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DISOWNED WITHOUT JUST CAUSE:
QUAKERS IN ROCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, DURING THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Carol Hagglund

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1980

Department of History

Carol Hagglund

1980

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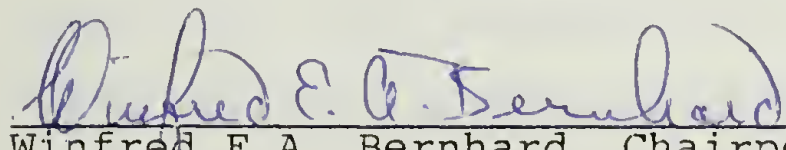
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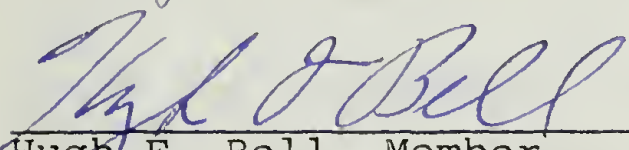
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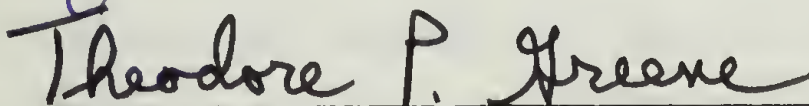
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ABSTRACT

Disowned Without Just Cause: Quakers in Rochester,
Massachusetts, During the Eighteenth Century

February, 1980

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Directed by: Professor Winfred E.A. Bernhard

This study explores the place of the Quakers in Rochester, Massachusetts, during the eighteenth century, analyzing their activities in the context both of the community and of the Society of Friends. Present in Rochester from the earliest days of settlement in the late seventeenth century, these Quakers forged a unique lifestyle based on compromises between the values of the community and the religious teachings of the Friends. During the early eighteenth century, Rochester's Quakers both held powerful positions within the town's political structure and also won from the town exemptions from religious taxation.

During the 1730's and 1740's geographic rivalries between sections of the community led to the creation of the new town of Wareham and of two new precincts with the existing town. Quakers from then on played a less prominent role in town life, but they nevertheless continued to hold lesser town offices which involved performing necessary services for the community. Rochester's population increased

rapidly over the course of the eighteenth century, but the Quaker congregation did not keep pace; the Quaker group remained about the same size--between thirty and forty families--for most of the century.

The Rochester Friends Meeting formed a cohesive group bound together by ties of kinship. Within the evolving organizational structure of the Society, however, they experienced difficulty fulfilling organizational responsibilities until the 1740's. At that time a change in their affiliation from the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting resulted in the Rochester Meeting's achieving institutional maturity and in individual Friends achieving a leadership status within the Monthly Meeting.

A purification movement within the Sandwich Monthly Meeting during the 1750's brought to Rochester an unprecedented emphasis on strictness in following Quaker rules and a new definition of the meaning of membership in the Society. While most Rochester Quakers participated in the Monthly Meeting on its new terms, others were excluded. Those who did not qualify for official "membership" still retained an informal affiliation through tradition and family ties and apparently continued to worship with the Friends.

At the time of the American Revolution, Rochester was a strong and active Quaker Meeting in a community which enthusiastically supported the goals of independence. In 1776, Timothy Davis, Rochester's most prominent Friend, was

disowned from the Society for publishing a pamphlet urging Friends to pay taxes to the Massachusetts revolutionary government, a controversial position within the Friends' organization. Fifty of Davis's followers, most from Rochester, were subsequently disowned for supporting Davis; this group formed their own Meeting outside the official structure of the Society. This split is the culmination of the Rochester Meeting's development of a unique local identity.

Included are two maps of the Rochester area and sixteen tables, some in appendices, which allow analysis of the composition and activities of Rochester's Quaker group. Additional appendices contain transcriptions of Timothy Davis's controversial pamphlet, A Letter from a Friend to Some of His Intimate Friends On the Subject of Paying Taxes, &c. and of a statement by Davis's followers, "A Declaration of the Reasons that Prevailed with Those Friends to Establish Discipline who Have Been of Late Disowned by Their Brethren for Joining in Prayer with Timothy Davis."

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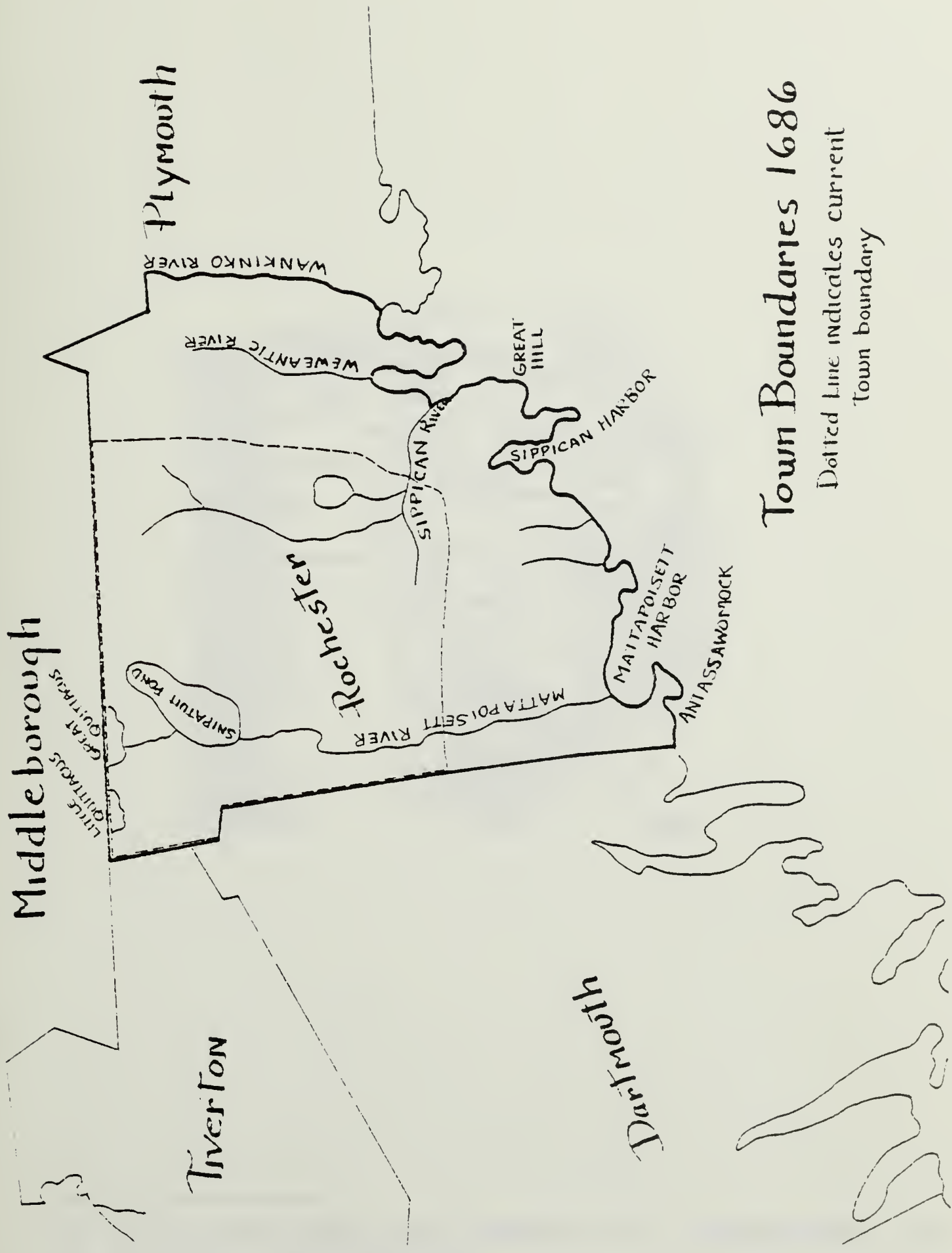
I N T R O D U C T I O N

A DELICATE BALANCE:

