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“Hand-Maids and Daughters of the Lord”: Quaker Women, Quaker Families, and Somerset’s Anti-Tithe Petition in 1659

Stephen A. Kent*

Of the two anti-tithe submissions that Quakers delivered to Parliament during the tumultuous and unsettled year, 1659, only the signatories of one survive,¹ appearing together within a bound volume containing separate petitions from London, part of Wales, and at least two dozen shires. (Four petitions in the volume do not give their places of origin.) A lengthy description of the volume’s contents appeared on its title page: *These several PAPERS Was sent to the PARLIAMENT the twentieth day of the fifth Moneth 1659. Being above seven thousand of the Names of the HAND-MAIDS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE LORD, And such as feels the oppression of Tithes, in the names of many more of the said HAND-MAIDS and DAUGHTERS of the Lord, who witness against the oppression of Tithes and other things as followeth.*² Together the petitions in the second submission contained the names of 7,746 women. Although it seems certain that Quakers were behind the petitions, by no means is it certain that only Quaker women signed them from the various areas.

While all historians of early Quakerism are aware of this document, no one has undertaken a systematic study of the signatories. Indeed, to do so would be a Herculean task, but one likely to reveal important information about both early Quaker women and the general anti-tithe movement in the final days of the Interregnum. My examination of the signatories of just one shire, Somerset, largely reflects the availability of comparatively rich records at Friends House Library, London, and the Somerset Record Office, Taunton.³

These records include: Quaker birth, marriage, and burial registers (beginning in the 1650s);⁴ records of Quakers’ ‘sufferings’ onward from 1656;⁵ a published copy of Somersetshire Quarter Meeting records from 1668 to 1699;⁶ and an historical account about early Quaker activity that appeared in *The First Publishers of Truth*.⁷ Because similarly good historical records exist for Cheshire and Lincolnshire, I have conducted parallel studies of the signatories from these locations, and I will offer some comparative comments about the results found within the three shires.

A basic motivation that I had for undertaking this research was to see how many women I could identify as Quakers, either before or after their names

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appeared on the shire's petition. Consequently, I devised charts that summarized my findings, with the basic division being between 'Quakers' and 'non-Quakers' (realizing, of course, that the records from this period likely are incomplete). I further subdivided the 'Quakers' category into those who appear to have been 'members'⁸ prior to and including 1659 and those whose membership I only could confirm to a period after Parliament received the petition. I categorized women as possibly being Quakers (in either pre- or post-1659) if their surnames appeared within Quaker records even if people with their exact given names did not (as long as no other evidence excluded them). I also included signatories here who had names that bore some resemblance to known Quakers but about whom name-spelling, or dates, or locations seemed problematic. Similarly, I decided that signatories likely were Quakers when their names resembled ones that appeared on Quaker records, but some doubt remained (often because of spelling variations, multiple records-entries of different people who apparently had the same name, etc.). I placed people in the 'certain' category if the Quaker records were clear about their membership, often despite inconsequential spelling inconsistencies.

Likewise, I placed a few people in a category of 'possibly not' being Quakers when, for example, the records provided exclusionary evidence despite a surname similar to a Quaker's. I listed women as 'probably not' being Quakers if they did not appear in Quaker records but at least shared a Quaker surname (thereby giving me a small amount of doubt). Finally, I determined that women certainly were not Quakers (at least according to the available sources) when their names failed to appear in the Quaker records and whose surnames failed to resemble anyone known to have been a Quaker. Regardless, however, of these criteria, judgement calls were inevitable, and other researchers might have located a few signatories differently.

This methodology allowed me to determine, first, how many of the signatories likely were (and were not) Quakers, and on this question I offer some conservative estimates. Second, for the signatories either who were Quakers at the time the petition went to Parliament or who joined the movement afterward, I am able to locate their act of anti-tithe petitioning in the context of other protest and resistance activities in which they or their family members engaged. Before I begin the analysis and offer my conclusions, however, I mention comments by various scholars who have discussed either the published volume or similar protest-documents. I now turn to these discussions, since they provide perspectives that help locate the volume (and, by extension, the particular Somerset petition) in its appropriate historical and cultural context.

Scholarship on the *Hand-maids and Daughters of the Lord* Petition

A useful place to begin is Patricia Higgins's standard discussion of women's political petitions to Parliament, even though she did not specifically mention the "Hand-maids" document. Nevertheless, many of the generalizations that she made about earlier petitions also hold true for it. She limited her examination of women's petitions to those that appeared from the first one (January 31, 1642) to the women Levellers' petitions of July 1653, and at least one of them attacked tithes (as would the 1659 piece).⁹ Moreover, the introductory apology to the "Hand-maids," which states that "[i]t may seem strange to some that women should appear in so publick a manner,"¹⁰ extends Higgins's comments that earlier women petitioners "felt obliged to explain themselves, and their justifications of their novel activity are a noteworthy feature, particularly for the Leveller period, of the petitioning."¹¹ Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser mentioned Leveller and Quaker women's petitions (including the "Hand-maids") as similar examples of Protestant women's protests,¹² but they did not analyze the Quaker petition in any depth.

Phyllis Mack recognizes the importance of a longitudinal perspective regarding individuals when she discusses Quaker women in the context of prophecy during the English Civil War. In refuting the notion that female visionaries and prophets were pathological, hysterical, or otherwise mad, Mack points out that "they carried on the mundane activities of charity work, petitioning parliament, supervising the morals of church members, and caring for prisoners, concurrently with more flamboyant prophetic gestures. They also sustained their public religious activities for extraordinarily long periods."¹³ Along the same lines, my research on these women signatories shows how long some of them maintained their anti-tithe and related oppositional efforts, and the price they paid for doing so.

The study that best combines longitudinal perspectives on both the "Hand-maids" petition and some of the signatories is Maureen Bell's exemplary analysis of Mary Westwood's publishing career, including Westwood's production of the book containing the shires' petitions from across the commonwealth.¹⁴ Focusing simultaneously on the overall, compiled petition and a few of its signers within the context of "'political' writing," Bell identifies the document as a twofold attempt "to influence both the government and public opinion in relation to Quaker demands for toleration and the abolition of tithes" and to effect particular "internal conflicts within Quakerism itself."¹⁵ Of the two approaches, the analysis of the petition's relation to internal Quaker conflicts is the most revealing. Bell identified Mary Westwood (d. January 18, 1667?)¹⁶ as a probable sympa-

thizer with James Nayler's female supporters who received opposition from Quaker male leaders in London who disapproved of women speaking in meetings.¹⁷ Furthermore, a review of items and authors whom Westwood published strongly suggests that she approved of "the enactment of 'signs' and public demonstrations [which could include Nayler's ride into Bristol]; prophecy; and the ministry of women,"¹⁸ all of which were falling into disfavour among more orthodox Friends at the end of the Interregnum. Publication of the "Hand-maids" petition, therefore, was one act among others of Westwood's apparent efforts to enhance the status of women within the organization. In support of this claim, four of Nayler's close female supporters signed the petition from 'London and Southwark'—Sarah Blackborrow [Blackbury],¹⁹ Rebecca Travers,²⁰ Dorcas Erbury,²¹ and Martha Simmonds.²² Subsequently, in 1660, Westwood published works by Blackborrow and Travers.²³

Another way that Westwood's publication of the 1659 petition served to enhance the status of women within first-generation Quakerism was by reminding all members of the price that some women had paid for their tithe-opposition.²⁴ Earlier in 1659, for example, Westwood published a persecution account of the travails suffered by Hampshire Quakers James Potter, his sister Ann, and his brother, Richard, in relation to a battle with a local minister. The account also contained another persecution account in which Quaker Elizabeth Streeter and two of her husband's servants went to jail over a conflict with another tithe-receiving clergyman.²⁵ Subsequently, the names of "Ann Potter" and "Elizabeth Streeter," appear consecutively in the petition from "Berkshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire."²⁶ Certainly local Hampshire Friends would have known of the sacrifices that these women had made for conscience' sake, but Westwood's publication of their persecution account and the anti-tithe petition carrying their names would have served as additional reminders. Undoubtedly, therefore, this collective volume of petitions sparked memories among Friends around the country concerning the price that some of their local women had paid for their tithe-resistance and the resistance of their family-members.

While Bell's study contributes significantly to both our appreciation of the "Hand-maids" petition and our insight into the possible motives of a few women who signed it, somewhat more about the women's lives becomes clear after examining records that document other political activities in which signatories engaged. Various sources, for example, from Quakerism's first quarter-century and beyond recount frequent incidents in which Quaker women suffered because of their tithe-opposition and other religiously-influenced political beliefs, and many of these sufferers supported the document in 1659.²⁷ This diachronic, 'protest-events' perspective high-

lights contributions by women to the early Quaker tithe-resistance efforts that some historians tend to overlook—a situation that this study will play a small part in remedying.

