) had illegally sold off or failed to protect these possessions which they confiscated from his home. He said that he had received from one FBI official a statement in writing that they had his possessions in storage. He waited a few months and requested the information from another agent and was told they did *not* have the possessions.

Duquesne showed me a small book recounting the massacre of his whole family by British soldiers during the Boer War in Africa. He was a youth, watching his family slaughtered. He later joined the Boer army to fight the British. This book recounted his escapade as the war was ending, showing a British troop where in a jungle mine there was a large cache of gold. He was allowed to bring a small squad of South Africans to help carry arms and food. He planned with the South Africans then to kill the Brits and share the gold. However, after the coup, he then managed to kill all the South Africans, leaving himself the only one able to find the gold in the future. How he might use this information to get access to the gold after the war ended wasn't clear to me.

From this publication, however, I was able to find an address where he had lived in New York City. A year later, after I was released, I had an opportunity to seek out that address while riding back to Maine with Jeanette Andrew, a good high school friend, who was intrigued by my story.

I explained to the landlady of the apartment building that I was an acquaintance of Fredrick Duquesne and could she tell me anything about him. She immediately became wary and apprehensive. She wondered if I was from the police, and that she was no friend of his—he had just rented there. I was able to quiet her fears, explaining that I had only known him briefly and believed he was still in prison in Missouri.

She then showed us the second floor apartment he rented, how scary he was, holding a woman hostage locked in his apartment and not letting her go out without him. She was afraid of his cruelty and never wanted to see him again.

I had just been curious to check out his story and see if he really had lived in New York, so this was more than I had counted on! Jeanette, who was a poet and author, was entranced, but as far as I know she never followed up any interest further.

Bernard Paul was impressed with Duquesne's skills as a spy. He observed Fritz was able to manipulate his abdomen so as to be able to hide a metal drinking cup under his shirt, and ability to swallow secret items which he would retrieve later from his fecal stool.

After my two weeks healing my ankle, I returned inside the hospital fence to visit with Bernard through the window on the second floor which was barred close enough to the ground for us to converse. I learned that the court had refused to hear Duquesne's effort of *habeas corpus*.

In June, Leanore Goodenough who had visited us monthly with privilege of clergy, managed to get Don Laughlin back to West Branch to supervise the spring crops at the farm. The parole board was also eager to get us C.O.s out as soon as possible.

Their concern was due to our friendly fraternization with the African American inmates (who bunked on the first ground floor of the prison camp). Our white dormitories were on the second floor and to equal opportunity to blacks, they would lead the camp line into the dining hall one day, and we whites would go first on the next day, etc. We were friendly with many of the blacks too and we would demonstrate that by mingling in ends of their lines. That was done when their line went first by our mingling with the men at the end of theirs with men in the front of the white line. When next day our line was first, we would line up at the rear, where we could mix with the blacks.

In some federal prisons there had been some horrible riots between whites and blacks. The prison guards were fearful our behavior might be leading up to a riot. Thus after our six months' stay, the parole board started to release us as soon as possible.

When they interviewed me, they asked me to sign the agreement to release, which promised to engage regularly with our parole officers outside, to commit no crimes, etc., but also to have no association with anyone with a criminal record. I declined, explaining that I would be involved with many of the C.O.s from this prison and possibly other prisoners, and that if I met other criminals, I would treat them as God's children and give them what legal help they might need. This stalled them for another three months, until they asked what promises I would be willing to agree to. My answer was that I could sign what they had been trying for, if I could add "as much as my conscience can allow." They released me pronto, with the requisite shirt, pants, jacket and boots made in the prison factory. Leanore came down that week and drove me back to school—the students were celebrating Halloween that Saturday night as well as my return.

Vietnam War

The Barrett Family's Peace Testimony by Daniel Barrett

My father **Hugh E Barrett** was raised in Missouri, the son of a Methodist minister. In 1943 he received a Conscientious Objector (C.O.) classification and was drafted. His first assignment was to the Mennonite CPS camp in Downey, Idaho. Downey was typical of the early CPS camps, a former CCC camp where the C.O.s were assigned tasks related to soil conservation. My father enjoyed the outdoor work but was frustrated that C.O.s were not offered more meaningful opportunities for their "service". The government had promised "work of national importance" but instead seemed more intent on placing the conscientious objectors in remote forested locations, hidden away from public view. My father had been at Downey for a few months when he learned of new CPS camps providing service to state mental hospitals. He jumped at this opportunity and transferred to the newly created Methodist CPS camp at the Cherokee Iowa State Hospital.

The mental health work at Cherokee was quite stressful. My father worked 13 hour shifts on wards that were badly understaffed. But even more stressful were the daily jeers and taunts directed at the C.O.s by fellow hospital workers. My father was deeply affected by the daily negativity but eventually learned to cope with help from follow C.O.s and with the support of the nearby Paullina Friends Meeting. Years later he was still reluctant to talk about this difficult time. But, occasionally, he would tell his children stories of hitchhiking 25 miles to spend Saturday evening and Sunday with the Paullina Friends. This was his first experience with Friends and their unique silent meeting for worship. He especially recalled one Sunday morning, sitting quietly in meeting, and suddenly being overwhelmed with tears of joy. It was such a relief to be surrounded by this supportive and loving Friends community.

My mother, **Bertha (Whitson) Barrett,** earned a masters degree from Iowa State early in 1943. She had been raised a Quaker, and her mother, Edith Whitson, had great sympathy for the young men in CPS camps. Every week Edith took her sewing machine to the CPS camp near their home in Ames to patch and repair the men's clothing.