ROCHESTER'S COMMUNITY VALUES AND QUAKER STANDARDS

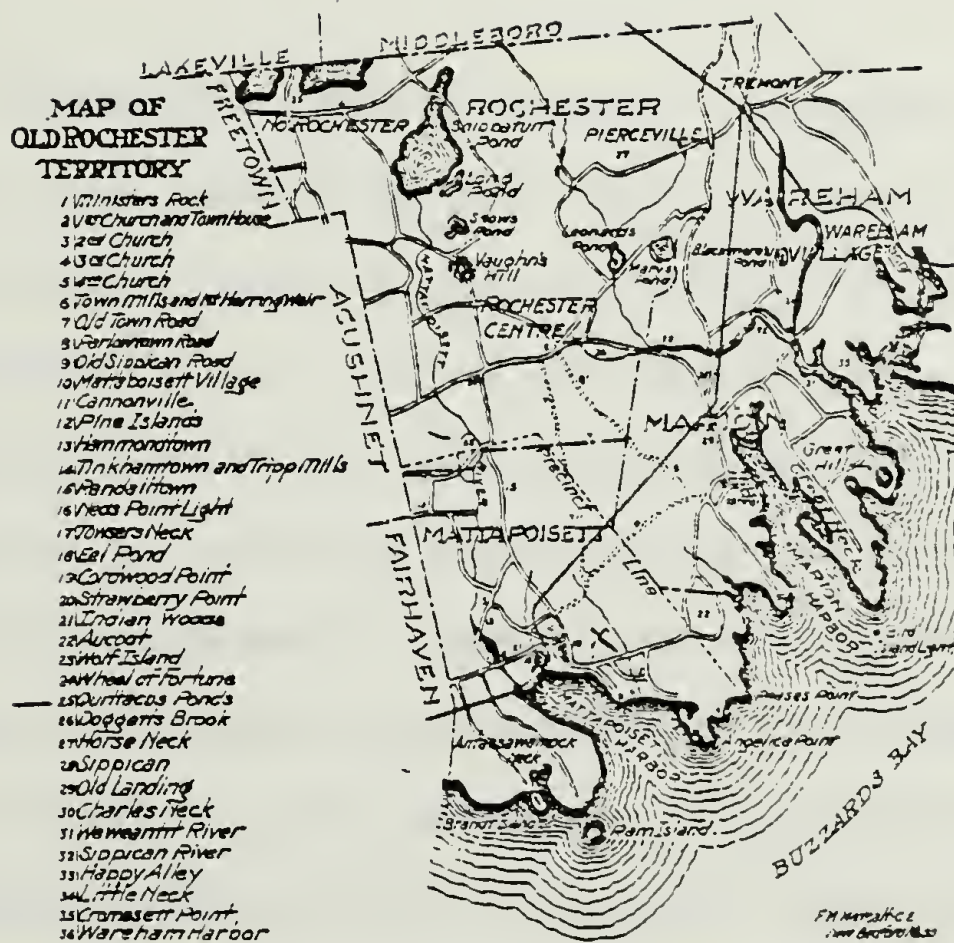
Rochester was a quiet, isolated Massachusetts settlement during the eighteenth century (Figures 1 and 2), occupying a large tract of land southwest of Cape Cod between the towns of Dartmouth on the west and Plymouth on the east. Most of Rochester's residents made meager livings by farming the rocky soil; some were involved in seafaring occupations. Few people in the town became wealthy, and nothing which happened there has attracted the attention of twentieth century historians who study events in colonial New England. Yet there evolved in Rochester customs and institutions which differed markedly from the stereotype of the New England community during the colonial era. Not the least of these surprising facets of Rochester's history is the compatible coexistence of Congregational established church and Quaker Meeting throughout the entire colonial history of the town.

Rochester's Quaker residents lived in an environment potentially filled with tension: their religion spurned many of the standards, assumptions, and customs of New England society. As a minority, Rochester Quakers might have been



Town Boundaries 1686

Dotted Line indicates current
Town boundary



Source: Mary Hall Leonard et al., Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, Massachusetts.

persecuted by intolerant neighbors. Instead the community worked out, not without occasional hostility, a system of compromises which allowed the Quakers to follow the dictates of conscience with relatively little interference from the town's establishment. A key feature in the compromise was the exemption of Quakers from taxation for ministerial support.

Compromise is a two-sided arrangement, however, and in their turn, Rochester's Friends matched the town's grant of tax exemptions by adopting a cooperative stance. They participated in the life of the community to the extent that conscience allowed and they molded their religious practices and beliefs to suit the circumstances in which they lived. The Rochester Quakers, remote from the centers of Quaker orthodoxy, developed interpretations of Friends' teachings which differed from those forged in urban Rhode Island where New England Quakerism had its center. The uniqueness of Rochester's brand of Quakerism resulted from the interaction of local customs with the teachings of the Society of Friends.

Rochester's differences from orthodoxy evolved so subtly that until the American Revolution brought a confrontation, Rochester's uniqueness was scarcely noticeable. When more than fifty Friends from the Rochester Preparative Meeting were disowned in 1778, they did not understand why their practices were unacceptable to the New

England Yearly Meeting. They left the Society of Friends in support of Timothy Davis, a local leader whose 1776 pamphlet upholding the legitimacy of the revolutionary government in Massachusetts was unacceptable to the leaders of the Yearly Meeting. Davis and his followers did not fight in the war, but they insisted that Quakers should be willing to pay taxes to the new government, even though those taxes might be used to finance the revolution.

This incident illustrates the consequences of the tension between religious and secular values which Rochester Quakers faced in their daily lives. Yet in spite of the seriousness of the affair, the influence of local community factors on the evolution of Friends' practices is an aspect of New England Quakerism which has not been previously analyzed. For two reasons, existing studies of the Society of Friends in New England are of limited usefulness in understanding Rochester's Quakers. In the first place, such works view the Society from the perspective of the Yearly Meeting, rather than the local Meeting. Secondly, those works are based on Quaker records alone without considering evidence from local secular records.

Since most eighteenth century Americans, particularly those living in rural areas like Rochester, defined their existence primarily from a local perspective, the study of the local community is essential in order to understand the colonists' lives. For Rochester Friends, the international

character of the Society of Friends was counterbalanced by local mores. The daily existence of Rochester Quakers was made up of interactions with non-Quaker neighbors; such relationships contributed important elements to the local Friends' Meeting and to its members' attitudes.

The evolution of local institutions is a particularly important theme in Rochester's development. Between the founding of the town in 1686 and the close of the American Revolution, the proprietary, the town meeting, and the religious congregations responded to changing circumstances with a slow evolution of purpose and practice. Change in Rochester was frequently based on trial and error rather than on careful analysis or planning. Nevertheless, the citizens compelled their town's institutions to reflect their ever changing needs.

Among the important causes of institutional change was a larger and more diverse population. This contributed to Rochester's subdivision into three precincts, while still another section became part of the new town of Wareham. The Quakers' position within the community likewise changed. The number of people involved in the Friends' movement in Rochester grew only slowly and did not keep pace with the overall increase in the population of the town. Quaker political power, greater during the early years of the town's history than the Friends' small numbers warranted, declined as Friends withdrew from the pursuit of powerful town

positions such as selectman. Instead, Friends redefined their role as one of service to the community; they held lesser town offices and performed a variety of vital tasks. At the same time, religious diversity ceased to be a controversial issue which could cause dissension at town meetings.

The Society of Friends, like other institutions, experienced changes during these years. Its organizational structure solidified, with duties and responsibilities of meetings at various levels being more carefully defined. New policies evolved by New England Quakers increasingly reflected the influence of a small cadre of urban Rhode Island leaders. Meetings at the local levels--the Preparative and Monthly Meetings--were entrusted the responsibility of carrying out those policies. The Rochester Friends' position within this multi-level organization is an important aspect of their practice of the Friends' religion.

Early in the eighteenth century, Rochester Friends neglected their responsibilities to the larger Friends' organization while they concentrated on local concerns. Yet in spite of this neglect of procedural matters, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these Quakers' dedication to the Friends' religious principles. Rochester's involvement in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, an affiliation which began in 1740, brought a new commitment to the regulations and procedures of the Society. The Monthly Meeting was still a

local unit, however, albeit with larger geographical bounds. Rochester's relationship to the Society of Friends was still strongest at the local level, and participation at the Yearly Meeting level would remain negligible.

Local initiative within the Sandwich Monthly Meeting led in 1755 to a campaign for renewed commitment to Quaker religious and moral teachings. Inspired by Samuel Fothergill, an itinerant Quaker preacher from England, Friends in Rochester, Sandwich, and Falmouth drew up the first formal membership regulations they had known; they compelled people guilty of violations of Quaker teachings to confess publicly in order to be considered members. This new strictness, which predated by several years similar campaigns throughout New England, also laid bare the confusion among some Friends in Rochester over the relative merits of religious teachings and community standards. During the late 1750's these Quakers were torn between their pacifist religious heritage and the responsibility of citizens to participate in the local militia.

Before the revolution, such problems were worked out within the context of local Preparative and Monthly Meetings, and solutions differed. But with the revolution came new emphasis from the Yearly Meeting on uniformity. Leaders of the Yearly Meeting believed that the turbulent times required greater discipline and conformity within the Society, that local variations discredited the Society's image. Because of

the stand they took on taxation during the revolution, Rochester Friends were judged to be a liability to the desired uniformity within New England Quakerism.

Rochester's experience is unique within the New England Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends; no other local group risked disownment in pursuit of its individuality. The events have a significance in and of themselves as local history, and serve also as an illustration of the difficulty of achieving balance between the force of local custom on one hand and the international and regional jurisdictions of the Society of Friends on the other. Furthermore, Rochester's situation reveals important and complex dimensions within the Society of Friends as the organization struggled to balance its traditional respect for each individual's private communication with God and the needs for institutional efficiency and credibility.

PART I

QUAKERS IN THE ROCHESTER COMMUNITY

C H A P T E R I

"COMFORTABLE SETTLEMENT OF A PLANTATION"

Establishing the Community

Cooperation and compromise characterized the early years of Rochester's existence. Although the creation of political and religious institutions in the wilderness was not trouble free, harmony prevailed over discord. The founding of Rochester in 1686 differed in method and purpose from the establishment of Massachusetts's first settlements fifty years earlier; nevertheless, effective new means of creating local institutions evolved with relative ease in Rochester.