The year of the petition—1659—was a politically and socially tumultuous one, with the collapse of the Protectorate in April and the reestablishment of the Rump Parliament in early May. Quaker responses to the tumult were far from uniform, ranging from optimistically planning for political influence in a religiously tolerant parliamentary government elected by freeborn men to expecting an apocalyptic kingdom established by God on earth.²⁸

Amidst indications that the Rump finally might abolish tithes, Quakers in at least four shires appointed persons to “take the subscriptions of all those persons that will give in their testimony against the oppression of tithes, that the same may be returned to London with all possible speed.”²⁹ At least in Kendal, two Friends had the instruction to “go through the town” collecting names,³⁰ so the clear implication is that anti-tithe sentiment was sufficiently widespread (among, for example, Baptists, Independents, and other sectarians) that Quakers anticipated being able to get many non-Friends to affix their names. Presumably these collected names were the ones (numbering over 15,000) that a number of prominent London Friends presented to Parliament in the June 27, 1659 petition.³¹ It is entirely possible, however, that Friends collected protest signatures from both men and women at the same time, and then separated them into an all-male collection for the June 27 petition and the all-female “Hand-maids” compilation petition of July 20. The introduction to the women’s Buckinghamshire petition even may allude to the earlier (presumably men’s) petition of June 27 when it said, “Truly wee cannot, whose hearts are upright to the Lord, but joyn our testimony with our Bretheren, against the unjust Oppression of Tythes....”³² Alternatively, in 1657, George Fox might have initiated the collection of women’s names (as Norman Penney suggested), with the “Hand-maids” petitions being the eventual result.³³ While the first collection scenario seems most likely, we simply cannot be sure.

Preliminary Remarks about the *Hand-maids and Daughters of the Lord* Volume

Reference in the book’s title to “the Names of the Hand-maids and Daughters of the Lord” may be allusions to two passages: Lk. 1:38 and possibly 2 Cor. 6:18. In Luke, Jesus’ mother, Mary, has received the message from the angel Gabriel that she will be the mother of a son to be called Jesus, who will be the Son of God. She responds with the statement about herself, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it

unto me according to thy word.” In 2 Corinthians, Paul instructs the faithful in Corinth:

17. . . . be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Another likely biblical passage that may have inspired the “Hand-maids and Daughters” reference is Joel 2: 28-29, where the Lord said:

28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions;

29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

In essence, probably Mary Westwood (who printed the book) or Mary Forster (who wrote the preface) organized the petitions within the biblical context of women reputedly doing God’s work, following His instructions. At the same time, however, the descriptive terms of women as ‘hand-maids and daughters’ were ones “of meekness and subordination” which could have been “an expedient bow to convention; nevertheless, many women—even most women—seem to have accepted their inferior status with resignation. Subordination defined them, but did not completely inhibit them.”³⁴

Occasional phrases of meekness and subordination, however, stand aside several strident passages of resentment (if not anger) and pointed instruction to the parliamentarians.³⁵ The petition from Wales and Herefordshire, for example, begins:

Friends, You have thrown your selves away out of the affections of the sober people, in setting up Tithes, notwithstanding the many Petitions and addresses unto you against them up and down the Nation from the sober people therein, and the well wishes of the choicest of the Nation towards you.³⁶

Less conciliatory were the opening remarks on a petition whose location was not identified:

You who are the Parliament of this Nation, you should have thrown down tythes, which is the cause of so great trouble in the nation at Courts, Assizes & sessions; and so many families in the Nations their goods spoiled, and their estates ruined, many prisoned to death by Priests and Impropriators....³⁷

Certainly these harsher statements represent the opinions and experiences of the Quakers, but they were not alone in their abhorrence of the tithe system and the burdens that it placed on families and friends.

The Somerset-shire [Somersetshire] Petition

The Somersetshire petition was not distinctive from the others in any way. Its opening remark against tithes consisted of one long sentence that captured Quakerism's essential religious and economic objections to them: "We whose Names are here under-written, being by the Light of Christ entered into the New Covenant, and seeing the Unjustnesse of Tythes do witnesse, and testifie against them, and the great Oppression by them; having hereunto subscribed our Names."³⁸ (Reference to the New Covenant alluded to the fact that the practice of tithing appeared in the Old Testament [for example, Gen.14: 20; Lev. 27: 30], but Quakers and some others believed that Jesus established a new relationship with God that overturned many old practices, including obligatory tithing [see Matt. 23: 23; Lk. 9:3, 10: 3-8; Heb. 7: 1-28; 2 Cor. 11:7].) Two hundred and ninety-five women signed the petition from this shire.

Table 1: Analysis of Somerset's 1659 "Handmaids"

Number of Women in Quaker Records						Number of Women Not in Quaker Records			289
PRE-SIGNING			POST-SIGNING						
POSSIBLE	PROBABLE	CERTAIN	POSSIBLE	PROBABLE	CERTAIN	POSSIBLE	PROBABLE	CERTAIN	
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	
4	4	36	11	47	38	6	37	106	
n = 44 (= 15%)			n = 96 (= 33%)			n = 149			
(= 48%)						(= 52%)			= 100%

Quakerism in Somerset had a stormy history at least since May 1655, less than a year after John Audland had brought his religious message to the county in July, 1654.³⁹ Beginning with a Quaker disturbance in Bath Abbey in May, 1655, Quakers were active and vocal in their opposition to state-supported churches, and because of their public behaviours evoked the anger and retaliation of local ministers, mobs, and justices of the peace.⁴⁰ Most damaging to the Quakers' public image was James Nayler's 1656 messianic ride into Bristol, which took him first through the Somerset towns of Glastonbury and Wells.⁴¹

Despite these obstacles and setbacks, Quakerism thrived in various parts of the county. Prominent among early Somerset converts was Jasper Batt (1621–1702), whose commitment to Quakerism spanned almost fifty years. Batt was a Baptist prior to his conversion to Quakerism,⁴² and parish records

indicate that he married his wife, Edith, in 1646, and had four children between 1649 and 1653.⁴³ He became a Quaker soon after the first missionaries arrived in his area (around 1656),⁴⁴ and within a year his run-ins began with civil authorities over his religious convictions and the behaviours that they engendered. On June 24, 1657, for example, he was arrested for refusing to pay 40s. worth of tithes, after which he had goods distrained of 9£. 4s. 6d.⁴⁵ In another incident, he showed up for jury duty at a court leet in 1657, only to be fined for refusing to take an oath.⁴⁶ Apparently his wife, Edith, supported her husband’s stands, since her name appears in the 1659 petition. The year after Parliament received the petition, Batt went to prison with Henry Grundy—husband of signatory, Anne—for tithe refusal.⁴⁷ Again, in 1669—the year in which Edith died—Jasper Batt’s refusal to pay tithes landed him in Tauton Castle jail.⁴⁸

The following year, Jasper Batt remarried, taking another anti-tithe signatory, Tomisin Parsons (d. 1707), as his wife.⁴⁹ In the 1680s, Jasper continued to suffer for his Quaker practices, experiencing distraint of his family’s goods over tithe-payment refusal,⁵⁰ attending Quaker meetings;⁵¹ and refusing to swear.⁵² In a letter that Batt wrote to George Fox on the 23rd of Ninth Month (November 23), 1683, he revealed some of the hardship that Tomisin faced over the family’s resistance to the established church, which the two of them continued to oppose as part of their Quaker faith. Earlier in the month, officers with a warrant raided the Batt house in response to Jasper’s attendance of a Quaker meeting earlier in July. They were storing bedding and bed-clothes both for their landlords and for Quakers who had been imprisoned, and these officers:

‘took away all our Bedding, and some Clothes, two Beds and Bed-clothes of Friends that were Prisoners.... In all they took six Beds, twelve or thirteen Pillows, with Sheets, Coverlets, Blankets, Bolsters, Pillowbiers [i.e., pillow cases], and Warming-pan, with other things, to the Value of about 25£.... That night my dear Wife lay on the Ground by the Fire, with some Straw under her head; nor can we with Safety receive or keep any Goods or Bedding in our House, not knowing but they will take it away.’⁵³

Tomisin survived these and other deprivations, outliving her husband by some five years.