My mother had for years attended youth conferences sponsored by the Iowa Yearly Meeting and had developed a network of friends around the state. As the war continued she felt a growing concern for her friends stationed in various CPS camps, many halfway across the country. It had come as a welcome relief when she learned that Warren Wilson and few other Paullina friends had transferred from a camp in the state of Oregon to the new Cherokee CPS camp located 25 mile south of Paullina. My mother soon came to see the Cherokee CPS camp as an opportunity for her as well. She had recently graduated and was now free to do what she wanted. So she decided to go to Cherokee and support her friends in their peace testimony. It was no problem getting a nurses' aide job at the Cherokee State Hospital. But when she started work, the job proved to be an experience different from anything she'd ever known, something she'd not soon forget. Years later my mother still had vivid memories of that first week. Her first day had begun easily enough, she made quick friends with her female coworkers. But soon, she realized these women deeply resented the C.O.s. Some were openly hostile. When the women ate lunch in the hospital's dining room, my mother was shocked to see how the C.O.s were ostracized. The men sat alone. Their table was carefully avoided by everyone else. My mother said it took her nearly a week to find the courage to sit at the C.O. table and eat lunch with her old friends. She remembered how the entire dining room went silent the moment she sat down.

My mother found that the C.O.s at Cherokee's came from a wide variety of religious backgrounds, educational levels, and professions. As she joined the group she was drawn at first to the Quaker farmers she had known from Friends conferences. She had a natural interest in farming, she'd just earned a Masters Degree from Iowa State in "Rural Sociology." She had been raised a farm girl. Her father was "Field Editor" for Wallace's Farmer Magazine, and he had followed his good friend Henry Wallace to Washington D.C. where they worked at the Department of Agriculture. So it was a surprise to everyone when my mother fell in love with Hugh Barrett, a Methodist with no farm background. They were married just prior to my father's discharge from CPS at the end of the war. The wedding was at the Ackworth Friends Church, the church my mother had attended for most of her childhood.

My father was a preacher for the first 8 years of married life, but eventually discovered he didn't really care for ministerial work. My mother agreed, so they both happily returned to mental health nursing. They worked at the East Moline State Hospital for most of their careers. But then the hospital was shut down in the 1980s as part of President Reagan's misguided plan to shrink government. My parents worked what remained of their careers as nurses at Manard State Prison where their mental health skills were much in demand. Prisons had become a dumping ground for the mentally ill since Republicans had dismantled the country's mental health system.

The Second Generation

My three brothers and I attended Scattergood Friends School where our classmates were the sons and daughters of the C.O.s my parents had known in the CPS camps. I remember evening discussions where we debated whether a person should register for the draft as a Conscientious Objector or instead refuse to register and go to prison. I argued that a person should register, but my friends felt that the act of registration was too much complicity with our country's war machine. So it was ironic that I was the one who eventually served time in prison.

Following my graduation from Scattergood, I registered for the draft and applied for a C.O. classification. My draft board in Rock Island, IL refused my application and my appeal. They then sent my draft notice, totally ignoring the fact that I had a college deferment. I refused induction and was soon arrested by the FBI. I pled guilty and was sentenced to 6 years in prison. I was held in the county jail for two weeks before federal marshals transported me to the Federal Prison in El Reno, OK. Five months later I was allowed to apply for parole, but my petition was promptly denied. The Parole Board in Washington D.C. then informed me that I would be required to serve an additional 13 months before my next parole hearing.

Unknown to me at the time was the work being done on my behalf by Senator Percy of Illinois and Senator Hughes of Iowa. My mother had contacted them and told of my situation and the injustice that had occurred. She explained that I should have been classified as a conscientious objector, pointing out that I perfectly fit the criteria. Both senators agreed and promised to help. Their research showed that the judge in my case had also been convinced I was a legitimate C.O. and that he had asked my draft board to reconsider. But the draft board refused. The judge then suggest that he could sentence me to probation with the stipulation that I perform the equivalent of alternate service (work for two years in a hospital). The draft board said that this was also unacceptable. They told the judge that if I was not imprisoned, they would draft me again as soon as I had completed my parole. When the senators took this information to the Parole Board in Washington, they were led to believe that I'd be paroled shortly. But the Parole Board instead denied my parole and pushed off my next hearing for 13 months. When the senators were told of this duplicity, they realized, sadly, that truth and fairness would not be enough. Senator Percy then returned to the Parole Board and used some type of leverage to force my release.

From my perspective, sitting in prison looking forward to another 13 months, I was very surprised to be called to a meeting with my prison caseworker. He informed me of an offer of parole on the condition that I work the remainder of two years doing the equivalent of alternate service. I agreed and arrangements were made for a parole officer in Peoria IL to find suitable employment. He quickly found a job for me as a surgery orderly at Peoria's Methodist Hospital. I very much enjoyed that job and worked at the hospital for two years. I then returned to Northern Illinois University where I prepared for a 45 year career as an elementary school teacher.