The land area to which Rochester's first settlers came consisted of "seventy or eighty" square miles, then bounded by the towns of Dartmouth, Middleboro, and Tiverton.¹ When founded Rochester covered all of what is now the towns of Rochester, Marion, and Mattapoissett, and part of Wareham. According to descriptions in the proprietors' records, lands consisted of salt and fresh meadow, cedar and spruce swamp,

¹Mary Hall Leonard et al., Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, Massachusetts: Being a History of These Towns and also in Part of Marion and a Portion of Wareham (New York, 1907), 35. Exact boundaries were subject to continuing negotiations with neighboring towns.

and wood lots, as well as upland used for farming. The sandy soil, excellent for farming in some places, was rocky in other areas of the town.

Rochester's seacoast was characterized by four major peninsulas, called "necks," which formed sheltered harbors and inlets. Into the sea emptied several small rivers and streams including the Mattapoissett, Sippican, and Weweantic Rivers. Snipatuit Pond in the northeast corner of town was the largest freshwater lake, and the nearly round Merry's Pond was also important to early Rochester residents.

The settlement of this land began in late 1679, three years after the conquest, in King Philip's War, of Indians who lived in the area. During the earlier years of peaceful coexistence between white man and Indian, there had been several unrealized schemes to purchase land from the natives for use by the English.² After the English victory made payment to the Indians unnecessary, a group of men including Plymouth Colony's Governor Hinckley requested permission to buy a portion of the land known as Sippican from the colony. The Plymouth General Court then issued a general authorization for sale of the "conquest lands," stating that "Gov. Mr. Hinckley, Major Cudworth and the Treasurer be and

²Ibid., pp. 8-9. Leonard's account, while thorough, is unfortunately lacking in specific documentation. It does give a complete account of the early history of the land. Early schemes to use the land included using income to finance the Plymouth schools and using land for grazing cattle.

hereby are impowered to make sale thereof."³

The prospective Sippican purchasers consisted of several men prominent in the colony's politics and others who were descendants of the colony's founders. Hinckley had been an assistant in the Plymouth Colony government for more than thirty years, was elected deputy governor in 1680, and became governor that same year following the death of Governor Josias Winslow. Joseph and Barnabas Lothrop were the sons of the Reverend John Lothrop of Barnstable, an influential minister during the early days of the colony. Others in the group included John Cotton, minister of the church in Plymouth; Kenelm Winslow, nephew of Governor Edward Winslow; George Morton, nephew of colony court clerk Nathaniel Morton; and John and William Bradford, descendants of Governor William Bradford.

The small group's request for permission to purchase the Sippican tract drew from the Plymouth General Court this reply to "several that would purchase lands att Sepecan and places adjacent":

the Court are glad to take notice of what they propound and offer themselves to oblige in order to a comfortable settlement of a plantation there, and shall be redy to accomodate them as farr as they can on reasonable and easey tearmes and give them all due incurragement if they can procure

³Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, Nathaniel Shurtleff and Daniel Pulsifer, eds. (12 vols. Boston, 1856-61), 6:19, July 4, 1679, hereafter cited as Plym. Col. Rec.

some more substanciall men that are prudent
 psons and of considerable estates that will
 make a speedy settlement of themselves and
 families with them; and wee desire and
 expect to heare further from them att the
 next meeting of this Court by adjournment in
 July next, att which time wee may if
 satisfyed in the pmises, bargaine with them
 for the lands they desire, or put it in a
 way to be done.⁴

Those men, who did not intend to live in the new community
 themselves, easily recruited settlers, however, and the
 admission of these new members enlarged the proprietary group
 to thirty. A thirty-first proprietary share was awarded in
 1683 to William Connett, an Indian who claimed part of the
 proprietors' land. After Connett refused a thirty-five acre
 grant, the group gave him a full proprietary share in an
 out-of-court settlement of his claim.⁵

The large tract of land quickly attracted settlers,
 although twelve of the proprietors neither settled there

⁴Ibid., 6:14, June 3, 1679. Although there is no
 indication in the records which men were part of the small
 group which made the initial request and which of the
 proprietors were taken in later because they would settle in
 the new community, it seems likely that the original group
 consisted of the prominent men who did not settle in
 Rochester.

⁵Ibid., 6:115, July 1683; 7:227-8, July 6, 1680;
 7:254, October 31, 1682; 7:258, March 6, 1682/3; 7:271-2,
 October 31, 1683. For additional references to the legal
 dispute with Connett see Rochester Proprietors' Records,
 copy, 2:3, March 1, 1685, April 1, 1685. (Two sets of
 proprietors' records exist for Rochester: the original book
 at the town hall--Book 1A--and a handwritten copy, now in the
 Plymouth County Court House.)

themselves nor sent sons to the new community.⁶ It seems clear that some of the Rochester proprietors saw the new area as an investment rather than as a home. Those who actually settled may be assumed to be the later recruits to the proprietary group. Residents and non-residents alike quickly devoted themselves to the task of organizing a community; evolving policies for the division and distribution of the land; establishing political and religious institutions; and constructing mills and roads.

The Rochester proprietors, unlike early seventeenth century proprietary groups, were drawn together by economic motivations. Rochester's proprietors had no idealistic notions of unity; they wrote no covenant. Ironically, harmony existed as an incidental byproduct of the proprietors' casual attitudes. From the earliest days of its existence, Rochester was characterized by the diversity and decentralization which remained predominant themes in the town's history. Meeting on April 15, 1680 to begin parcelling out their land, the proprietors drew for house lots. The lots were as equal in value as the men could make them, and were divided between two locations: half in

⁶ Leonard, Mattapoisett and Old Rochester, 56. Those who never settled were Benjamin and Joseph Bartlett, John and William Bradford, John Cotton, Joseph Dunham, Thomas Hinckley, Barnabas and Joseph Lothrop, George Morton, William Peabody and Ralph Powel. Miss Leonard's compilation is probably accurate. A list of persons owning shares in the proprietary in 1712 shows no one with any of these surnames. Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:11-12, December 12, 1712.

Mattapoisett and the others two miles away at Sippican, now Marion.⁷

These two settlements have remained population centers until the present day, but it was not until 1695 that Rochester Center was laid out.⁸ Various reasons might account for the proprietors' failure at the start to establish a compact settlement with a single permanent center. The defeat of the Indians had removed the need for settlers to huddle together for defense; non-resident proprietors may have lacked sufficient familiarity with the land to decide where the center should be. Certainly the purposes and goals of these people were different from those held by the first generation of colonists. Rochester's founders placed material values ahead of spiritual ones, and apparently they prized individualism more than had their grandparents and placed less emphasis on corporate goals.

Whatever the reasons, the geographic dispersal of the original residents became a pattern which for better or worse shaped the town's history and encouraged fragmentation and eventual secession by various areas of the original town. By 1710 the scattered residence pattern necessitated the town meeting vote that school would be "kept at three or four

⁷Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 1:3.

⁸Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 25, Feb. 5, 1694/5.

places in sd town."⁹ In older towns the tendency was for settlers to congregate at first in the center of town and then to spread out as time passed and succeeding generations required more space. The situation in Rochester was different, for there the tradition of spreading out was as old as the town itself and sectional rivalries originated with the first allocation of land.

After the allocation of the house lots, later distribution of land gave additional encouragement to patterns of dispersal. Policies adopted in 1690 and 1695 encouraged proprietors to trade parcels of land to consolidate their holdings as long as the consolidation did not injure the rights of another.¹⁰ Even some of the house lots could be exchanged for land in still a third location; the proprietors ruled that "any man that has his house lot at Sippican and does mislike it . . . shall have liberty laying that house lot down in common to take up twenty akers of upland for his house lot."¹¹ Such official approval of consolidation of landholdings is another departure from the seventeenth century traditions of land distribution, and this

⁹Rochester Town Records, 1:12, Feb. 15, 1709/10..

¹⁰Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 14, June 17, 1690; 25, Feb. 5, 1694/5.

¹¹Ibid., p. 7, April 15, 1680. House lots at Mattapoissett were forty acres. People at Sippican received twenty acres as house lots plus an additional twenty acres at the Great Neck which could not be lived on.

policy further abetted spreading out of the settlers in Rochester.

If the proprietors' casual attitude toward planning the community contributed toward later regional rivalries, other actions facilitated harmony within the community. Perhaps by design but probably by accident, Rochester evolved an orderly procedure both for the transfer of ownership of proprietary rights to the residents and for the accumulation of power by the town meeting. There is no evidence of friction between the townspeople and the non-resident proprietors, so apparently the transition went smoothly. The 1680's and 1690's saw sales not only of land but also of shares in the proprietary. Since the motivation of many of the original owners was speculation, they sold their interests quite rapidly to men who intended to settle.