Edith Batt is one of forty signatories whose membership in Quakerism at the time of the petition is firmly established, and whose close relatives (in most cases, husbands, fathers, or brothers) had suffered for their beliefs. For example, opposition to tithes by the husband of Mary Addans [sic: Addams or Adams], Richard Adams, took place as early as 1651, and he was to die in jail in 1660 while resisting tithe payment.⁵⁴ So, too, would the husband of

Anne Beaton, (named William), who was an early convert who opened up his home for Quaker meetings.⁵⁵ In 1680, he refused to take communion at Easter, and for that offense he spent about twenty-seven months in Ilchester Gaol, where he died on September 9, 1681.⁵⁶ Anne Gundry's husband, Henry, was "driving his Oxen" when two bailiffs, beat, arrested, and jailed him for tithe-resistance in 1657,⁵⁷ and he returned to gaol (with Jasper Batt) in 1660.⁵⁸ Although it is not clear why he was in gaol in November 1663, Gundry (along with Jasper Batt and three other Quaker men) wrote a letter from Ilchester prison to incarcerated Friends in London's Newgate prison.⁵⁹ Still acting on his beliefs, in 1664 Henry Gundry again was distrained over tithes.⁶⁰ The year 1666 must have been a difficult one for the Gundry family—they had at least one son [Robert], born in 1655⁶¹—since Henry first was distrained, then imprisoned, over tithes.⁶² Again in 1678, he (along with Jasper Batt and others) was fined for attending a Quaker meeting.⁶³ He remained resistant until the end (which came in 1682), when "Henry Gundry, of Street, finished his Testimony against Tithes, by Death in Ilchester Gaol, after about four Years Imprisonment."⁶⁴ Undeterred, his surviving wife, Anne (d. 1704), resisted tithe-payment the following year, and suffered distraint.⁶⁵ Into the closing years of the 1680s, Anne continued to resist tithes.⁶⁶

Another husband of a petition-signer (Christopher Bacon [c. 1623-1678], married to Jone [Joan]), also died in prison during the Restoration. He was a tailor and yeoman in Sutton Mallet, having been a Royalist soldier during the Civil War (which was unusual for a Quaker convert, since more often men had fought for Parliament).⁶⁷ In one instance, he used his service for the King to silence a bishop who called him a rebel for meeting with the Quakers.⁶⁸ He was an early convert, and apparently spent some time spreading the message of Quakerism in Ireland.⁶⁹ Inadvertently, Jone was partly responsible for his conversion (in or about 1656), because he went:

into a [Quaker] meeting, not with the intention to be edified there, but rather to scoff, and to fetch his wife thence, who went thither against his mind, [but] was so reached by the lively exhortation he heard, that he was not only convinced of the truth preached there, but in time became a zealous preacher of it himself, and was valiant in his sufferings.⁷⁰

Christopher's first recorded encounter with authorities occurred in July 1657, when he received a 5£. fine for failing to remove his hat at Quarter Sessions hearings. That same year—one in which Jone gave birth to their first son, Philip—⁷¹ he:

went to visit his Friends in Ilchester Gaol, where he was taken by the Watch; after three Days Detention there, he was sent to Prison, where he lay three Months, till the [Quarter] Sessions [court]; at which he was fined 5£. for not taking off his Hat, and recommitted.⁷²

Another child, Nathaniel, arrived a few months before Quakers delivered the anti-tithe petition (that Jone signed) to Parliament,⁷³ and a daughter arrived two years later in 1661.⁷⁴ During that same year, however, Christopher spent time in gaol for holding a Quaker meeting in their house, and he also received a beating by another man for no apparent reason (other than, it seems, his Quaker faith).⁷⁵ Years later, in 1678, he was in gaol again, this time for tithes-resistance, and the consequences of his imprisonment were fatal (despite Jone’s efforts to nurse him):

About September 1678, Christopher Bacon of Sutton, was imprisoned at Bridgewater by William Macey, one of the Magistrates of that Town, for Tithes said to be due to the Corporation [i.e., the municipal authorities]: He was kept close confined in a very cold Room in the Common Prison, Macey, his Prosecutor, saying, ‘He should abide there until he did eat the Boards of the Loft,’ and through the Extremity of Cold he suffered much, till he became very sick, when with much Difficulty his Wife was admitted to go in and out to administer to him; When he was grown so weak, that it was thought he would have died there, they turned him out; but he never perfectly recovered his Health after, but remained in a weak State of body about two Months, and then died on the 29th of December, being about fifty five years of Age.⁷⁶

Existing Quaker records do not indicate whether the death of her husband broke Jone’s spirit regarding tithe-resistance or strengthened her resolve.

Other documentation exists of husbands of signatories who suffered for the faith and their resistance. Jone [Joan] Pearce’s husband, James, had been a pre-Quaker tithe resister who converted.⁷⁷ Jone [Joan, Joane] Loscombe’s husband, Thomas, lost a surveyor’s job and was imprisoned for several months in 1657 because he would not swear to perform his responsibilities.⁷⁸ Several months afterward, he was “imprisoned for not paying tithes, around the 2nd month 1658 (April, 1658),” and remained confined for over a year until a “Com[mi]tee of Parliament” released him on “the 20th day of the 4th moneth 1659” (20 June 1659). He was imprisoned again, however, for tithe resistance around a month later.⁷⁹ While imprisoned for the first time, he became a father, with his wife giving birth to a daughter, Mary, in January 1658/9.⁸⁰ In 1674, Jone’s refusal to swear in court would cost her a fine and imprisonment.⁸¹ Another Quaker signatory, Dorothy Scott, gave birth to two boys, John and Robert, in 1656 and 1657,⁸² and in 1658 her husband, Samuel, spent two hours in the stocks for his “Exhortation given to the Priest and People” in Podimore-Milton.⁸³ Quaker ‘membership’ at the time of the “Hand-maids” seems to be clearly established for Mary Addams, Jone Bacon, Edith Batt, Anne Gundry, Joan Loscombe, Joan Pearce, and Dorothy Scott, and contemporary incidents of persecution strongly suggest that they and their husbands jointly opposed obligatory tithe payments.

Anne was among the four women with the last name, Gundry, who signed the petition, and we can connect three of them to Abraham Gundry (1629–1701), a yeoman from Street⁸⁴ who converted to Quakerism in the 1650s,⁸⁵ was jailed for attending a Quaker meeting in 1660,⁸⁶ and was an active in resisting the established church during the 1680s.⁸⁷ Among his brothers and sisters were Henry Gundry, Arthur Gundry (1637–1668), and Lydia Gundry (b. 1639),⁸⁸ all of whom were involved with Quaker protests against tithes. In addition to the activities of brother, Henry, and his signatory wife, Ann, brother Arthur (1637–1668) married Quaker signatory Jone [Joan or Joane] Pitman in 1661.⁸⁹ In 1666, he had goods confiscated for tithe refusal.⁹⁰ Lydia, too, signed the Somerset petition,⁹¹ and another sister, Mary, already had married Henry Moore (1619–1685) the year before the petition appeared in print,⁹² and her married name, Mary Moore, appears among the signatories.⁹³ Her yeoman husband, Henry, had refused to pay tithes well before his conversion to the sect (with legal actions against him in 1651 and 1653),⁹⁴ and was among the shire's early converts. He “gave up his house for meetings, and used his endeavors to get his neighbours to come and heare the trueth declared.”⁹⁵ In 1657, he spent four months in prison for tithe resistance and contempt of court,⁹⁶ and an ecclesiastical court excommunicated him in 1663.⁹⁷ Again he was imprisoned for tithe resistance, this time in 1665.⁹⁸ Twice he suffered distraint over tithes in 1670,⁹⁹ and again in 1681.¹⁰⁰ Parenthetically, probably around the time that Mary signed the petition, she gave birth to a baby girl named Sarah.¹⁰¹

In addition to the Quaker involvement of at least some of the signatory women in the Gundry family, membership also seems clear for signatory Rose Pittard (née Chappell), who married yeoman Quaker Christopher Pittard in 1658.¹⁰² A year before the marriage, he suffered distraint of his horse for riding to a Quaker meeting.¹⁰³ Three years after the marriage (1661), Christopher again seems to have run afoul of authorities, but the record of events is conflicting. One sufferings account has him imprisoned in September for tithe resistance, with his release coming twenty months later when his prosecutor died.¹⁰⁴ Another account has him sent to prison on October 14 for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance.¹⁰⁵ In any case, in 1662 he lost 30£. worth of goods over his refusal to pay 4£. in tithes, and in 1663 he did gaol-time (possibly as a consequence of his oaths-refusal).¹⁰⁶ In 1669 he was imprisoned again (a Quaker historical record only indicates that he was “a sufferer for trueth”),¹⁰⁷ but while in gaol, Quakers in the Ilchester Quarterly Meeting disowned him because of “his excessive drinking, & his utter rejecting the advice & counsell of friends who in love were sent to visite him. . . .”¹⁰⁸

As an aside, they also accused him of being “a Hat man,” by which they meant that he followed the leadings of the schismatic Quaker, John Perrot,

who refused to remove his hat in Quaker meetings when someone was reputedly ‘moved by the Spirit’ to speak.¹⁰⁹ Despite having been disowned, in 1670 he suffered distress again for attending Quaker meetings,¹¹⁰ as did his wife, Rose.¹¹¹ She remained active among the Quakers at least into the early 1680s, since she served on a “committee of clearance” concerning a marriage in September 1683.¹¹²

In one documented instance, a Quaker signatory had a father who previously had withheld tithe payments. William Shephard [Shepherd or Sheppard], father of Elizabeth and residing in Street, Walton, had resisted tithe payments prior to the appearance of Quakerism in the shire, and joined the group after it appeared in the mid-1650s.¹¹³ For refusing to hear the Common Prayer, William went to prison in March 1661/2.¹¹⁴ No evidence exists, however, that this daughter suffered persecution herself because of her father’s actions, but she did sign the petition.