My brother, Jay E. Barrett, also registered with the Rock Island draft board. They called him in for his physical the summer immediately following his graduation from Haverford College. When notification arrived that he had passed the physical, Jay submitted his application for C.O. status. Later that summer, the draft board called him in for an interview but then, remaining true to form, denied the claim. By that time, however, Jay had begun his first year of graduate school at Cornell. This, luckily, provided a deferment for the remainder of that 1969-70 school year, allowing him time to launch an appeal. Jay had plenty of motivation, he had witnessed my recent imprisonment on a six year sentence with seemingly little hope for early parole. A group of catholic draft counselors advised Jay to fill his file with letters from "religious advisors" to strengthen his appeal. Jay obtained letters from both of his grandfathers (one a Quaker and the other a Methodist minister), a professor at Haverford, and from other Quakers. He also included several lengthy memos explaining why he should be given a C.O. classification. He also claimed that the Board had not really listened at his first hearing. By the time the Board considered Jay's appeal in the Spring of 1970, Senator Percy had taken an active interest in my imprisonment and had arranged for my early parole. We can only assume that the attention from a U.S. Senator affected how the draft board treated my brother. Jay was allowed a second hearing and then granted C.O. status.

This occurred in early summer, just as he had completed his first year of grad school. So the timing was right for Jay to promptly began his two years of alternate service. Following my example, Jay moved to Peoria where he also began work as an orderly at Methodist Hospital. My younger brothers David and Frank were not drafted and were therefore spared having to do battle with the draft board. Frank, however, found it disappointing to miss the opportunity to make his own peace testimony. So he decided to take a break from college and follow in his brother's footsteps, working for two years as an orderly at Methodist Hospital.

Today, 50 years later, we are proud to have been a part of the peace movement which eventually ended the draft. It is our hope that the draft will never return. But we have been frustrated to watch as our country continues its warlike ways even without a draft. Our country's war machine marches on fueled by armament dealer profits.

Notes Recently, I've studied and learned more about World War II CPS camps. I was surprised to discover that women joined with the men, finding a variety of ways to help, support, and work side by side with the C.O.s. Many were able to reach out to the community and help reduce some of the hostility. This knowledge helped me rethink and better understand my mother's experience. Her time at Cherokee was much more than simply "husband hunting". She provided a great service by standing bravely with the CPS Unit in the face of overwhelming hostility.

I've also learned recently how wartime mental health workers were able to spark major changes and improvements to the nation's mental health system following the war. Many C.O.s, like my parents, continued to work in mental health long after the war ended. They made it their life's work to model the humane treatment of patients. I also learned that C.O.s had collected data which reformers used to highlight problems and motivate reform. It is sad, however, that this mental health reform movement came to a screeching halt in the 1980's when Reagan Republicans convinced the country that we could no longer afford our mental health system. But, of course, their promised savings never materialized. Indeed, costs have increased. Today, people who exhibit signs of mental illness are likely to be arrested and put in prison. It is estimated that 80% of today's prison inmates have mental illness. And, the Republican prison alternative to hospitals has provided no cost savings. The price tag for housing the mentally ill in jails and prisons is twice that of compassionate hospital care. What's more, there have been many other tragic results. Most notable is the steady stream of shootings since the 1980s. It is no surprise that most mass shootings are committed by men and boys with long-standing mental problems. Each of these tragic characters has, at some point, reached out for help. But after years of cuts, communities have little to offer.

My parents were disheartened to see so many men suffering in prison, men who at one time might have been cared for in a hospital setting. It seemed heartless and cruel that our country would place the mentally ill in prison, condemning them to horrible daily abuse at the hands of society's most hardened criminals. Perhaps we can take heart today in efforts to feed and find decent homes for those suffering from mental illness. "Street people" represent a large segment of our country's mentally ill population. These are the people most likely to fall into our prison system. Supporting the homeless is seemingly our best option in today's strange political climate. Indeed, showing kindness is the legacy we carry forward from the CPS camps and the alternate service lovingly offered by so many conscientious objectors.

Ben Clark

Regarding having been classified as a "Conscientious Objector" as an eighteen-year-old boy: This story all is from memory. It may be my only written record of my direct association in younger days with the U.S. Selective Service System, as is explained at the end.

The Vietnam war was in full-swing when I turned eighteen, and became legally required to register for the Draft. The majority of young men my age were automatically classified by Selective Service System as "1-A" -- which essentially translated into being molded as a soldier, to either kill or be killed in Vietnam. Being able to pursue a different relationship with Selective Service was contingent upon initiating deliberate efforts in alternate directions. I had no love for that war, nor for "war in any form," nor did I feel any inclination whatsoever to place myself into a situation of being ordered to carry a deadly weapon and of having to choose between being shot at or shooting another human being whom I'd never met. So I filled out an application form for "1-O" ("Conscientious Objector") classification, and filed it with Selective Service.

Since my "1-O" application had made it clear that I was unwilling just to fall into line and become a soldier, I was notified of a date and time to appear at the local Selective Service System office, upstairs above the old Iowa City Post Office building (now the Senior Center).

Being eighteen, and quite possibly literally with my life hanging in the balance, I felt anxiety. So, as a balancing exercise on the night before my draft board appointment, I read through Henry David Thoreau's entire "Essay On Civil Disobedience."

It worked. The next day, sitting at a table with the members of the Johnson County Draft Board, I was sufficiently psyched up for that encounter, and was able to remain calm and to hold firmly to my position, despite mental pressuring by those much older individuals.

To my relief, I was not directed to meet with them again. Apparently they decided to leave me alone. A short time later I received a draft card in the mail, indicating that I'd been classified as "1-O."

Another twist to my own draft situation was the involvement of the "Lottery," which had been instituted a few years prior to the official end of the undeclared "Vietnam War." The idea underlying the "Lottery" was almost exactly as that term is portrayed in the 1948 Shirley Jackson short story with that same name -- essentially, that if your number is drawn, you'll probably die.