In other towns settled earlier, proprietary groups had increased the number of shares, admitting new members by vote and granting them the right to receive land in future divisions. This reduced the amount of land which each proprietor would receive. In contrast, the system used in Rochester after 1683 kept the total number of shares constant, thirty-three.¹² Since there was no town covenant

¹²There were thirty purchasers. One share was granted to the Indian William Connett, one share was created for the ministry and one for the minister. The minister's share was permanently granted to Samuel Arnold, the first ordained minister. This share passed to Arnold's heirs, while the next minister, Timothy Ruggles, received the use of

to be upheld, new members of the group were not screened or subjected to vote; they were simply granted automatic membership in the proprietary when purchasing all or part of a share. Shares were quickly fragmented and the number of men in the proprietary grew rapidly, but the number of shares remained constant. Some proprietors retained proprietary interest in the undivided land and sold only parcels of land.

An indication of the rapidity with which shares were sold can be found by comparison of names found in the proprietors' records with the list of original purchasers. By 1683 seven new share owners were among the twenty-four proprietors who pledged to contribute toward the establishment of a grist mill. In 1697, a list of seventeen proprietors delinquent in paying an assessment contained only three original proprietors, one of whom was William Connett. Eleven men listed were clearly new purchasers of proprietary shares, and three others had the same surnames as original proprietors and may have inherited their shares.¹³ Not until 1712 was a complete list of shareholders compiled; by that time, though more than fifty-five men owned at least a quarter-share, only about one third were original

the ministry during his tenure but was not granted rights to undivided land.

¹³Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:3, 1683; 5, July 13, 1697.

proprietors or their sons.¹⁴

In addition to showing the extent to which the original purchasers had sold their proprietary interests to outsiders, the 1712 list also indicates that most proprietors were small landowners. Since proprietary shares represent rights in the town's undivided land rather than actual land ownership, the 1712 list does not give a complete picture of the town's economic structure.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the list of share owners gives an accurate reflection of the distribution of wealth in Rochester. Only five men held more than a single share: Samuel Prince, not an original owner, held ten quarter-shares; "Aaron Barlow and sons" owned eight quarters;

¹⁴Ibid., 2:11-12. Some of the fifty-four entries on the list contain more than one name, for example Aaron Barlow and sons; Mark, John, and Joseph Haskell. There are sixty-one names in all. Five are original proprietors or possibly sons with the same names; seventeen more have the same surnames as original proprietors and thirty-nine have different surnames. The counting of surnames has been used for convenience in place of the too time-consuming task of compiling genealogical information for the entire group. In one known case, Timothy Davis, who owned three-quarters of a share in 1712, was not a direct descendant of proprietor Samuel Davis and acquired no land from Samuel Davis's share. Nevertheless, the overall figures give an accurate picture of the extent to which original proprietors had sold their interests.

¹⁵In at least one case a proprietor sold out rights in future land divisions while retaining land in the community. Elizabeth Ellis, a widow, was an original proprietor and brought three sons to Rochester to live. Her descendants lived in Rochester and owned land in the town in 1712, but no Ellis was a proprietor. Genealogical information about the Ellis family was supplied to me by Miss Miriam Ellis of West Dennis, Massachusetts.

and three other men owned five quarters each. On the other hand, twenty-one men owned a half-share each; sixteen owned only a quarter-share, eight owned a full share and four persons owned three-quarters of a share.

The transfer to residents of ownership in the proprietary was an important process for the establishment of the community's autonomy. Minutes of the proprietors' meetings show patterns of proprietary activity which illustrate other aspects of the transfer of power from non-residents to residents. An initial flurry of interest by non-residents during the early 1680's was followed by a second era, during the late 1680's and early 1690's when the proprietary and particularly its non-resident members were comparatively inactive; the middle 1690's saw a revival of the proprietary itself but with leadership shifted to the people living in the community. It was then that the town meeting assumed control of most decisions except those strictly relating to land divisions.

During the earliest phase several meetings were held at which proprietors divided and distributed land, provided for a grist mill and for religious services, and handled the legal problems arising from Connett's challenge to their title. There were five meetings in 1679 and 1680, annual meetings in 1683, 1684, and 1685, and a meeting in 1687. One of these meetings took place in Plymouth and the rest in Sandwich, at the homes of various proprietors.

Following the 1687 meeting three years apparently elapsed before the proprietors met again. Joseph Lothrop resigned as Proprietors' Clerk in 1685 and no one was chosen to succeed him until nine years later.¹⁶ The creation of the Dominion of New England and the accompanying disruption of established governmental traditions and institutions certainly must have been a major factor distracting the attention and energies of the non-resident proprietors. These events followed on the heels of Governor Hinckley's own efforts in the mid-1680's to reorganize Plymouth Colony's government; he introduced a new law code and divided the colony into counties for the first time. Thus, the colony experienced nearly a decade of great uncertainty and change. While non-resident owners, including Hinckley, were concerned with matters of colony-wide importance, in Rochester the settlement, sale, and distribution of land proceeded. But now local residents, both new purchasers of proprietary rights and less prominent members of the original group, assumed leading roles.

In 1686 the Plymouth General Court incorporated the settlement as a town: "Upon the request of the inhabitants of Scippican alias Rochester to become a township and have the priviledges of a town, the Court granted theire desires in yt respect."¹⁷ Significantly, the inhabitants rather than

¹⁶Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:4, March 31, 1685.

¹⁷Plym. Col. Rec., 6:189, June 4, 1686.

the proprietors were making the request. Already the shift of power from non-residents to residents had begun, but it was not until the mid-1690's that the process was completed. After a period of very infrequent proprietary meetings, the 1690's brought both a resumption of regular meetings and a shift in the location of the meetings to the town itself. A meeting in 1694 is the first noted to have been held in Rochester and Samuel Prince was chosen clerk of the proprietary:

it was voted that Samuel Prince of Sandwich should be the clerk of these records in the room of their former clerk, Mr Lothrop, and to take care of this their book of Records, therein to record whatsoever acts or orders are necessary to be recorded and also all their lands by butts and bounds . . . shall be by him recorded in said record book.¹⁸

While the choice of another Sandwich resident does not seem a step in the consolidation of residents' power, Prince subsequently moved to Rochester. Perhaps the move was planned and announced before his election.¹⁹

Seven months after Prince became Proprietors' Clerk, the group held a meeting, in Sandwich, and there made a

¹⁸Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 21, July 10, 1684.

¹⁹There was an important meeting in February 1694/5 held at Prince's house in Sandwich and another in July, 1697, at his house in Rochester. Prince's move obviously occurred at some time between these two meetings. Though the location of some meetings is omitted from the Proprietors' Records, all meetings after the July 1697 meeting at Prince's home for which a location is given were held in Rochester.

series of regulations regarding land allocation and related matters. This meeting seems to have been another important step in reactivating the group, giving it renewed purpose and direction. Of greatest significance for the town itself was the selection at this time of the site for the town's center; this proprietary meeting established the town common and burying ground in an area which had previously been laid out as a wood lot.²⁰

While the proprietary group languished during the years of crisis in the colony's government, power was gradually transferred from the proprietary to the town meeting. Within the town itself, residents organized to provide necessary services. For example, the proprietors had been responsible during the 1680's for providing religious worship for the settlement. The first minister hired by the proprietors, Samuel Shiverick, did not settle permanently in the community. His successor, Samuel Arnold, again was hired by the proprietors, who granted him the "minister's share" in the proprietary and also the use of the "ministry share."²¹ After 1687, however, negotiations with Arnold were handled by

²⁰Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 8, Feb. 5, 1694/5.

²¹Ibid., p. 8, Mar. 18, 1683/4; p. 13, Mar. 31, 1685; Roch. Prop. Book, copy, 2:4, Aug. 1683. Arnold's name, although it is included on a list of original proprietors, is in different handwriting and appears to have been added later. Arnold received one half-share but it is unclear when he acquired the second half. Two of his sons appear on the 1712 list of proprietors. Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 3, 1679; 28.

the town meeting rather than the proprietors, and it was the town meeting which hired Arnold's successor, Timothy Ruggles.

In other areas, too, the town assumed power. After the proprietors had decided in 1695 where the center of the town would be located, it was the town meeting which proposed to build the town's first meeting house in 1698.²² In 1699, the proprietors delegated to the selectmen of the town part of the responsibility for laying out highways.²³ In 1697 it was the town which negotiated with blacksmith Anthony Coombs to settle in the community. The agreement between Coombs and the town contains the signatures of the "inhabitants or proprietors," of Rochester, apparently indicating a blurred distinction at the time between proprietors and others.²⁴ It seems likely that nearly everyone in the town at this early date was, in fact, a proprietor. But whether or not residents were concerned about the distinctions between those who owned shares in the proprietary and other citizens, separate record books kept by the town meeting and the proprietary reflect separate functions for the two bodies. The proprietary was, after the mid-1690's restricted to

²²Roch. Town Rec., 1:66, May 10, 1698.

²³Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 1:39, October 24, 1699.

²⁴Roch. Town Rec., 1:67, March 16, 1697/8. The agreement between Coombs and the town is recorded with the land records: Plymouth County Deeds, 8:101-102, Nov. 1697, recorded Nov. 10, 1710.

land distribution.

It is difficult to know exactly when the town meeting first became active. The first meeting recorded in the books was held in 1694, but the Colony Records for 1690 list selectmen, tax assessments and military quotas for all towns including Rochester.²⁵ Presumably the town meeting in Rochester was active by that time to elect town officers and raise taxes and troops. By the end of the 1690's the town meeting had assumed the role of decision and policy making for the town.