At least five Quaker women whose names appear on the petition had themselves been arrested or abused. On April 2, 1657,¹¹⁵ three women were arrested for harassing a minister (their harangues had made the minister, James Strong, “afraid of [i.e., for] his life”), and two of them (Elizabeth Tucker and Jone [Joan] Giles) signed the “Hand-maids” petition a few years later.¹¹⁶ Subsequently, in 1662, Jone and husband, Robert, were arrested for attending a Quaker meeting.¹¹⁷ Similarly, “for going to the steeplehouse [in Whitchurch] and declaring against the deceit of George Nicholson priest” (i.e., minister) of the church, Mary Hasell:

was sent by the J.P. to the Common Goale at Ilchester, around 14th of 12 mo. 1657 [February 14, 1658], but then kept confined by the prison’s keeper until the 24th day 3rd month 1658 [May 24, 1658], for not paying him for her keep [which, by the way, she never did pay but was released then anyway].¹¹⁸

Another signatory, Jane Murford, had been “assaulted and abused by the Rabble in the streets” while going to and from a visit to the gaol in 1658, and the mob told the visitors that “*They were ordered by the Mayor to use them so, because they were Quakers*” (italics in original).¹¹⁹ In 1658, Sarah Sargant (Sergeant) wound up in prison after the improprator of the family land had her husband, William, incarcerated for about ten months (beginning in 1657). Her imprisonment seemingly was timed to interfere with her harvesting efforts, and when the family’s two servants continued bringing in the corn, they too were jailed. The harvest would have been lost had neighbors not brought it in. Subsequently, William died in prison after a twenty-month incarceration.¹²⁰

Assistance came to another suffering Quaker—a widow named Agness [Agnes] Barrat [Barrett] several months after her signature appeared on the

1659 petition. Aged and poor, she was unable to pay the tithes that the local minister demanded, and was arrested along with another poor Quaker, Henry Gould. A neighbor, however, named William Mead, “in pure Compassion to their Circumstances, paid, and so ransomed them from out of the Bayliffs Hands.”¹²¹ Compassion also likely explains why signatory Sarah Batt, “a Widow aged seventy three,” was released from gaol shortly after she was imprisoned for tithe refusal in 1660.¹²² Another woman, Lucie Travers, may have been a widow when she signed the petition in 1659, but in any case two years later she had goods distrained for nonattendance at the local church.¹²³ Her last appearance in Quaker records reported:

Lucy Traverse, an ancient Widow, who being for some Time at her Daughter’s House in Queen’s Camel, was prosecuted for a Demand of 2d. for Easter- Offerings by one Kitley, Priest of the Parish, and cast into Prison, where she died a Prisoner on the 25th of the Month called March 1674, yielding up her Life in a free and faithful Testimony against the Antichristian Yoke of such superstitious Impositions.¹²⁴

For Quakers, these payments to ministers at Easter were another obligatory form of financial support to local parishes,¹²⁵ and Traverse took her opposition to them to the grave.

Table 2: Persecuted Female Quakers and Their Relatives—Somersetshire 1659 Signatrees

PERSECUTED BEHAVIORS

	Refusing to Pay Tithes		Disrupting Sermons & Challenging		Refusing to Swear Oaths	
	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING
RELATIVES	*Moore, Mary (L) 1651 H (L) 1653 FH (I) 1657 FH *Gundry, Anne (B,I) 1657 H *Batt, Edith (I) 1657 H Sargent, Sarah (I) 1657-8 H *Loscombe, Jone, (I) 1658 H (I) 1659 H Sargent, Sarah (I) 1658 Witney, Alice (F) 1658 Witney, Kather.(F) 1658	Roman, Emm (I) 1659 H Addans, Mary (I) 1660 H *Batt, Edith (I) 1660 H (I) 1669 H *Gundry, Anne (I) 1660 H(D) 1666 H (I) 1666 H (I) 1682 H *Gundry, Mary (I) 1660 H *Pittard, Rose (I) 1661(?) H (D) 1662 H (I) 1669 H Pitman, Jone (D) 1666 FH Travers, Lucie (F) 1674 (D) 1681 *Moore, Mary (D) 1681 H *Gundry, Lydia & Moore, Mary (D) 1683 H (D) 1683 H Parsons, Tomisin (D) 1685 FH (D) 1686-90 FH	Scott, Dorothy (S) 1658 H		*Batt, Edith (F) 1657 H	Doggett, Ellinor (I) 1661 H * Pittard, Rose (I) 1661(?) H (D) 1663 H * Gundry, Lydia & Moore, Mary (I) 1683 H *Parsons, Tomisin ² (I) 1683 FH (P) 1684 FH (I) 1684-86(?) FH
SELVES		*Brock, Anne (I) 1659 Barrat, Agness (I) 1659-60 Batt, Sarah (I) 1660 Thacher, Mary (I) 1660 *Chessicke, Alice (D) 1661 Tylor, Mary (D) 1666 Gundry, Anne (D) 1683 (D) 1686-90	*Hasell, Mary (I) 1657-58 *Tucker, Elizabeth (B,I) 1657-58 *Giles, Jone (I,F) 1658			* Loscombe, Jone (I,F) 1674

PERSECUTED BEHAVIORS *(continued)*

	Attending Quaker Meetings		Church Non-Attendance		Holding Quaker Membership		Visiting Imprisoned Quakers	
	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING	PRE-SIGNING	POST-SIGNING
RELATIVES	*Pittard, Rose (D) 1657 FH	Giles, Jane• (I) 1662 H *Leveret•, Susan (I) 1662 FH King, Anne• (I) 1663 H Rocke•, Luce (I) 1663 H *Moore•, Mary (D) 1670 (a) H (D) 1670 (b) H *Pittard, Rose (D) 1670 H Gundry, Anne (F) 1678 H *Parsons, Tomisin ² (F) 1678 FH (I) 1683 FH (I) 1683 FH (D) 1683 FH *Gundry, Lydia & Moore•, Mary (I) 1683 B		Shepard•, Elizabeth (I) 1661–62 F *Moore•, Mary (E) 1663 H Beaton, Anne ³ (I) 1680–81 H	*Leveret•, Susan (B) 1658 FH *Bacon, Jane• ⁴ (I) 1657 (I) 1657		*Bacon, Jane• ⁴ (I) 1657 H (I) 1657 H	
		Giles, Jane• (I) 1662 *Tucker, Eliz. (I) 1662 Weeb•, Mary (I) 1662 Wethyman•, Eliz. (I) 1662 Vison•, Alice (I) 1662 Rocke•, Luce (I) 1663 *Langdon, Mary Junior• (D) 1667, (D) 1670 Corpe, Edeth• (F) 1670 *Higdon•, Debora (I) 1663 *Pittard, Rose (D) 1670 Roman, Emm, (D) 1670 Swetman•, Anne (D) 1670 Swetman•, Anne Jr. (D) 1670 Swetman•, Elizabeth (D) 1670 Giles, Mary (I) 1675 King, Anne• (I,F) 1684–85		Ley•, Margaret (D) 1661 *Cheesicke•, Alice (F) 1662 *Higdon•, Debora (F) 1662 Nicholas, Anne (I) 1663 *Langdon, Mary Junior• (D) 1667			Murford, Jane (b) 1658	
SELVES								

KEY:

*—multiple persecutions •—spelling discrepancy (B)—Beaten, (D)—Distrain, (E)—Excommunicated from established church, (F)—Fines, (I)—Imprisoned, (L)—Legal Action, (P)—Praelmured, (S)—Stocks

B—brother, F—father, FH—future husband, H—husband

¹ Her specific offence involved refusal to give Easter offerings

² One year after the death of his wife, Edith Batt, in 1669, Jasper Batt married Tomisin Parsons

³ Refused Communion

⁴ Refused Hat Honour

N.B. Because of multiple persecutions, the total number of incidents—76, involving 17 future husbands and husbands, and 23 signatrees.