In my own case, since I'd been classified as "1-O" instead of "1-A," I would have been ordered to report for "alternative service," to some location of the Selective Service System's choosing if my own number (my birth date) had been selected early within "Lottery" drawings. (Otherwise, if I had been classified as "1-A" and if my number had come up, I would have been ordered to report for a "Physical" exam, as a first step toward being made into a soldier.) As things turned out for me, my own birth date was drawn as number 95 in the Lottery. (Mine was the 95th birth date drawn, out of 365 birth dates, representing that year's pool of eighteen-year-old American males). And also, as things turned out for me, they didn't draw so heavily upon the pool of eighteen-year-olds that year as they had earlier, so they never reached number 95. Therefore, I was never ordered to report for "Alternative Service."

But although the "Conscientious Objector" classification might well have enabled me to avoid the soldier training and the hellish experiences in Vietnam, the draft card still felt like a huge burden to me. The wording of the Draft law included a requirement to carry the draft card with me at all times. So whenever I carried that card, even though it always stayed out-of-sight in my pocket, it always felt to me as if, by carrying it, I was carrying a "proof of ownership" document. As if that little card in my pocket was a written declaration that the Selective Service System had legal ownership of my own physical body. That level of awareness ate at me for a long time.

So although I might easily have just quietly allowed time to pass until I would have reached age 35, when I would then legally have passed beyond Selective Service's control, my conscience was not quiet. (I believe this is a reflection of what the "conscience" part of the term "conscientious objector" refers to.) Finally, I came to a clear sense of an appropriate action to take, to come to a sense of peace within myself.

I recycled my draft card.

But that was not all. I also wrote a short statement, which I mailed to the local draft board immediately after recycling the card. It was worded something like this:

"This is to inform you that I cannot in good conscience continue to be affiliated with your organization. Therefore, I have placed my draft card into a paper recycling collection bin, where its fibers will be of more value than they were previously, while in my possession."

I never received any direct acknowledgment from Selective Service, after sending that letter. But a while later I received one of their envelopes in the mail. I held it up to the sunlight, and could see through it that there was a new draft card inside. I never opened that envelope. I set it on a shelf, and then mostly just forgot that it was there. The only time I ever "carried" that draft card (as per the wording of that Draft law's stipulation) was when I brought it in from the mailbox.

So that draft card sat there in its envelope on my shelf for the next few years. Until our house burned down. The house fire was a devastating thing for my family. And it burned my draft card. Happily for me, I've never been sent another replacement.

Evan Fales

(Dr. Evan Fales did his alternate service at Scattergood Friends School near West Branch, Iowa.)

I'm sure I don't have any copy of what I wrote to my draft board, but I do remember quite clearly what I said. I did register for the draft, when I turned eighteen half-way through my sophomore year at Haverford College, after a considerable debate with myself over whether I should register at all. I requested the form you had to fill out to ask to be classified 1-0 (as a CO), though I knew I wouldn't qualify. This was back in 1962, well before the Supreme Court Seeger decision in the late 60's. and I was a birth-right Quaker but never believed that God existed. (The first question on the form that you had to answer--and answer in the affirmative--was the question "Do you believe in a Supreme Being?"

My draft board, in Lancaster, PA, responded by sending me a 1-A classification (draftable). I protested, saying I wanted to fill out the 1-0 form even though I didn't expect to qualify. They sent it to me.

Since I was about two years younger than most of my Haverford classmates, including several good pacifist friends who were atheists, I had opportunity to see how sincere atheist pacifists struggled with the Supreme Being question. The result was pretty invariably a labored statement that tried to re-define God as a supreme force of nature, or some such being--in short, I felt, an exercise in casuistry. I was having none of it, preferring to be blunt and straight forward. To the initial Supreme Being question I answered "No." I answered the religious affiliation with Quaker--which I was. To the question whom I consulted for religious guidance, I said no one. To the question why I would refuse to fight I answered roughly as follows:

"It is common for draft boards to ask us whether, if your mother were in mortal danger at the hands of an assassin, we would shoot the attacker to save our mother. Such an event is so far outside my experience that I cannot tell you with certainty what I would do. But what I can tell you with certainty is that I would never delegate the responsibility for that decision to another human being as I would if I placed myself under the orders of a commanding officer.

Clear enough, I thought. To my surprise--and enduring puzzlement--the draft board sent me a 1-0 classification. I have no idea why.

Jeff Kisling

"Received order to report for civilian work on February 1. As I approach the decision, its revelation, and the consequences, I draw back in fear." Journal 1/25/1972

At last the draft issue was coming to a head. I left Earlham knowing I would lose my student deferment and be eligible for induction. I was reclassified 1-0 (conscientious objector to do alternative service) in October, 1971, I think. I looked for jobs in hospitals, and accepted the one at Methodist partially because I knew, if I did decide to do alternative service, such a job would qualify.

Up to this point I still had alternatives. Now the 'official' order had come. It didn't matter that I would continue to work at the hospital or even that I would receive credit for what work I had done. What did matter was whether I would acknowledge that I was actually doing alternative service. I enjoyed my work at the hospital and felt called to continue with it, whether the government approved or not. But I had to decide whether I would accept the work on their terms or mine.

I've already indicated how much ready, thought, and worry I put into the draft decision. I thought I would suddenly receive the answer some day during Meeting for worship. It didn't happen exactly that way. I remember one meeting in the fall of my senior year at Scattergood when I knew it would be wrong to cooperate with the Selective Service System. I knew with certainty yet the time wasn't yet right to act on that knowledge. My grandmother (Lorene Standing) says the will of God is most often revealed in a series of small steps.