From the town founding to 1700, then, two parallel but interrelated changes took place in Rochester. On an individual level, there was a shift of ownership and power from non-residents to residents, and on the institutional level the rise of the power of the town meeting and the decline of the proprietary. These changes occurred gradually and there seems to have been little conflict or hostility accompanying the transition. Two post-1700 developments are worthy of mention, however. In 1701 the proprietors voted to levy fines for non-attendance at their meetings.²⁶ This action, which may have discouraged apathy among the resident proprietors, was undoubtedly aimed primarily at non-residents.

²⁵Plym. Col. Rec., 6:231, May 20, 1690; 242, June 3, 1690; 254, Nov. 4, 1690.

²⁶Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 48, May 20, 1701.

It shows the growing solidarity of those who lived in the Rochester community.

A second action by the proprietary in 1700 saw the proprietors appointed agents to sue non-proprietors to prevent their use of proprietary common land.²⁷ This action seems to indicate that for the first time non-proprietors were becoming numerous and were being differentiated from proprietors. The growing complexity of society foreshadowed future developments in the town. The first two decades of the town's history, however, had apparently witnessed little conflict in connection with developing local institutions.

Quakers in Early Rochester

Although the geographic dispersal of Rochester's first generation is the major theme in the community's early history, the religious diversity of the settlers must also be considered an important factor. Among Rochester's early residents were a small minority who practiced the Quaker religion and others who, although not Friends themselves, were sympathetic to Quakers. The mid-seventeenth century persecutions of Quakers in both Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth Colonies are familiar episodes in the story of New England's unwillingness to accept religious dissent. By the

²⁷Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 47, Sept. 24, 1700.

time Rochester was founded, however, Quakers, though not popular were allowed by Plymouth Colony to enjoy many of the rights of citizenship:

Whereas severall of the ancient inhabitants of the towne of Sandwich, called Quakers, exhibited a petition unto this general court by the hands of William Newland, this court graunts liberty that such of them as have been ancient inhabitants and have expended monies in purchasing of those lands lying within theire townshipe, shall have libertie to voate in the disposall of such lands, and shall have libertie to voate for the choice of raters and shalbe capeable of makeing of rates, if legally chosen thereunto by the towne and psons aforesaid, soe long as they carry civilly and not abuse theire libertie.²⁸

Many of Rochester's early residents, both Quakers and non-Quakers alike, came from Sandwich. Quakers were also prevalent in other Plymouth Colony towns including especially Dartmouth which bordered the new settlement of Rochester.

Although there may not have been any Quakers among the original purchasers of Rochester,²⁹ the sale of land and proprietary shares to Quakers was common during the 1680's and 1690's. At no time did Quakers comprise more than a small minority of the population of the town: when the town's residents negotiated to lure blacksmith Anthony Coombs to Rochester, only four of twenty-eight signers of the town's

²⁸Plym. Col. Rec., 6:71, July 7, 1681.

²⁹Mrs. Elizabeth Ellis may have been a Quaker at the time of the purchase but no proof exists. Aaron Barlow is known to have converted to Quakerism, probably after 1690.

agreement were Quakers. By 1712, there were nine Quakers among the fifty-five individuals owning proprietary shares, and those Friends held five of thirty-three shares. In spite of their small numbers, Quakers during Rochester's early history were leading citizens who made important contributions to the developing town, holding offices in both town and proprietary.

Records do not reveal when Quaker Meetings were first held in Rochester, however, or when specific individuals became Friends. A 1701 land description refers to the "Quakers Bridge," the earliest mention of Quakerism in Rochester.³⁰ No individual's association with the Society of Friends can be verified before that time and in fact all references to Quakers before 1700 must be understood to refer only to men proven to be Quakers at some later period in their lives. Nevertheless, one or both of two things occurred in Rochester during the 1690's: either Quakers assumed leadership in two events, or the men who were town leaders then converted later to Quakerism. In either case, it is an important development not only for Rochester's history but also for the history of toleration in New England. Rochester's town meeting records for the 1690's suggest that by the last half of the decade Quakers were an active force in the life of the town.

³⁰Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 47.

The lives of John Wing and Aaron Barlow illustrate the phenomenon of prominent men becoming Quakers. Barlow was one of the original proprietors and Wing purchased one-half of Samuel Brigg's share in 1683. Neither was a Quaker at that time, for both Wing and Barlow were among proprietors who pledged to donate money toward the support of the gospel.³¹ Quakers, who opposed "hireling priests," would not have made such contributions. In 1689 both Wing and Barlow were made freemen of the colony, a status achieved by only seven Rochester residents³² and one from which Quakers were excluded. Barlow was the town's representative to the Plymouth General Court in 1690 and 1691 and a selectman in 1690 and 1698; Wing was a selectman in 1702, 1703, and 1704. Both men's names appear frequently in the proprietary records, indicating service on committees or as agents or performance of other services for the community. While the stature of these men is evident, the origins of their Quaker affiliation are obscure. By 1709, however, the Quaker Meetings were held at the home of John Wing. Aaron Barlow's death in 1714 was recorded in the Friend's vital records.

Wing and Barlow were brothers-in-law; Barlow's wife

³¹Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:4, August, 1683.

³²Plym. Col. Rec., 6:208, Oct. 16, 1689; 240, June 3, 1690. The Colony soon passed out of existence and no new freemen were admitted.

Beulah was John Wing's sister. Many Wings in Sandwich were Quakers and family influence may have predisposed Wing and Barlow to Quakerism. Whenever the two men actually converted, they and others in the community probably had some sympathy for Quakerism by the mid-1690's. Other men undoubtedly settled in Rochester after becoming Friends, and these men, too, became active leaders in the town and the proprietary.

The criteria for selection for town office apparently included ability and willingness to serve, but not religious affiliation. Those two factors--ability and availability--would determine the Quakers' service during the entire colonial period of Rochester's history. Nine Quaker men in addition to John Wing and Aaron Barlow held town offices between 1697 and 1710. The positions they held ranged in importance from selectman to fenceviewer. Table 7 in the Appendix shows Quaker office holders and their positions.

Although too little is known about the significance or prestige attached to specific offices during these years, it seems clear that from the beginning many Friends in Rochester were willing to use their skills to undertake jobs which required a donation of their services for the good of the town. John Wing performed the duties of "sealer of measures" or "clerk of the market" for a number of years, for example. A cooper by trade, living near the town center, Wing seems to have been uniquely qualified to inspect and certify legal weights and measures. Perhaps the Quakers'

reputation for honesty in business was another factor which led the town to select Wing for this office eight times during the 1697 to 1710 time period. In any case Wing and other Friends alike served in lesser town offices as well as the most powerful positions.

There has been some suspicion that towns might have used election to "undesirable" offices such as constable or hog reeve, as harassment for unpopular citizens. Yet the list of Quaker officers in Rochester during this period reveals no systematic discrimination against Quakers. Occasional selection of Quakers to the office of "tithingman" might represent harassment, but the evidence is difficult to interpret.

Rochester's assimilation of its Quaker residents was not free of conflict. Toleration of dissent was a part of the heritage of Plymouth Colony,³³ but accomodating the religious views of Friends was a difficult task which required compromise by Quakers and non-Quakers alike. The major test of Rochester's toleration occurred in the town's handling of the financial support of religion. Early in its history Rochester exempted Quakers from such contributions.

Plymouth Colony had traditionally accepted the view

³³ John M. Bumsted, "The Pilgrims' Progress: The Ecclesiastical History of the Old Colony, 1620-1775" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1965), 6, 26-27, 31-34, 52-53.

that voluntary support for religion was preferable to taxation.³⁴ During the 1680's, the proprietors of Rochester made provision for religious services, and at first apparently favored voluntary support backed up with grants of land made by the group to the minister. In 1683, eighteen proprietors, including John Wing and Aaron Barlow, pledged sixteen pounds five shillings toward "the maintenance of a minister to preach the word of God."³⁵ Significantly, at the same meeting those eighteen proprietors were joined by six others willing to pledge contributions toward the establishment of a grist mill, apparently indicating that the economic responsibilities of proprietorship were more keenly felt than the religious ones. Perhaps because the voluntary donations brought so little money, the proprietors soon made contributions to religion compulsory. First they adopted taxation of non-resident proprietors. After granting the minister ten acres of land:

It was freely and clearly voted that the proprietors . . . that did not now live there should give to Mr. Samuel Shiverick for his pains in preaching the word of God amongst the people there according to the proportion of their lands.³⁶

The following year, this was voted as an annual payment, and

³⁴Ibid., pp. 12-16.

³⁵Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:4, August 4, 1683.

³⁶Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 8, March 18, 1683/4.

taxation of all residents was instituted on March 31, 1685, taxation not based on land holdings but equal to all.³⁷

In the late 1690's, shortly after the town meeting began to assume responsibility for the running of town affairs, the question of support for religion must have agitated heated discussion in town meetings, and presumably it was the Quakers' beliefs which caused the dissension. The three men chosen selectmen in 1698 were probably all Quakers at the time of their election. Two of them, John Summers and Elisha Wing were in later years among the most active members of the Quaker meeting; the third was Aaron Barlow. The meeting which elected these three selectmen repudiated the compulsory support of the minister, now Samuel Arnold, voting that "Mr. Arnold's hearers should pay him his sallery."³⁸ Although it does not mention Quakers specifically, the result of this decision was that Quakers were exempted from taxation for the minister's support. Thus began a tradition which lasted throughout the town's history with only occasional interruption.