A few other details emerge about some of the other Quaker women whose names appear on the Somerset petition. One signatory, Susan Leveret[t], would marry Quaker John Slade in 1669, and he had “been grievously abused” (presumably beaten) because of his Quakerism while traveling in 1658 and sent to prison for attending a Quaker meeting in 1662.¹²⁶ Another signatory, Emm [Emma?] Roman, had not been a Quaker in the mid 1650s, since she and her husband, John, baptised their daughter in 1655, a year after they buried a son, James.¹²⁷ Subsequent Quaker records give conflicting information about whether John ever joined the movement, but at the very least he was sympathetic to their efforts. In 1659, for example, a Quaker sufferings account reported that a minister got him imprisoned on the 17th day of 9th month (November 17), presumably for tithe resistance.¹²⁸ Much

later, in 1670, Emm suffered a substantial fine for attending Quaker meetings, and her husband paid it. A note in these records stated that John Roman was not a Quaker although he allowed members of the group to meet at his house.¹²⁹ A third signatory, Ellinor [Eleanor] Dogget[t] (d. 1669), suffered imprisonment (apparently for refusal to swear) in 1661.¹³⁰ Likewise, signatory Mary Giles suffered imprisonment with seven other Quakers (three of them women) for attending a meeting for worship in 1675, and married another Friend two years later.¹³¹ Within months of the petition's delivery to Parliament, Jone [Joan] Cole and husband, John (of Shapwick, not the 'John Cole' from Farrington) became parents to a baby girl, and John was a trusted figure in the Quakers' Street Meeting by 1668 (along with Jasper Batt, Henry Gundry, and Abraham Gundry).¹³²

Also giving birth shortly after Parliament received the petition was signatory Anne King (d. 1706).¹³³ She and her husband Thomas, (of Crewkerne, d. 1707),¹³⁴ became the parents of a baby girl, also named Anne, on November 25, 1659, adding to their existing family of two boys—William (b. 1651) and Thomas (b. 1657).¹³⁵ Quaker persecution records show that two or three soldiers gave evidence that Thomas had attended a Quaker meeting in late November, 1663, which led to his imprisonment.¹³⁶ In June 1684, Anne was imprisoned for attending a Quaker meeting, and then fined for the same offense.¹³⁷ It appears that her imprisonment continued for some eight months, when Quaker records from the period of mid-March 1684/5 describe her as “a poor sick, weak, aged Woman; her Husband an aged, weak, poor Man, having little or nothing but his Labour to maintain them.”¹³⁸ As aged, weak, and poor as they were in 1684/5, both Anne and Thomas survived into the first decade of the next century.

Conclusion

These individual stories about the anti-tithe activities of the Quaker signatories and their families offer compelling proof about the divisiveness that obligatory tithes caused in Somerset communities. People's opposition to tithes and the state-supported ministry stretched over decades, usually costing them distrained goods, frequently costing them freedom, and sometimes costing them their lives. The records from this period are uneven, but they still manage to report on dozens of people who committed hundreds of brave (if not foolish) acts of resistance and defiance. Because of prohibitions against marrying “one of the World,”¹³⁹ it is not surprising that Quakers married other Friends, and that networks of family connections wove people together. Likewise, Quakers suffered together, with many persecutions occurring to groups of Friends at the same time (such as those persons punished for attending meetings at various periods during the

Restoration). All these factors aside, the surviving records allow us to determine that only about half of the signatories (49%) appear to have had any active involvement with Quakerism, either before or after the 1659 petition. Simply put, slightly over half of the names (51%) neither appear in extant Quaker records, nor have surnames that appear. One must consider the possibility, therefore, that many of the signatories agreed with the Quakers’ efforts to get tithes abolished but were not directly involved with the group. Nor did they necessarily have close relatives who were Quakers, since their surnames seem absent from Quaker records.

The finding that (according to available documents) slightly less than half of the Somerset signatories appear to have been Quakers during some period of their lives is in line with findings from similar research conducted on the signatories from Lincolnshire and Cheshire. Of the 180 Lincolnshire signatories, 52% had names that possibly, probably, or certainly appeared in Quaker records. The figure was lower in Cheshire (at only 35% of 449 names), but, taken together, one finding is clear: large percentages of signatories do not appear to have been Quakers.¹⁴⁰ Presumably, therefore, they were anti-tithe sympathizers from other denominations or sects, or (at the very least) friends and neighbors of the Quakers themselves. If in fact the organizers of the petitions wanted to show the extent that popular opposition existed to tithes, then securing as many signatures as possible, rather than limiting signatures to women of a particular religious group, would have made the most sense.

In other circumstances, we know that Friends and non-Friends worked together in activities related to tithe opposition. Evidence from various parts of the country during the 1650s and into the Restoration shows that “Quakers and other inhabitants sometimes colluded to frustrate a minister’s efforts to gather tithes.”¹⁴¹ Consequently, it should not be surprising that many non-Quakers would have supported a Quaker-coordinated anti-tithe petition in Somerset and elsewhere. In Essex, for example, during the 1650s:

Friends and other villagers at Hadstock removed the book detailing tithe payments, thus disabling the rector, Thomas Watkins, from claiming his dues.... In 1675 the Quaker Samuel Parminster was ringleader of a group of villagers who refused to pay tithes at Belchamp Otten.¹⁴²

Likewise, taking the long view of the late seventeenth century, Alan B. Anderson concluded, “in many and in some areas most cases, neighbors rallied in support and offered assistance in protecting at least some of the Quakers’ property against the actions of informants and constables.”¹⁴³ As happened in Somerset, this phenomenon also occurred in Lancashire, where

some Friends encountered the awkward situation where their “tenth was paid for them by relatives or friends and neighbors.”¹⁴⁴ Many of the neighbors and relatives who were willing to assist Quakers who were suffering because of their testimony against tithes surely also would have been willing to sign a petition expressing their opposition to the obligation.

If my conclusion is correct about a large number of signatories not being Quakers, then we can adjust statements that prominent historians have made about the religious affiliation of the petition’s signatories. For example, Margaret Fell’s biographer, Isabel Ross, stated that the petition bore “the signatures of 7,000 women Friends,”¹⁴⁵ and a more recent biographer wrote that “Margaret and her daughters also headed the petition to Parliament that seven thousand Quaker women signed in July 1659 against the hated tithe.”¹⁴⁶ In the same vein, Barry Reay mentioned the “seven thousand Quaker women from all over the nation” who signed the “Hand-maids” petition.¹⁴⁷ It seems likely, however, that these comments overstate the number of signatories who in fact were Quakers, even though Quaker women may have been the sole signatories in some areas. For example, the single phrase that introduced the Nottingham petition presented “The names of Women Friends, who bears Testimony against the oppression of Tithes.”¹⁴⁸ It sounds as if all the people who signed it were Quakers, but future research will have to bear this out. More ambiguous was the phrase that introduced the petition from another part of the country: “Women, Friends that have given their Testimony against the oppression of Tithes into the North part of LANCASHIRE.”¹⁴⁹ Everything rides on the placement of the comma, but punctuation was erratic in this period. Nevertheless, the brief introduction from another area omitted mention of Quakers entirely: “These are the names of the Women, who are witnesses against the oppression of Tithes, taken at Northampton.”¹⁵⁰ Depending upon the quality of extant Quaker records from these districts, researchers may be able to determine the affiliations of these women much as I have attempted to do for Somerset.

While Somerset residents adhered to different religious denominations during the late 1650s, there nevertheless were neighbors, often friends, and sometimes relatives with the Quakers who lived among them. Even if they were more likely than Quakers to pay their obligatory tithes, certainly many of them resented having to do so. Consequently, the “Hand-maids” petition of 1659 provided an opportunity for Quaker women and their female neighbors to register their objections to the practice, just as others did from shires across the country. Quaker families often carried out their opposition to tithes in ways that got them fined or imprisoned, and when punishments befell them, they sometimes received sympathy and direct

assistance of others whose resistance was not so strident. It seems highly likely that many of the Somerset women whose names appear on the petition sympathized with the Quakers’ anti-tithe efforts but did not identify themselves as Friends.