I think my task was first to prepare for the decision, its consequences and the reaction to it; and to prepare my family and those close to me for the decision. Then I would act. I had done what I could to prepare myself and others. Now the time had come. The first of February I returned to Earlham to visit friends and to get support before going ahead with my decision.

I mailed the following to the draft board today, along with my registration certificate and classification (1-0) card:

2/6/1972

Dear members and clerk of the draft board:

I have received an order to report for civilian work February 1, 1972.

I want to thank you for your concerned questions at my personal appearance, when we were considering my position as a conscientious objector. I have appreciated Mrs. Landon's kindness and consideration, even when I returned my draft cards. Thank you for giving me more time to consider this decision. I hadn't realized what a powerful affect that action would have on some people. The extra time gave them, and me, a chance to come to grips with the decision and its consequences. However, my beliefs have remained basically the same and the time has come to act accordingly.

I am sure none of us really want war. Many are convinced that was is a 'necessary evil'—the only way to achieve peace. I think I can understand that, and I do respect those who sincerely believe it—their sacrifice has been very great.

But I do not believe war is the way to peace. True peace is a personal, internal, spiritual matter. When we come to know and love ourselves and our God, then and only then do we have peace. From this point, peace and love will flow from us and should engulf those we live and work with. This is the only way to find and promote peace.

In this matter, war has no place.

The enclosed attempts to illustrate my beliefs in relation to the Selective Service System. I hope this will help you to understand why I feel I cannot cooperate with the Selective Service System. I want it to be clearly understood that I am not doing alternative service. It is not my choice. There is nothing else I can do.

Love,

Jeff Kisling

Letter to my draft board

I write concerning my relationship with the Selective Service System. There are many alternatives. In fact, someone once said the only alternative not open to a young man facing the draft is that of being left alone. I explored several of these. I applied for and was granted conscientious objector status (1-0). Then I had a student deferment, which made me very uneasy. I am now doing work which should qualify as alternative service, but for reasons I will attempt to explain herein, I find this alternative to be unacceptable.

I find it difficult to understand why one young man must explain his decision to do civilian work for a non-profit organization while another need make no explanation, indeed is encouraged to fight and perhaps kill other human beings. But it is one's duty to explain one's actions in order that others might understand, and perhaps follow. Noncooperation is less understood than conscientious objection, so I feel all the more compelled to try to present an explanation. I must try to explain, to spare my family the burden of doing so, for they neither clearly understand nor agree with my decision. (Note: they fully supported alternative service, but didn't want to see me imprisoned).

This decision grew out of my experience as a member of the Society of Friends. Meetings of the Society of Friends can be a source of strength and guidance as one begins and continues to search for meaning in life. Quakers have always believed that there is that of God in every man, that each of us has the ability to communicate with that of God in us, and the responsibility to respond to that of God in everyone. It is evident that Jesus had communion with God—evident in the actions of his life and in his teachings—culminating in "not as I will, but as thou wilt." This is the essence of Jesus' teaching—that God's will can be discerned and should be obeyed even at the cost of doubt and persecution. Quakers readily accept Jesus as an exceptional person and try to live up to the principles he gave us to live by. But we are even more concerned that we obey that Inner Light to which He was so sensitive, so we and have personal contact with and guidance from God. Thus, Quakers try to minimize distractions from "this (secular) world" in order to discern the will of God in their hearts and His presence in their midst. They gather together in a simple room and settle down together, searching in silence—each contributing to the spirit of the meeting as a whole. There are times when a member feels he has been 'moved by the spirit' to share with the group, in which case the meeting considers the message in further silence.

There is a spirit which comes from the silence which gives direction to life. The spirit is often difficult to discern because of our ties to 'this world.' We are afraid or too proud to give up our desire to 'reason through' decisions. Thus we develop a system of beliefs and guidelines composed of traditional beliefs, our own reasoning, and as much guidance from the Inner Light as we are willing to seek and accept. Thus our decisions, being not entirely grounded upon our faith, may not always be 'right'. But we can do no more, nor should we do less, than follow our conscience as occasions arise—always seeking to become more attuned to the spirit.

Adolescence is that period when one begins to seriously consider 'who he is' and his purpose in the world. It is a time when one has so many question and so few answers. The extent to which a young person searches for, and finds answers to these questions is dependent upon guidance given by parents, peers, school and church; the degree to which this guidance corresponds to his own experience and needs; and his own self-discipline and desire to continue the search. Too often the leadership and resources are not available; he is 'turned off' by inconsistencies or shallowness or insincerity on the part of those he looks to for guidance and example; or materialistic demands distract from the search.

The draft requires fundamental moral decisions at this time in life. This may not be bad in itself, but tremendous pressure is brought to bear to influence the decision—tradition, parental and peer pressure, the law, etc. The Selective Service System tries to attract men to the armed forces by relying on these pressures and by not making alternatives widely known. The pressures in this case are for action which is contrary to the experience and desires of most young men—frustrating, anguishing when one is searching for truth, honesty and integrity. This type of experience stifles personal growth and leads to the loss of a spirit of idealism and faith in the goodness of men. Can there be a graver crime than that of destroying the spirit and dreams of the young? Only that of destroying life itself, and the Selective Service System is directly implicated in both.

Most of us agree that conscription and war are unjust-evil. The question is, how do we deal with evil? 'Resist not evil'—a phrase widely known but little understood and less obeyed. 'Do not set yourself against one who wrongs you' (NEB) is a better way to put it, I think. In setting ourselves against those who harm us, we look, to some extent, for some way to hurt, or at least hinder them. We look for the worst in others and play upon their weaknesses rather than looking for the best and trying to fortify it. Out task is to overcome evil by doing good.