The policy was accompanied by conflict, however. In the next town meeting, held in May, 1698, two other men were chosen to serve as selectmen; the reason for choosing them is unexplained, as is the question of whether they were

³⁷ Ibid., April 1685; Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 1:9; Roch. Prop. Rec., Town Book 1A, 13, Mar. 13, 1685.

³⁸ Roch. Town Rec., 1:66, March 16, 1697/8.

additions to the original group of selectmen or replacements for two of the Quakers elected in March.³⁹ It is likely that a reaction against Quakers was taking place. The meeting which chose the two new selectmen engaged in controversy about the building of the town's first meeting house. The town meeting decided to construct a meeting house to be financed by taxation, and the following February authorized the levying of the tax for that purpose.⁴⁰ Only five months later, however, in July, 1699, a new policy emerged: the town decided to finance the meeting house by voluntary contributions rather than by taxation, if they could raise the needed fifty pounds.⁴¹ This is the last explicit word on the subject, so apparently the money was raised.

Thus, after a series of meetings at which policies were made and subsequently reversed, the town meeting in Rochester had adopted the principle of voluntary contributions for both the minister's salary and the construction of the meeting house. It is likely that changes

³⁹ Ibid., 1:66, May 10, 1698. It is curious that a note is made that the two new selectmen, Peter Blackmer and Samuel Briggs, took the oath of office. Since this is an unusual notation and since Quakers traditionally refused oaths, it suggests that perhaps two Quakers refused the oath and were replaced. This theory is weakened, however, by the fact that for the next five years Quakers continued to be elected and to serve as selectmen in Rochester.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1:66, May 10, 1698; 1:66-67, Feb. 2, 1698/9.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1:68, July 12, 1699.

and reversals in policies resulted from various factions getting sympathizers out to the meetings to cast favorable votes. Yet since the Quakers were never a majority of the town's population, it is clear that a significant number of non-Quaker inhabitants must have supported the theory of voluntary contributions, or the practice could never have been sustained. Since the policies were initially worded to establish voluntary contributions rather than as specific exemptions for Quakers, presumably non-Quakers could also refrain from contributing.

The next recorded episode in Rochester's debate over how to pay its minister came as the town negotiated with Timothy Ruggles to succeed Samuel Arnold. After overseeing the establishment of the church in 1703, Arnold died in 1707. Ruggles was ordained as his successor on November 22, 1710. Prior to the completion of the negotiations with Ruggles, the town had spelled out its formula for raising the minister's salary, this time specifically exempting Quakers:

At a town meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Rochester regularly assembled together voted that the sum of thirty pounds in mony be raised yearly by way of rate upon the sd inhabitants after the rate of forty pounds so to abate the sum of ten pounds upon such of sd inhabitants as are of contrary judgment & now professed Quakers and the sd thirty pound to be raised by the remainder of sd inhabitants in equal proportion for to be [word illegible] for the encoragement & ⁴² support of a minister in sd town yearly.

⁴²Ibid., 1:70.

The agreement between the town and its new minister, dated October 11, 1710 specifically stated that Ruggles's salary would be "raised upon sd inhabitants by way of rate in method as by record may now at large appear."⁴³ Thus, Ruggles accepted the exemption of the Quakers from taxation as a condition of his employment.

The steps Rochester followed in achieving this formula can be only partially reconstructed from events in the town's records. Beginning in 1707, the year of Arnold's death, the minutes state that the selectmen would also be the tax assessors. No explanation is offered, but this seems to have accompanied a decision to pay the minister by taxation.

If assessing taxes for the minister's salary was part of the selectmen's duties, a Quaker would compromise his religious principles by serving as a selectman. Quakers had served in this office, with at least one elected annually, between 1698 and 1704. No Quaker served as selectman after that until the 1720's, but Quakers continued to be chosen for other town offices. Perhaps, then, a compromise was worked out in the town during these years. The town instituted taxation for the support of the minister, but Quakers were exempted from paying this tax. The task of assessing taxes was added to the selectman's duties and Quakers no longer held this high office. When the town hired Ruggles after

⁴³Ibid., 1:71.

Arnold's death, policies which had been evolving for several years were written into the town record book and into the agreement between town and minister. The policy worked out here lasted without serious conflict until 1729 when Ruggles, frustrated in his attempt to collect his salary, began to demand payment from the Quakers.

The significance of the formula worked out in Rochester by 1710 is underscored by contrasting Rochester's history with events in neighboring Dartmouth. In that town, Quakers were more numerous, better organized and comprised a larger percentage of the town's population than in Rochester. Dartmouth attempted to resist the colony's demand that they establish tax supported worship. At the same time that Rochester was working out a compromise to accommodate its Quaker residents, two of Dartmouth's selectmen were imprisoned in the Bristol County Jail for refusing to assess religious taxes. One of the two men, Deliverance Smith, was a Quaker of long standing, and the other, Thomas Taber, Jr., became a Quaker at about this time.⁴⁴ Dartmouth continued to defy the colony and for the next twenty years the General Court threatened and fined the community because of its refusal to conform.

⁴⁴Society of Friends, Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, "Minutes, Men Friends" (1699-1729), 54, 56, 59, 61, 63, 1708 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 51), hereafter cited as Dart. Mo. Mtg; Dartmouth Town Records, copy, 24, Jan. 1708.

The situation in Dartmouth then, is in sharp contrast to Rochester's acceptance of both orthodoxy and dissent. Town meetings in Rochester were not without conflict, yet the result of heated discussion was compromise which accommodated various points of view. The process by which the settlement had been founded had included an orderly transfer of power from non-residents to residents and from the proprietary to the town meeting. Within the town meeting, compromises respected the right of the Quaker minority not only to live peacefully in the community but also to participate actively in the political life of the town. When, in the 1730's and 1740's, dissension at last overcame the ability of the Rochester town meeting to pacify and compromise, geographic rivalry rather than religious diversity was the cause. The dispersal of Rochester's residents, with its beginning at the founding of the community, would become a major cause of disharmony and contention.

C H A P T E R I I
THE CHALLENGES OF
GROWTH AND DIVERSITY

By 1710, Rochester had passed through its formative stage. Non-resident proprietors had surrendered power to the residents of the community, the town meeting had emerged as a strong and independent governing body, and the town had evolved a viable formula for accommodating religious diversity. At the hiring of Timothy Ruggles as its new minister in 1710, the town had included in his contract a clear statement of its intention to exempt Quakers from religious taxation. With this agreement as the basis for religious harmony, informal consensus led to a situation in which the Quakers could participate in town government to the extent that their consciences allowed.

A second period in Rochester's history, covering the years 1710 to 1735, was characterized by great population growth and an increasingly complex social and political situation. These trends continued throughout the eighteenth century in all the colonies; within the Rochester town meeting, citizens struggling to cope with changes which enveloped them sometimes found the mechanisms of town

government inadequate to their needs. Quarrels and contention were common and by the mid-1730's Rochester was faced with the problem of geographic fragmentation, as outlying regions sought independence.

The Quakers in Rochester, like the other residents of the town, were confronted by changes which seemed to come faster than people could adapt. At times, the town's tolerance wore thin and occasional harassment of Quakers occurred. Such instances were unusual, however, and Quakers continued to hold town offices and to serve the town in other ways. The ambivalent treatment of Quakers during these years suggests that, except during a few crisis periods, Quakers were judged as individuals rather than as members of a group. Such individual treatment paved the way for the years after 1735 when Quakerism and religious diversity ceased to be a major issue in town politics.

Population Growth and the Town Meeting

Population growth, one of the most notable developments in Rochester's colonial history, achieved great importance during the early eighteenth century. Although there are no records which give a count of the residents, impressionistic evidence of several sorts documents the fact, if not the exact extent, of the growth. Natural increases within the families of early settlers are apparent from even a casual reading of the town records. Sons came of age and

began to take an active role in the life of the town. For example, by 1729, four sons of Quaker John Wing had served in various town offices. Three Hammond brothers were among the earliest settlers; by 1740, thirteen Hammonds were listed on an assessment list for the Mattapoissett precinct.¹

In addition to such increases in the old families, new settlers were constantly coming to the town. The record books contain many new names which first appeared during this era. Although no complete lists of the town's residents or taxpayers survive, partial lists can demonstrate that growth occurred. The 1697 agreement between the town and blacksmith Anthony Coombs contains twenty eight names; the 1712 list of proprietors lists sixty-one names; the 1740 Mattapoissett assessment list, covering only one of five sections of the town, contains fifty-two names. A continuing registration in the record books of "distinguishing marks for animals," though not a complete list of residents, is useful for what it shows about the pace of growth. These lists are summarized in Table 1, which shows that new registrations were concentrated in the years before 1709 and between 1719 and 1728.² Some of the names registered during this latter

¹Mattapoissett Precinct Records, 34, June 23, 1740. This book is now in the care of the clerk of the Mattapoissett Congregational Church.