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Appendix A: The Relationship Between Somersetshire's 1659 signatories and Quakerism

(Names [totalling 295] taken from Anonymous, 1659: 44-46.)

a: Surnames and Names (3) that Possibly Appear in Pre-Signing Quaker Records: Andrews, Frances; Key, Elizabeth; Wastfild, Mabell

b: Names (3) that Probably Appear in Pre-Signing Quaker Records: Jones, Agnis; King, Anne; Parsons, Dorothy

c: Names (40) that Certainly Appear in Pre-Signing Quaker Records and 1659 Records Without a Specified Month: Allen, Jone; Allen, Jone; Bacon, Jone; Batt, Edith; Beare, Alice; Beaton, Anne; Blenman, Hannah; Bryan, Jone; Clothier, Gartery; Daniell, Judeth; Davis, Eliz.; Day, Elizabeth; Fevor, Dorothy; Giles, Grace; Giles, Jone; Gundry, Anne; Hasell, Mary; Hill, Anne; Hill, Charity; Hopkins, Jone; Jobbins, Rachel; Jones, Anne; Jones, Mary; Loscome, Jone; Lyde, Mary; Metford, Jone; Moore, Mary; Murford, Jane; Pearce, Jone; Pinker, Jane; Pittard, Rose; Rocke, Luce; Roman, Emm; Sargant, Sarah; Scot, Dorothy; Stevens, Mary; Stroad, Sibbil; Tucker, Eliz.; Winsor, Mary; Withey, Alice

d: Surnames and Names (9) that Possibly Appear in Post-Signing Quaker Records: Budd, Susan; Bull, Jone; Janes, Sarah; Mapson, Mary; Mores, Elizabeth; Pitman, Jone; Poope, Elizabeth; Rodgers, Jone; Walliss, Mary

- e: Names (46) that Probably Appear in Post-Signing Quaker Records: Addans, Mary; Atkins, Eliz.; Barnes, Susanna; Batson, Eliz.; Bennat, Alice; Brock, Ruth; Browning, Jone; Browning, Mary; Bryan, Mary; Chilton, Anne; Chivers, Dorothy; Coggen, Mary; Collins, Alice; Collins, Anne; Cook, Jone; Cowling, Rebecca; Daniell, Eliz.; Day, Agnis; Downe, Margaret; Hart, Anne; Hart, Elizabeth; Humphry, Elizabeth; Hurford, Mary; Hutchens, Jone; Langdon, Mary; Lock, Anne; Mabson, Joyce; Marshall, Anne; Marten, Sarah; Masters, Elizabeth; Nash, Bridget; Porch, Hannah; Sampson, Elizabeth; Short, Waborogh; Skidmore, Alice; Smith, Jane; Stacy, Eliz.; Stroad, Esbell; Sturedge, Elizabeth; Swetman, Anne; Taylor, Mary; Thecher, Anne; Turner, Alice; Waters, Dorothy; Wats, Elizabeth; Wornell, Mary
- f: Names (43) That Certainly Appear in Post-Signing Quaker Records: Allin, Precilla; Barrat, Agness; Batt, Sarah; Baugh, Margaret; Beaton, Grace; Brock, Anne; Chessicke, Alice; Cole, Jone; Corpe, Edeth; Day, Jone; Dogget, Ellinor; Feare, Giles, Mary; Anne; Goodson, Sarah; Gundry, Lydia; Gundry, Margaret; Gundry, Mary; Higdon, Debora; Lambert, Anne; Lambert, Mary; Leveret, Frances; Leveret, Susan; Lewes, Anne; Ley, Margaret; Lock, Elizabeth; Longe, Mary; Lotsham, Jone; Mabson, Jone; Nicholas, Anne; Oldaies, Elizabeth; Parsons, Tomisin; Pavior, Jone; Piper, Mary; Sampson, Anne; Shephard, Elizabeth; Starr, Mary; Swetman, Elizabeth; Thacher, Mary; Travers, Lucie; Tylor, Mary; Warden, Martha; Weeb, Mary; Wethyman, Eliz.
- g: Surnames and Names (4) That Possibly Do Not Appear in Quaker Records: Collins, Hanna; Doggett, Jone; Swetman, Anne jun.; White, Mary
- h: Surnames and Names (42) that Probably Do Not Appear in Quaker Records: Addams, Elizabeth; Addams, Frances; Batson, Frances; Bennet, Agnes; Browning, Elizabeth; Browning, Margaret; Coggen, Julian; Cowling, Joice; Daniell, Ellinor; Daniell, Jone; Downe, Mary; Giles, Anne; Hutchens, Jane; Jacob, Margaret; Jones, Susannah; King, Sarah; Lock, Anne jun.; Lockier, Frances; Moore, Dorothy; Munden, Elizabeth; Nash, Abigail; Nash, Anne; Pearce, Sarah; Pearce, Susannah; Phillips, Rachell; Pittard, Anne; Pittard, Philip; Poope, Susannah; Shephard, Julian; Starr, Sarah; Thecher, Elizabeth; Thecher, Jone; Tylor, Agnis; Tylor, Anna; Vinson, Alice; Waterman, Christian; Wats, Jone; Wilmington, Alice; Wilmington, Jone; Wilmington, Mary; Winsor, Winifred; Withey, Kather.
- i: Surnames and Names (105) that Do Not Appear in Quaker Records: Bayle, Jane; Bennet, Thomaze; Bicknell, Dorothy; Biggs, Elinor; Bishop, Bridget; Bishop, Frances; Board, Anne; Board, Hanna; Board, Mary; Boulter, Margaret; Boulter, Sarah; Brook, Dorothy; Candell, Anne; Cannons, Mary; Clace, Dorothy; Clement, Susanna; Coburne, Anne; Cook, Alice; Cook, Mary; Cosens, Mary; Creese, Mary; Dean, Ellinor; Douting, Jone; Emsbury, Mary; Estmont, Frances; Evins, Elizabeth; Frances, Christian; Frances, Jone; Gane, Ales; Gane, Ellinor; Gane, Garteret; Gapper, Precilla; George, Hester; Gibbs, Martha; Gibbs, Rebeckah; Gillet, Anne; Goslet, Susannah; Gottell, Anne; Greene, Sara; Guire, Hanna; Hall, Elice; Hart, Jone; Hart, Jone; Hart, Maudlen; Hicks, Mary; Hide, Mary; Hide, Mary jun.; Hillier, Agness; Hiscox, Alice; Hodges, Elizabeth; Horwood, Mary; Huchens, Anne; Huchens, Edeth; Huchens, Agath; Kelloway, Ursula; Lace, Christian; Landsdon, Susannah; Lang, Mary;

Lediat, Sarah; Long, Hester; Lusbury, Mary; Mallet, Elizabeth; Martyn, Abigal; Mawsell, Jone; Melles, Anne; Milkens, Eliz.; Minchen, Anne; Morle, Jane; Morley, Sarah; Olice, Jone; Oram, Alice; Pidle, Grace; Pille, Margaret; Pinkerd, Mary; Pitts, Mary; Plumly, Ustul; Pomury, Ellinor; Pranket, Ellinor; Preston, Anne; Price, Elizabeth; Quantick, Alice; Radford, Margery; Reede, Sarah; Rowlings, Precilla; Rucke, Anne; Sage, Agnis; Sage, Amee; Salsbury, Jone; Samborne, Mary; Savage, Hanna; Scrine, Rebecca; Selwood, Abigal; Small, Jane; Stage, Avis; Stent, Jone; Stockman, Elizabeth; Veal, Elizabeth; Warfield, Susan; Wickham, Elizabeth; Willet, Margaret; Wilmote, Anne; Wilmunton, Bazell; Wilmunton, Mary; Winsor, Jone; Wottis, Judeth

Notes

¹ See Braithwaite, 1955: 458. The eight page text of the Quaker petition (dated June 27, 1659) whose signatories have not survived is *The Copie of a Paper presented to the Parliament. [Against Tithes.]* Printed by A. W. For Giles Calvert (Thomason/147:E.988 [24]). Its title page indicated that more than 15,000 people signed it.

² Mary Westwood published it in London in 1659 (Wing/F1605; also listed in Smith 2, 1867: 260). Doubt exists, however, about whether anyone ever presented it to Parliament. Historian of the Restoration, Ronald Hutton, commented that tithe-abolition “was the sole object of two great petitions to Parliament, one delivered on 14 June and the other on the 27th. The first was collected in the western counties, the second was general. The process by which they were raised is obscure, though Quakers raised many signatures for the second by touring the north-western counties on horseback. A third petition, produced but not presented in July, was signed by 7,000 Quaker women” (Hutton, 1985: 47).

³ My appreciation goes to Sheila Turcon for her assistance with research in the Somerset Records Office, to Malcolm Thomas and Joanna Clark for their assistance with materials at the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London, and to Susan J. Hutton, Ken Hutton, Paul Joosse, Jessie Meikle, Julie Neilson, and Susan Raine for their careful assistance with data tabulation, presentation, and proof-reading. I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Isaac Walton Killam Fellowship at the University of Alberta, which provided me with the travel money necessary for the British research.

⁴ These records are housed in Friends House Library.

⁵ Two sufferings books are housed in the Somerset Records Office, and accounts of Somerset sufferings exist in Besse, 1753: 577-649.

⁶ Morland (ed.), 1978.

⁷ Penny (ed.), 1907: 211-228.