The time we spend 'resisting evil' could be better spent in trying to find out where we can do better ourselves. You do not change others by opposing them—rather, by respecting and trying to understand and learn from them, you can both benefit and move nearer the truth. A life of example—showing the possibilities and fruits of a life lived in love and concern for others, is the only way to overcome evil.

I do not want my example to be alliance with evil. Thus, I cannot serve with the Selective Service System. However, I will not set myself against it. I will break my ties with Selective Service, and concentrate on the difficult task of working for peace in whatever way I can.

The conclusion to my draft story is that I was drafted at a time when men were not being drafted for the armed forces. A Supreme Court case declared this to be illegal, so my order to report for civilian service was invalidated and I wasn't prosecuted. I did finish my two years with Friends Volunteer Service Mission in Indianapolis.

Letters to and from Bear Creek Monthly Meeting

Homer Moffitt, Clerk

Bear Creek Monthly Meeting

Dear Friends,

I am thankful for your kind letters and encouragement concerning my work in Indianapolis. I am learning much about love, and as I respond to the love of others, and they to mine, we are all amazed at how it grows.

I am enclosing a statement I have written concerning conscription, and my decision not to cooperate with the Selective Service System any more. I sent a copy of that statement, along with my draft cards, to my draft board.

Again, I tried very hard to follow the leading of the inner light. If I alone were making the decision, this would probably not be my choice. Thomas a' Beckett, torn between his obligations to the Church and those to the State, was searching for guidance. When he realized all the forces that influence him—selfish desires for power and personal gain, fear of punishment or displeasing people, etc., he said. "I am loathsome." But then he heard what he believed to be the voice of God saying, "Nevertheless, I love."

I, too, feel shamed when I realize the factors that often influence my decisions and actions. On this matter, I have tried very hard to be sensitive to the will of God, and hope to do so in the times to come. Still somewhat uncertain that my choice is right, I am comforted in knowing that He still loves.

Love,

Jeff Kisling

In reply:

Dear Jeff,

We have found your statement explaining your relationship to the Selective Service System very moving. Several of us are aware that your decision on this has been a difficult and lonely one. We want to assure you of our love and support as you meet the events which result from your courageous stand.

On behalf of the Peace Committee of Bear Creek Monthly Meeting

Letters to draft board supporting application for conscientious objector status

West Branch, Iowa 52358
December 3, 1969

Chairman, Local Draft Board
Marshall County, Iowa

Dear Sir:

This statement is to support the application of Jeff Kisling for classification as a conscientious objector.

I have known Jeff for the past four years while he has been a student at Scattergood School. Last summer he was employed in my laboratory to work on some special computer problems for me. He is a mild mannered young man, a person who tackles issues and problems with an open mind, thinking them through carefully and thoroughly. He is gentle and sensitive to the needs of people, not only of individuals close to him, but of people throughout the world who are struggling for the opportunity to live in peace.

Jeff has been active in Friends' peace activities. In the Fall of 1968 he attended a conference on Friends and the Draft, and gave an oral report to his Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Friends. A few weeks ago he was one of the student leaders of a week-end conference of young people discussing the draft and related problems of war and peace.

The atmosphere of Jeff's home and the Quaker school that he is attending have been such as to lead naturally to his desire to find other ways to solve international problems than through war, violence, and death. I believe these methods are completely foreign to his nature, and he would be unable to cooperate with them.

Sincerely yours,

Donald E. Laughlin

Donald E. Laughlin

Scattergood School
West Branch, Iowa
November 26, 1969

To the Chairman, Local Draft Board

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am eager to express my certainty that the claims that Jeff Kisling makes are sincere.

Jeff has proven his convictions in many ways, the strongest and most assuring of which are the actions of his daily life. He has remained positive and well-disposed in his manner towards others throughout the time I have known him. It takes humbleness and patience to be like this, and Jeff has these virtues, where many of the rest of us have become bitter and cynical in our outlooks. He has remained aware of the feelings and attitudes of those around him, and this backs up his claim that through looking "for the best in those with whom we disagree...we can surely, eventually, obtain a solution desirable to both of us."

Another way Jeff has proven the sincerity of his claims is the hard road he took in deciding how to meet the Selective Service System. I know that he weighed many alternatives and contacted many sources before reaching his decision, but I can assure you that the decision is his own.

Jeff has been influenced by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which teaches that there is a part of God in every man, and that it is sinful according to Christ's teaching to slay a fellow human under any circumstance. Jeff is conscientious, painfully conscientious, not only as a Quaker, but also as my friend and as a human being.

Your friend,
Ron Ellyson
Ron Ellyson

Allan Winder

I'm afraid I didn't keep any of the brief correspondence I had with the Ann Arbor board. The only point of contention that I recall was that they ordered me to take an induction physical before reporting to Scattergood. I pointed out that I didn't think that was required, thinking that they would rather have me 4F rather than A-10. They agreed.

My brother Robert had preceded me, insisting that his reason for refusing to serve was not religious, but was philosophical. They had a lot tougher time with him. He had already created waves by refusing to take the military indoctrination class at Ann Arbor Huron High School. It was required for graduation, but by special school board action he was allowed to graduate. The Ann Arbor News had fun with all of that.

Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali was one of the most significant influences in my life, at a difficult time in my life (late 1960's). Approaching my 18th birthday, when I would have to decide what I was going to do about registering with the Selective Service System, I saw Muhammad Ali take a very public, very unpopular stand against the Vietnam War.