²Plymouth County Deeds, 8:101-02, Nov. 1697; Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:11-12; Matt. Prec. Rec., 34, 1740; Roch. Town Rec., 1:13-16, 25-29, 111.

TABLE 1

ANNUAL NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS OF
DISTINGUISHING MARKS FOR ANIMALS, 1699-1750

Year	<u>Animal Marks Registered</u>	
	<u>Annual Number</u>	<u>Ten-Year Totals</u>
1699	8	
1700	6	
1701	0	
1702	1	
1703	6	
1704	5	
1705	4	
1706	3	
1707	1	
1708	2	36
1709	1	
1710	0	
1711	0	
1712	3	
1713	1	
1714	1	
1715	2	
1716	0	
1717	0	
1718	0	8
1719	3	
1720	9	
1721	3	
1722	3	
1723	6	
1724	6	
1725	2	
1726	1	
1727	0	
1728	4	37
1729	5	
1730	4	
1731	3	
1735	1	13
1740	1	
1750	1	2
TOTAL, 1699-1750		96

period are familiar names, probably sons of early settlers. Other names, however, are apparently those of new arrivals to the town.

Population growth brought in its wake numerous other social changes which greatly modified the experiences and expectations of Rochester's citizens. Among the most important of these related factors were increased population density; migration; social and economic polarization; increasing conflict; and the failure of local institutions to resolve disagreements. Such developments were not unique to Rochester, but were common in the colonies between 1720 and the Revolution.³

For the people in Rochester, as elsewhere, population increase gave a sense of overcrowding. Original residents watched as newcomers purchased and cultivated large tracts of formerly vacant land. The 1708 decision of the Rochester proprietors to divide all but five hundred acres of the original land grant⁴ shows that most of the group were eager to sell land rapidly. The implications of the situation must have weighed heavily on fathers and on sons coming of age. The division of fathers' estates gave sons smaller farms than their fathers had owned; undivided or vacant land was less

³For an analysis of such factors see Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Social Changes and the Meaning of the American Revolution," Journal of Social History 6 (1973):403-39.

⁴Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 80, Feb. 10, 1707/08.

likely to be available to supplement the inheritance.

At least one Rochester father, Quaker Aaron Barlow, showed concern for the future of his family land holdings. In 1712, Barlow was the owner of two full shares in the proprietary, more than any other man except Samuel Prince. Barlow was unusual among the original proprietors because instead of selling his original share during his lifetime, he bought a second share. At his death in 1714 Barlow was able to provide generous legacies to all four of his children; daughters as well as sons received land. Yet Barlow was apparently disturbed by the prospect of further division of the land holdings in succeeding generations, and to prevent complete dispersal of the land stipulated the practice of entailment:

it is to be understood that I entail all the above lands which I have willed to my eldest son Shuball (the undivided only excepted from entailment) to him the said Shuball and to his eldest mail [sic] heir and so to their mail heirs forever but in case there be no mail heir then to the female forever.

Barlow's conservative solution to the problem of potential land shortages turned out to be an unrealistic one: he could not even follow it himself, but left its implementation

⁵ Plymouth County Probate Records, 951-O.S. Aaron Barlow. An inventory valued Barlow's estate at nearly 1800 pounds. Aaron Barlow's son Shubal died in 1770 and deliberately disregarded his father's wishes concerning entailment. Ibid., 962-O.S. Shubal Barlow.

to his eldest son. Aaron Barlow's attempt at entailment, however, reveals not only his fear of diminished land holdings but also his concern for maintaining the family's social and economic position within the community.

Not until Aaron Barlow's grandchildren were adults was there a general awareness of such problems. The significance of the interrelated conditions of growing population and land shortages then became increasingly apparent, and some people sought a solution in migration. During the 1730's two groups of Rochester's residents began to migrate west. After 1735, some settled in Hardwick, a new community in which Minister Timothy Ruggles had inherited a proprietary share.⁶ A number of Quakers, less well organized than the Hardwick group, moved to the Hudson Valley to a Quaker settlement near the present day town of Pawling, New York.⁷ Migration to these and other areas would continue and intensify during the remaining years of the eighteenth

⁶After the General Court authorized settlement of the area the proprietors had a quota for new settlers. Ruggles recruited settlers from his congregation in Rochester and some of his own children were among those who migrated. For information on this migration see George P. Howard, "Emigrants from Rochester to Hardwick, 1735-1780," 1971 (Xerox) American Antiquarian Society.

⁷The Quaker migrations can be documented through the Monthly Meeting records since Friends were required to obtain certificates when they planned to relocate. Other information about the community is found in Warren H. Wilson, Quaker Hill (New York: 1907), originally written as a Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University.

century.

Too little is known about Rochester's economic history. The absence of significant mercantile or industrial activity suggests that it was probably difficult to acquire great wealth in Rochester. While the distribution of wealth was apparently quite even in the town's early years, the spread between the wealthiest and the poorest residents widened, if only because of the diminution of land holdings after the first generation.

By the 1720's there were occasional appeals to the town for charity. The traditional solution of removing a pauper from town was used in 1723 in the case of "Father Hoskins," but removal could not be used for long-standing residents of the community. Thus, later that same year Mr. John Briggs was appointed to "buy corn for the poor."⁸ Appeals for charity continued; by 1735 the town's annual meeting discussed the merits of electing an overseer of the poor.⁹ Though they did not elect such an officer, the problem continued to grow; requests for aid became increasingly frequent in the later years.

Poverty, overcrowding, declining expectations for their children's material circumstances--these are some of

⁸Roch. Town Rec., 1:108, Aug. 15, 1723; 109, Dec. 23, 1723.

⁹Ibid., 2:71, warrant for March 17, 1734/5.

the newly emerging social and economic conditions which Rochester's residents faced. The town meeting was the local institution through which the people worked to develop a corporate response to these problems, as well as to other results of population growth. It is not surprising that the town meeting was slow to adapt in the face of changing conditions; individuals were perplexed by rapid growth and they disagreed about solutions. Thus the town meeting saw increasing tension and conflict. The political history of the meeting between 1710 and 1735 is complex, but certain general trends can be delineated.

Forms and procedures offer the most easily observed changes in the Rochester town meeting during these years. Social complexity brought to the town meeting both a greater volume of business and a greater variety of issues to be considered. More meetings were held, and meetings lasted longer. Procedural changes included election of a moderator to run each meeting, and the choice of agents and ad hoc committees for handling particular problems or issues.

Procedural changes alone, however, were not enough to enable the town to cope successfully with the new situations brought before it. Signs of the town's failure to reach a consensus became more frequent as years passed. Some historians have stressed avoidance of conflict as a characteristic of eighteenth century towns. This may indeed have been an important ideal, but in Rochester, at least, it

was frequently impossible for the meeting to arrive at peaceful and harmonious decisions. Postponement of action to another meeting and failure to resolve items of business listed in warrants became more common. Such failure to take action is an indication that the meeting could not reach agreement. Conflicts were thus left as open wounds to fester until they became too serious to be ignored.

The town records reveal not the absence of conflict but the reluctance of town clerks to legitimize it by writing down the details. In addition to giving ample evidence that conflict occurred, the town records also indicate that sometimes outside agencies were called in to decide disputes. Lawsuits and even petitions to the General Court were used when satisfactory solutions could not be found within the town meeting.

A final factor relevant to the general inability of the town meeting to solve problems is changing leadership. It was inevitable that new generations of residents would have different goals and ideals than their parents and grandparents. Rapidly changing social conditions may have exacerbated differences in perspective between the generations. Thus, as younger men moved into leadership positions they brought a different frame of reference, a different attitude toward the community's problems. Other research into Rochester's history shows a concentration of power in the hands of a few men during the early years of the

eighteenth century. One analysis of leadership in Rochester and has found that of the fifteen men who began service as selectmen before 1710, only three served more than three terms. Those three men began their service while still young men and served long terms in office. All were reelected frequently until their deaths. Peter Blackmer, first elected at age thirty-one, served eighteen terms as selectman and held the office of town clerk concurrently; John Briggs and Benjamin Dexter each began at age twenty-seven and served sixteen years. Continuity in leadership as well as the particular talents of these three men apparently facilitated peace and religious toleration after 1698.¹⁰

The deaths of these three paramount political leaders occurred within a ten year span between 1718 and 1728 and coincided with the deaths of other important community leaders.¹¹ After the end of the period dominated by these early leaders, no equally powerful men emerged. Leadership was divided among more men, and the town government, though

¹⁰David Olausson, "A Colonial New England Town: Pluralist Democracy, Puritan Majority, Rochester, Massachusetts, 1680-1736" (undergraduate seminar paper, Lawrence University, 1976).

¹¹Blackmer died in 1717, age fifty; John Briggs died at forty-nine in 1728; Benjamin Dexter's death is not recorded in town records but probably occurred about the time of his last service as selectman, 1725. Other deaths during this period include Quakers Aaron Barlow, 1715; John Wing, 1717; Timothy Davis, 1721; and John Summers, about 1720.

perhaps more democratic was visibly less stable. Many factors must have been at work here: certainly people's values had changed. Also, increased population meant that there were more men available and qualified to hold town office. The individual who aspired to hold office faced greater competition. This may explain the reluctance of the town to re-elect men as frequently as in the past.