⁸ The concept of Quaker ‘membership’ still was forming in the late 1650s and early 1660s, with one of its early mentions appearing in The Yearly Meeting epistle of 1659: “every member may act in his own freedom” (quoted in Vann, 1969: 125). Richard T. Vann suggested that the establishment of business meetings

were major steps in the process of defining membership, and before those steps such things as having withdrawn from the established church, allowing one's vital records to be recorded with other dissenters outside of the state recording apparatus, and endogenous marriage were degrees of self-definition (Vann, 1969: 126-127). Indeed, Somersetshire records from 1659 indicate that Friends already were using these actions as indicators of mutual association, mediated through local meetings of like-minded individuals (Morland [ed.] 1978: 51-54). Certainly, too, plain dress, plain speech, and tithe opposition itself would have been additional indicators of what became Quaker membership, although the role of tithe refusal as an obligation of Interregnum Quaker identity is far from clear. Writing about the situation in Lancashire, Nicolas Morgan concluded, “the denial of tithes was used by Friends as a badge of membership” (Morgan, 1993: 187). Speaking more broadly, however, about the situation throughout England, he stated, “Early Friends had found a shared social concern in their objection to the tithing system, but there is little evidence to suggest that before the Restoration Friends’ testimony automatically extended as far as refusing to pay tithes” (Morgan, 1993: 219). Consequently, I am not assuming that everyone (including Quakers) who signed the 1659 women’s petitions actually refused to pay tithes, however much they may have opposed them. In the specific context of this study about Somerset, for the most part I am using records that the Quakers themselves produced during the Interregnum and Restoration periods, so they already made decisions about who they were (i.e., who their ‘members’ were) by including people in their own documents. In a different part of the country, for example, “Southwark Friends intended that they record only the names of those whose behavior was consistent with the high standard of Quaker conduct,” (Vann and Eversley, 1992: 17). I assume that the same intention held true for Somerset Friends.

⁹ Higgins, 1973: 201.

¹⁰ Mary Forster, in Anonymous, 1659: [i].

¹¹ Higgins, 1973: 210.

¹² Anderson and Zinsser, 1988: 234.

¹³ Mack, 1982: 25-26.

¹⁴ Bell, 1988.

¹⁵ Bell, 1988: 22.

¹⁶ Bell, 1988: 6.

¹⁷ Bell, 1988: 30. Actually, prior to Nayler’s Christ-like ride into Bristol on October 24, 1656, a number of issues wore away at Friends in London, only one of which involved issues of women speaking in meetings. Related ones involved women’s “demand of their own freedom ‘in the Spirit’ to proclaim, and of their prophetic authority to test and censure their respected co-religionists” (Trevett, 2000: 159; see Kegl, 1994: 54-61; Trevett, 1990). Likewise, a leadership struggle within Quakerism likely was occurring between George Fox and Nayler at a time when Nayler’s mental health was unstable. For a discussion of these issues, along with an analysis of the actions of Nayler’s female and (often overlooked) male supporters, see Trevett, 2000: 168.

- ¹⁸ Bell, 1988: 32.
- ¹⁹ Bell, 1988: 31; Anonymous, 1659: 55. On Sarah Blackborrow and Nayler, see Damrosch, 1996: 298 n. 35. On Blackborrow's work on the establishment of women's meeting for the poor, see Braithwaite, 1955: 341; and on her establishment of a Quaker meeting in London at Hammersmith, see Braithwaite, 1955: 376.
- ²⁰ In the petition itself (Anonymous, 1659: 55), Rebecca's last name appears as "Trevise," but Bell apparently believes that they are the same person. Worth mentioning is that James Nayler stayed in the London house of Rebecca and William Travers after his release from Bridewell prison in Autumn 1659 (Trevett, 2000: 139). "Rebecca Travers" also signed a broadside written by Ann Whitehead "For the King and Both Houses of Parliament" in about 1670 (Smith II, 1867: 908), and "Rebecca Travers" and "Mary Forster" (author of the preface to '7,000 Signatories') wrote testimonies to Ann Whitehead (née Downer) upon her death in 1686 (Smith II, 1867: 909). Downer had been an early Quaker convert and itinerant preacher from London (see Penney [ed.], 1905: 204-205 and n.3). I thank Geoffrey Nuttall for putting me on the trail of these facts in 1984. On Rebecca Travers and Nayler see Damrosch, 1996: 74-75, 84-85, 222.
- ²¹ I assume that 'Doras [sic] Erbery' (Anonymous, 1659: 57) represents an alternative (and for the era, typical) spelling and print-setting mistake. On Nayler and Dorcas Erbery (Erbury) see: Crawford, 1993: 166-180; Damrosch, 1996: 156-157, 163, 173-174, 188-189, 223; Trevett, 2000: 121-149.
- ²² Bell, 1988: 31; see Anonymous, 1659: 58 (assuming that 'Martha Simonds' simply is an alternative spelling of her name). On Martha Simmonds and Nayler see Damrosch 1996: 117-118, 126-135, 138-139; 144-149, 174-175, 223, etc.; Trevett, 2000: 133-140, 159-168.
- ²³ Bell, 1988: 31. As an interesting aside, another signatory of the petition from London was Mary Sanders, who was the maid of Oliver Cromwell's wife (Anonymous, 1659: 55; Brailsford, 1915: 269.
- ²⁴ For a discussion of the tithe issue during the 1650s, including a section specifically on Quakers, see Brace, 1998: 30-43.
- ²⁵ Bell, 1988: 13.
- ²⁶ Anonymous, 1659: 41.
- ²⁷ Also worth noting is that one Yorkshire Quaker, Grace Barwick, subsequently issued her own anti-tithe tract to Parliament and sympathetic army officers a few months after signing the 1659 petition. See Bell, 1988: 26; Anonymous 1659: 28.
- ²⁸ Moore, 2000: 169-170; see Reay 1978.
- ²⁹ *Early Record Book at Kendal*, quoted in Braithwaite, 1955: 458.
- ³⁰ *Early Record Book at Kendal*, quoted in Braithwaite, 1955: 458.
- ³¹ Braithwaite, 1955: 458.
- ³² Anonymous, 1659: 47.
- ³³ Penney in Fox I, 1911: 468 n. for p. 385.

- ³⁴ Ludlow, 1985: 105. See also Speizman and Kronick (1975) who said that shortly after Quakers submitted the petition with 15,000 signatures, “Quaker women submitted a supplementary petition in which they apologized for their temerity, as such ‘foolish things’ and ‘weak things,’ in addressing the ‘mighty’ and ‘wise.’”
- ³⁵ The strident passages are what caught the eye of Davies, 1998: 91-94. On an interpretation of the resentment that Quakers felt, see Kent, 1990: 146-149.
- ³⁶ Anonymous, 1659: 62.
- ³⁷ Anonymous, 1659: 65.
- ³⁸ Anonymous, 1659: 44. A general discussion of the arguments that Quakers used against tithes appears in Reay, 1980: 105-110.
- ³⁹ Penney (ed), 1907: 222.
- ⁴⁰ Underdown, 1973: 186-188.
- ⁴¹ Underdown, 1973: 187.
- ⁴² Morland (ed.), 1978: 6.
- ⁴³ Jewers, 1898: 18, 19, 20, 21.
- ⁴⁴ Morland (ed.), 1978: 58, see 263.
- ⁴⁵ Somersetshire Quaker Sources, DD/SFR/ 8/1 [page 1^v], refers to Batt’s arrest while Besse, 1753: 577 refers to the tithes distraint that Batt suffered. I am assuming that these two incidents are the same, but the possibility exists that I am mistaken.
- ⁴⁶ Besse, 1753: 582; Underdown, 1973: 186-187.
- ⁴⁷ Besse, 1753: 586; Anonymous, 1659: 45.
- ⁴⁸ Besse, 1753: 599; *Friends’ House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Burials...*, Book 1527, Page 17.
- ⁴⁹ Morland (ed.), 1978: 280; *Friends’ House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of the Registers of Marriages...*, Book 143, Page 19.
- ⁵⁰ Besse, 1753: 616 (for the year 1681); 646 (for the year 1685); see 649 (for the years 1686 to 1690). I cannot determine why he was in Ilchester prison in 1663 (Besse, 1753: 595).
- ⁵¹ Besse, 1753: 631 (goods confiscated in early November 1683 for attending a meeting in July 1683); 626 (for meeting attendance on August 12, 1683); and 630 (for meeting-attendance on November 11, 1683).
- ⁵² Besse, 1753: 634 (in 1683); 636, 641 (both in 1684); and 647 (which reproduces a 1686 Quaker plea to judges and government officials which indicated that Batt’s refusal to swear had landed him in prison for two years, four months, and nineteen days).
- ⁵³ Quoted in Besse, 1753: 631.
- ⁵⁴ Reay, 1980: 101; Besse, 1753: 586.
- ⁵⁵ Morland (ed.), 1978: 264, 59.