He said: "Under no conditions do we take part in war and take the lives of other humans."

"It is in the light of my consciousness as a Muslim minister and my own personal convictions that I take my stand in rejecting the call to be inducted. I do so with the full realization of its implications. I have searched my conscience."

"Man, I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong…they never called me nigger."

It was very clear what the consequences of that decision could be, and yet he would not be persuaded to change his position, knowing he was jeopardizing his boxing career.

I was impressed by his clear vision of the universal struggle of every person for peace and freedom, and every person's responsibility to the world community, no matter their religion, race or country.

He helped me make my decision to refuse to participate in the draft, and therefore, the Vietnam War. And continued to be an inspiration in the days that followed.

The Moral Integrity of Muhammid Ali

In Rabbi Michael Lerner's speech at Muhammad Ali's memorial service in Louisville. he describes the moral integrity of the life of Muhammad Ali. And he calls upon each of us to commit ourselves to the same moral integrity.

"So I want to say how do we honor Muhammad Ali? And the answer is the way to Honor Muhammad Ali is to BE Muhammad Ali TODAY. That means us, everyone here and everyone listening. It's up to us to continue that ability to speak truth to power. We must speak out, refuse to follow a path of conformity to the rules of the game in life."

Each of us needs to find our way to speak truth to power, especially in a time when governments and corporations have corrupted our political process and increasingly abuse power. Speaking out is how we take that power back.

Jeff Kisling

The Peace Testimony Remains Lynne Howard

I am an Iowa native—actually a Des Moines native. I grew up attending Knox Presbyterian Church just two miles from the Des Moines Valley Friends (DMVF) Meeting House. Although Presbyterian Churches are not typically known as "peace churches", Know Presbyterian was an active peace church. While never having to officially declare himself a conscientious objector during WWII (due to his status as a pastor), our minister, Reverend Keith Delap, was a true follower of the peace testimony.

The 1960-1970's were an exciting time in which to be a teenager. Fresh ways of being, thinking and doing were opening. A truly new world seemed possible. Under Reverend Dewlap's pastorship the Know community was challenged to envision a world without war. More importantly, we were led to understand that we are not merely idle bystanders, but rather, active participants in bringing this new era into fruition. These were heady and empowering ideas.

My peace activism started at Know and, because "all things peace" in Des Moines leads to AFSC and the Friends, I became involved with a group of like-minded students led by FSC staff. We formed the Des Moines Area Youth Coalition and one of our main goals was to see draft counseling available in all of the Des Moines Public High Schools. Young Des Moines men were walking down the aisles to receive their diplomas, and the, within months, stepping out of helicopters into the lush green hell that was Viet Nam in the 1960-70's. The deserved, at the minimum, some place to hear and discuss options. We took our proposal to the Des Moines School Board in September of 1970, and to our surprise, it passed! As a matter of interest, I have attached the proposal.

Eventually, my spiritual path led to membership at Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting. It was an ecumenical journey—from my early Presbyterian roots, to Catholicism via the Catholic Worker and Jesuit Volunteer Corps, to Methodism through my husband, Bill. And then, in my middle years, a Friends who attended DMVF Meeting remarked, "Lynne, you really are a Quaker, you know!" Yes. I had found my spiritual home in a place I had known for years.

In closing, while I've enjoyed going down memory lane, my real purpose in this piece is to recognize and celebrate the constancy and relevancy of the AFSC and Friends in peace and justice work over the years in central Iowa. AFSC has provided optimistic leadership on the many complex issues that affect our local community and wider world. If you want to know what is happening in the peace community, you pass through the doors of the AFSC and the Meeting House. Other worthwhile groups have come and gone but the Friends Peace Testimony, and the faithfulness it requires of us, remains.

Lynne Howard, member Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, 2014

September 15, 1970

MEMO TO: Members of the Des Moines School Board

FROM: A Group of Concerned Persons in the Des Moines School System (Parents and High School Students)

Background Statement: The Schools and the Draft

Many young men are struggling with decisions related to their future in connection with the draft and the war. Young men must register for the draft at age eighteen, but they come to this important event without any clear understanding of its meaning for them or their country.

It is our feeling that high schools have a responsibility to counsel and educate you men for citizenship in a troubled and divided world, and this responsibility is not fully met unless there are also trained counselors who can help young men with vital decisions related to the draft and military service.

To determine whether or not the Des Moines counselors are presently trained in draft counseling we contacted Mrs. Baal, supervisor of counselors for the Des Moines School District, who said that technically the counselors have no training in draft counseling, but that it would depend on the training they received to become a counselor. Mrs. Baal went on to tell us that most of the Des Moines counselors were trained at Drake and to find out if they received any draft counseling training we should contact Dr. Tiedeman, one of the men in charge of the counselor training at Drake. Dr. Tiedeman told us that their training program did not include draft counseling. The high school counselors of Des Moines are not trained in the area of draft counseling.

The schools need to be counseling you men as t the options available to them. These options include deferments for students, deferments for pre-ministerial candidates, occupational deferments, dependency deferments, those who are deferred for physical, mental, or moral reasons, and the option of conscientious objection. But let us also keep in mind that counseling needs to be provided for young men as to the opportunities and options available to them in terms of making one of the services a vocational choice. What opportunities are available if they are interested within one of the branches of service?

The Des Moines Board of Education has a very important role to play in the future of young people. For the most part, the high schools in Des Moines do an adequate job in providing counseling for college or in relationship to jobs. However, they have failed to help young men with decisions concerning at least two years of their lives by not providing adequate counseling. It was out of a concern with this lack that the Philadelphia School System, along with other schools' systems, have already set up objective draft counseling. Dr. Shedd, the Superintendent of the Philadelphia School System, feels very strongly that schools need to advise students on their legal options and alternatives to the draft.

We believe the Des Moines schools should provide similar counsel to help young men with critical decisions that may affect their entire lives. Therefore, we make the following proposal:

PROPOSAL FOR DRAFT COUNSELING IN THE DES MOINES PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

STATEMENT OF BELIEF:

We believe that all young men in the Des Moines Public High Schools should have access to adequate counseling by qualified counselors in regard to the Selective Service and its alternatives. Qualified counselors are those persons who:

1. Have received special draft counseling training
2. Have a detailed knowledge and experience of the Selective Service Law and the administration thereof
3. Are sensitive to the moral and spiritual implication of war and peace and individual conscience
4. Have knowledge of where to refer students if they want counseling on a specific aspect of the Selective Service alternatives and options

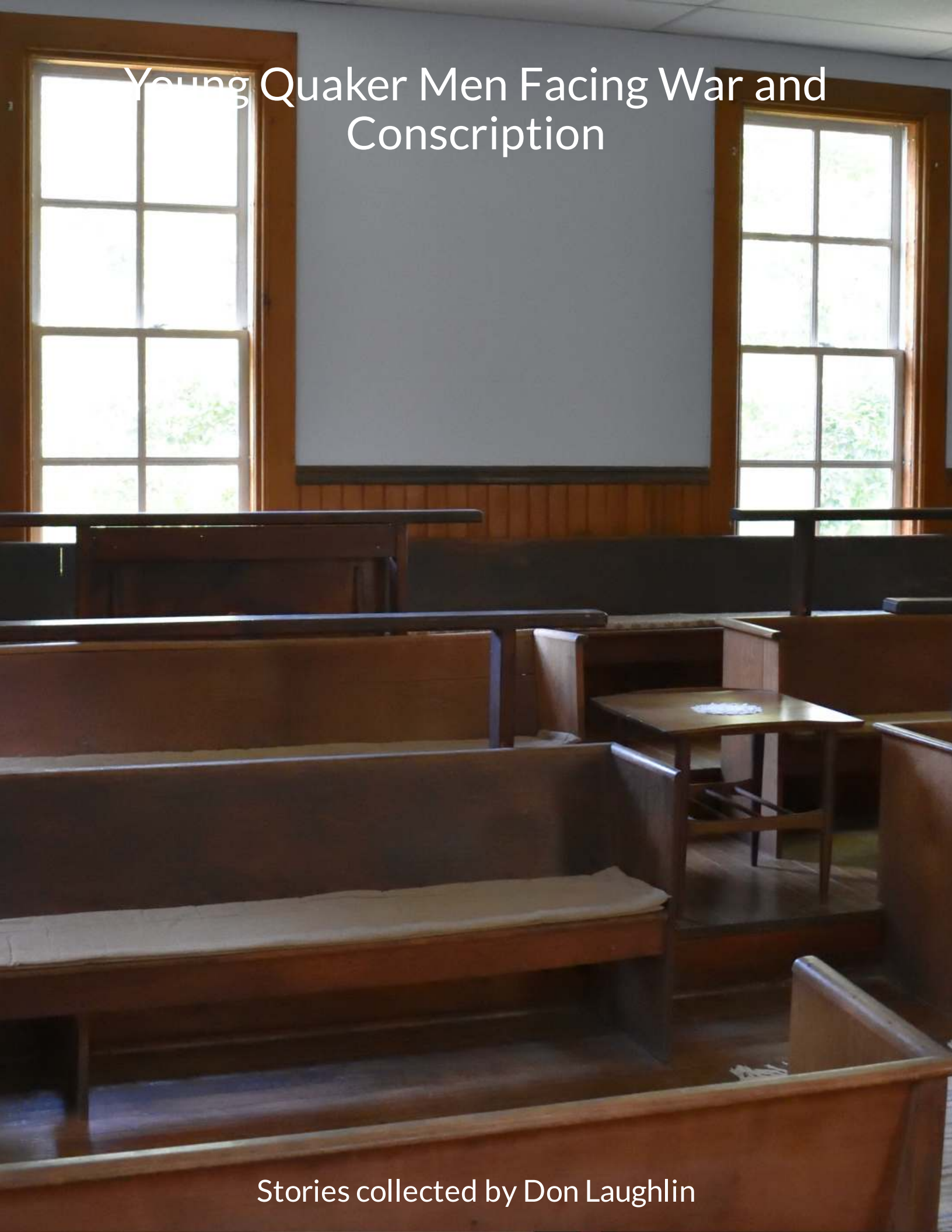
We further believe that such counseling should be made available during school hours, similar to other available guidance counseling.

IMPLEMENTATION:

There in light of the above purpose we recommend that one of the following plans be used to implement this counseling program:

1. That each high school in Des Moines provide adequate training of all guidance counselors in order that they be familiar with the Selective Service Law and its alternatives
2. That each high school select one guidance counselor who would be specially trained (see above) to counsel and answer questions concerning the draft and its alternatives. Other guidance counselors in the school could refer their students to this specially trained counselor, if this type of counseling is needed
3. That each trained counselor would refer persons who need more intensive and specific counseling to appropriate groups. (Particular religious groups, various branches of the Service, etc.)

Young Quaker Men Facing War and Conscription



Stories collected by Don Laughlin