- ⁵⁶ Besse, 1753: 618.
- ⁵⁷ Besse, 1753: 577.
- ⁵⁸ Besse, 1753: 586.
- ⁵⁹ Besse, 1753: 594-595.
- ⁶⁰ Besse, 1753: 597.
- ⁶¹ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Registers of Births...*, Book 143, Page 83 and Book 138, Page 7; *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Births* . . . , Book 1527 Page 7.
- ⁶² Besse, 1753: 597, 598.
- ⁶³ Besse, 1753: 614.
- ⁶⁴ Besse, 1753: 622.
- ⁶⁵ Besse, 1753: 635; Morland (ed.), 1978: 273.
- ⁶⁶ Besse, 1753: 649.
- ⁶⁷ For an older list of Quakers who had fought in the Civil War, see Hirst, 1923: 527-529.
- ⁶⁸ As Sewel (II, 1725: 402), reported: "Once, being taken up at a meeting in Glastonbury, and brought before bishop Mew, at Wells, who called him a rebel, for meeting contrary to the king's laws, Christopher having formerly been a soldier for the king, said to him, 'Dost thou call me rebel? I would have thee to know, that I have ventured my life for the king in the field, when such as thou lay behind hedges.' By this he stopped the bishop's mouth, who did not expect such an answer, and therefore was willing to be rid of him."
- ⁶⁹ Morland (ed.), 1978: 6, 58, 263, and 45 (for a brief biographical note).
- ⁷⁰ Sewel II, 1725: 402.
- ⁷¹ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Births* . . . , Book 1527 Page 28.
- ⁷² Besse, 1753: 582. On Quakers and quarter sessions courts, see Horle, 1988: 30-32.
- ⁷³ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Births* . . . , Book 1527 Page 28.
- ⁷⁴ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Registers of Births* . . . , Book 142 Page 101.
- ⁷⁵ Besse, 1753: 589.
- ⁷⁶ Besse, 1753: 613.
- ⁷⁷ Reay, 1980: 102; *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Registers of Births* . . . , Book 131 Page 4: 'Pearce, Jeremiah.'
- ⁷⁸ Besse, 1753: 582.
- ⁷⁹ DD/SFR 8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*. S.R.O. (page 3^v); see Reay, 1978: 197; Braithwaite, 1955: 453.

- ⁸⁰ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Registers of Births*. . . , Book 143 Page 107.
- ⁸¹ DD/SFR 8/2 Somerset Sufferings Book 1659-1695, S.R.O., p. 102.
- ⁸² *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Registers of Births*. . . , Book 143 Page 107.
- ⁸³ Besse, 1753: 583.
- ⁸⁴ Morland (ed.) 1978: 273.
- ⁸⁵ Morland (ed.) 1978: 61.
- ⁸⁶ Besse, 1753: 586.
- ⁸⁷ Besse, 1753: 635 (for tithes-distrain in 1683); 628 (jailed for attending a Quaker meeting and refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance [on August 29, 1683]); 646 (for distrain over tithes-refusal in 1685); and see 649.
- ⁸⁸ Jewers, 1898: 12, which gives the date of her christening as December 1, 1639. To confuse matters, it seems like her parents' names were Abraham and Mary Gundry, which were also names of their children.
- ⁸⁹ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of the Registers of Marriages*. . . , Book 143, Page 1 and Book 138 Page 3.
- ⁹⁰ Besse, 1753: 597.
- ⁹¹ Anonymous, 1659: 45.
- ⁹² Morland (ed.), 1978: 273.
- ⁹³ Anonymous, 1659: 45.
- ⁹⁴ Reay, 1980: 101.
- ⁹⁵ S.R.O. DD/SFR 10/2/39, “First Publishers and Receivers of Truth,” reproduced in Morland (ed.), 1978: 59, see 61 (“H. Moor”).
- ⁹⁶ Besse, 1753: 578.
- ⁹⁷ Besse, 1753: 594.
- ⁹⁸ Besse, 1659: 597.
- ⁹⁹ Besse, 1753: 601, 606.
- ¹⁰⁰ Besse, 1753: 601, 619.
- ¹⁰¹ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Births*. . . , Book 1527, Page 7.
- ¹⁰² Morland (ed.), 1978: 267.
- ¹⁰³ Besse, 1753: 582.
- ¹⁰⁴ Besse, 1753: 587.
- ¹⁰⁵ Besse, 1753: 589. In reaction to the Fifth Monarchist uprising in January 1660/61, the Restoration government prohibited “meetings of Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, and others except in parochial churches or private houses. Meetings elsewhere would be considered unlawful assemblies, and those

attending them were to be bound over to good behavior and to appear at quarter sessions to be tendered the Oath of Allegiance” (Horle, 1988: 68).

¹⁰⁶ Besse, 1753: 590, 593.

¹⁰⁷ Morland (ed.), 1978: 83.

¹⁰⁸ Morland (ed.), 1978: 83.

¹⁰⁹ Morland (ed.), 1978: 83. On John Perrot and the hat controversy, see Carroll, 1970; Braithwaite, 1961: 233-242.

¹¹⁰ Besse, 1753: 600.

¹¹¹ Besse, 1753: 608.

¹¹² Morland (ed.), 1978: 151.

¹¹³ Reay, 1980: 101; Morland (ed.), 1978: 99.

¹¹⁴ Besse, 1753: 589.

¹¹⁵ DD/SFR/8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*. S.R.O. (page 19^{r-v}) gives the following incident as “2 day 2 Mo 1657,” which in modern terms is April 2, 1657. Besse used this collection as a source for his large sufferings collection, yet in it (Besse I, 1753: 583) he gives the year as having been “1658.” I cannot explain the discrepancy. I am unclear whether Besse himself used the Julian or Gregorian Calendar in his dating, since the Act of 24 George II that instituted the Gregorian system in Britain and the Commonwealth only went into effect in 1752. Friends, however, since the preceding year had been advised to follow the Gregorian Calendar (Penney in the introduction to Fox I, 1694: xli-xlii).

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, 1659: 46. Worth noting is the calculation by historian Barry Reay (1984: 145) that “[o]f well over 300 Quakers in trouble for disrupting ministers during the period 1654 to 1659, 34% were women....” Mack (1992: 424), identified Elizabeth Tucker as among prophets who appeared once or twice between 1650 and 1665, but overlooked that she had signed the 1659 petition.

¹¹⁷ DD/SFR/8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*. S.R.O. (page 35).

¹¹⁸ DD/SFR 8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*. S.R.O. (page 20^v); see Mack, 1992: 423.

¹¹⁹ Besse, 1753: 583-584.

¹²⁰ Besse, 1753: 577-578.

¹²¹ Besse, 1753: 585; DD/SFR 8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*, S.R.O. 5, 14 5^v.

¹²² Besse, 1753: 586.

¹²³ Besse, 1753: 589; DD/SFR 8/1 *Somerset Sufferings Book 1656-1672*, S.R.O. 43^v.

¹²⁴ Besse, 1753: 613.

¹²⁵ A brief discussion of Easter offerings appears in Hill, 1956: 169.

¹²⁶ Morland (ed.), 1978: 277; Besse, 1753: 584, 590.

¹²⁷ Anonymous, 1659: 45; D/P/ pod. m 2/1/1, Register of Puddimore [Podimore] Milton.

- ¹²⁸ DD/SFR 8/2 *Somerset Sufferings Book* 1659-1695, S.R.O., p.1.
- ¹²⁹ Besse, 1753: 607.
- ¹³⁰ Besse, 1753: 588; *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of the Registers of Burials...*, Book 128, Page 214.
- ¹³¹ Anonymous, 1659; Besse, 1753: 611; *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Marriages...*, Book 150, Page 5.
- ¹³² *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of Supplemental Registers of Births...*, Book 1527, Page 7; Morland (ed.) 1978: 57.
- ¹³³ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of the Registers of Burials...*, Book 143, Page 171 (for Ann King of Crewkerne Meeting, wife of Thomas), but also see the entry on the same page which indicates that Anne King of Crewkerne Meeting died in 1701.
- ¹³⁴ Morland (ed.), 1978: 276.
- ¹³⁵ *Friends' House Library*, Somersetshire Sources, *Digested Copy of the Registers of Births...*, Book 143, Page 67.
- ¹³⁶ Besse, 1753: 594.
- ¹³⁷ Besse, 1753: 638, 641.
- ¹³⁸ Besse, 1753: 643, see 644.
- ¹³⁹ Quoted in Morland (ed.) 1978: 27; see 27-29.
- ¹⁴⁰ Kent, 2007.
- ¹⁴¹ Davies, 2000: 32.
- ¹⁴² Davies, 2000: 32.
- ¹⁴³ Andersen, 1977: 258.
- ¹⁴⁴ Morgan, 1993: 224.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ross, 1949: 42.
- ¹⁴⁶ Kunze, 1994: 134.
- ¹⁴⁷ Reay, 1980: 110.
- ¹⁴⁸ Anonymous, 1659: 31.
- ¹⁴⁹ Anonymous, 1659: 8.
- ¹⁵⁰ Anonymous, 1659: 30.