Leadership in Rochester needs more thorough study to delineate the relationship between patterns of leadership and the decline of harmony in the town meeting. The evolution of factionalism in town government also needs clarification.

Procedures and patterns of leadership were not the only things which changed during the years between 1710 and 1735. In addition, the types of issues which concerned the town meeting changed, and the differences in emphasis are in many ways related to the social changes which were occurring. In general, the meeting was concerned mainly with financial matters during the 1720's and by the 1730's began to focus on problems related to geographic factionalism.

During the 1720's most of the conflict in the town meeting was related to economic issues. The materialistic orientation of Rochester's founding proprietors gave a precedent for that preoccupation. The growing complexity of the people's lives was reflected in the town meeting: new programs led to increased expenses at a time when it seemed the average man's wealth was declining. It should come as no

surprise then, that conflict erupted over the town's handling of loan money issued by the colony, that payments of salary and settlement to Timothy Ruggles were hotly discussed, or that taxation of Quakers reappeared as a controversial matter during the twenties.

Faced with the question in 1718 of whether to "seat" or to "pew" the new meeting house, a distinction between assigning seats according to some determination of rank or prestige on one hand, or selling the space to the highest bidders on the other, Rochester decided on the sales method:

voted that Benjamin Ham[m]ond[,] John Briggs and Sam'll Sprague [the selectmen] be a comity to spot out the places for pews and to sell them at a vendue to those of sd town that would give the most for them and to build sd pues [sic] in three months from the day of sd meeting and pay money¹² for them in six months from sd day.

It seems, however, that not enough sales were made, or perhaps the town changed its mind, for in early September, 1719, the meeting appointed a committee to "seat" the meeting house within six weeks.¹³

Another financial issue which preoccupied the town meeting for several years and which led to open controversy,

¹²Roch. Town Rec., 1:94-95, Feb. 12, 1717/18.

¹³Ibid., 1:99, Sept. 2, 1719. It seems most likely that this referred to assigning seats to those who did not purchase pews. However, an entirely different slate of selectmen was in office at this time, so the possibility of a change of town policy cannot be discounted.

was the loan money given by the colony to the towns during that era. Though it appointed trustees to manage Rochester's share of this money, in the beginning the town meeting was intensely interested in the details of the trustees' stewardship. In October, 1721, when the first of the loans was made available, the town held four meetings to discuss the details of managing the money.¹⁴ At the last of these meetings, the town chose, by lot, fifteen men who would each receive the use of twenty pounds. From then on, supervision was left to the trustees and only occasionally did the town consider matters involving the loan money.

By the late 1720's, however, at the very time that a second loan was made available by the colony, Rochester became embroiled in problems related to returning the money from the first loan. Discussion of ways to collect the money occupied portions of eight town meetings between 1728 and 1731. Excerpts from documents submitted to the town by agents trying to collect the money reveal the difficulty:

In pursuance to a vote . . . 1 June 1728, I have notified ye Trustees of sd town of the 50,000£ loan money & they refuse or neglect to make up any ac[c]ount on the same & say that the town must first give them the orders how to dispose of sd money before they can dispose of said money to aneybody [sic].

Edw^d Winslow

¹⁴Ibid., 1:104, Oct. 9, 13, 20, 24, 1721.

At a town meeting . . . July 7, 1729
 . . . town made choice of me . . .
 to acct wt ye trustees of ye 50,000
 loan and accordingly I appointed
 time & place for the purpus [sic]
 and notified sd trustees but they
 would not come to any acct.

Caleb Blackwell

We the subscribers being chosen
 . . . Aug. 31, 1730 to acct w[ith]
 ye town former trustees for the
 towns interest in ye above sd loan
 money . . . they refused to render
 account to us in that affair.

Noah Sprague
 Caleb Blackwell¹⁵

The results of these efforts have gone unrecorded. What is significant, however, is the lack of respect for the authority of the town and for the agents designated by the meeting.

By 1733, the town was having trouble with its trustees of the second or "60,000 pound" loan:

Whereas it manifestly appears to the town that their trustees which they made choice of for the towns part of the 60,000 pounds loan money have not attended to the town acts referring to the same & considering that there is yet three years interest behind to the province treasurer & the towns part of the interest not paid to the

¹⁵For meetings see: Ibid., 1:120, June 1728; 1:122, July 7, 1729; 1:123, Oct. 15, 1729; 1:123, Dec. 12, 1729; 1:125, Aug. 3, 1730; 1:127, Oct. 29, 1730; 1:129, Oct. 13, 1731; 1:131, Dec. 20, 1731. Perhaps these meetings were prompted by the colony's demands for repayment as well as by the town's concern. For agents' reports see: Ibid., 1:126, recorded Oct. 29, 1730.

town & considering that one of the trustees is removed out of town the town now makes choice of Mr. Timothy Ruggles, Jr. to represent the town & to act any thing for them that may be legal & also consistent with the province act refer[r]ing to the sd 60000 in order to secure the towns principle & interest & when secured to make report forthwith.¹⁶

The town subsequently became involved in a series of disputes with one of the trustees, Ichabod Nye, and these events were a sequel to the mismanagement of the town's loan money. In February, 1733/4, Noah Sprague was named as agent to answer a lawsuit brought against the town by Nye; ten men, including Nye, entered a protest against the decision to raise five pounds to finance the action against Nye.¹⁷ The dispute between the town and Nye dragged on for several more years.

In choosing its trustees, the town presumably selected men who were respectable and responsible. Yet, for some reason, Ichabod Nye and his fellow trustees were either unable or unwilling to administer the funds properly. Their defiance of the town's wishes and the inability of the town to call them to account for their actions suggest that the town meeting was a weak and ineffective body. The

¹⁶Ibid., 2:67L, July 30, 1733. Page numbers in Volume 2 of the town meeting records appear only on every other page. The notations "L" and "R" tell which of the facing pages contains the reference.

¹⁷Ibid., 2:67L-67R.

factionalism which would emerge fully during the 1730's was apparently already beginning to divide the town; a united town would not have had the difficulties Rochester experienced in its handling of the loan money.

Another financial matter which was a source of constant discussion by the town was the payment of Timothy Ruggles's salary. Like ministers in other towns Ruggles had trouble collecting money voted to him by the town. A series of illustrations from the town records reveals the town's grudging attitude toward paying Ruggles. In 1718, the sixty pound salary voted to the minister was fifteen pounds less than he had received the previous year. The cut was apparently a bargaining tactic, for three months later the meeting voted twenty pounds more to Ruggles if he would relinquish claims for money due to him from previous years. Even so, it was some time before Ruggles received the twenty pounds and signed the following release, dated January 5, 1719/20:

Rec'd from Mr. James Winslow town treasurer for said Rochester the sum of 20 lb. in full for all former arrearages due to me for yearly sallery & for the 8 lbs. voted for my renouncing my right to half the ministry by the meeting house & for house rent & for what was my full due for that year that the town voted by sixty pound [so the original] for on[e] year to make the said sixty pound satisfactory for said year being in full for said arre[a]rage from the beginning of my service in the ministry until Mar 1717/18 Exclusive

of what¹⁸ was voted for my settle-
ment.

Ruggles became increasingly disgruntled with the town's failure to pay what he thought he should receive. In October, 1726, Ruggles appeared at the town meeting and, "desired the town to fulfill his settlement as promised by vote and the town refused it till another meeting."¹⁹ The following spring the annual meeting voted him a salary of one hundred pounds and Ruggles responded angrily by challenging the Quakers' exemption from ministerial taxation; Ruggles "declared he should not accept of the 100£ for his salary and excuse the Quakers."²⁰

Ruggles thus repudiated the agreement which had maintained religious and political peace in the town since the beginning of his ministry. Such an extreme step was no doubt necessary to rouse the town from parsimony and convince the meeting to raise his salary. The significance of the Quaker exemptions should be emphasized: when the town voted Ruggles a salary of one hundred pounds he would actually receive less than that, for the Quakers' assessments would be included in the hundred pounds but their portion would not be

¹⁸Ibid., 1:96, Mar. 19, 1717/18; 1:97, June 13, 1718; 1:98, Jan. 5, 1719/20. The twenty pounds paid to Ruggles was to be raised by selling pews in the new meeting house.

¹⁹Ibid., 1:113, Oct. 28, 1726.

²⁰Ibid., 1:117, Mar. 22, 1726/7.

collected. Thus, receipts given by Ruggles to the town for his salary state that he has received his salary, "partly in cash, partly in discount of mens rates, partly by other receipts"²¹; the phrase, "partly in discount of mens rates" referred to the exemption of the Quakers.

Apparently it took a gesture of such magnitude as Ruggles's challenge to tradition to make the town take its minister's claims seriously. In April 1727, the meeting voted to attempt to give Ruggles twenty acres of land near the meeting house, as promised at his settlement; if they were unable to get such a tract of land, they would give him one hundred pounds as compensation.²² Not until 1730, however, did they address the main issue raised by Ruggles in his protest against Quaker exemptions. In that year, the town voted Ruggles a salary of one hundred thirty pounds, a substantial raise which would significantly increase his salary even if Quaker exemptions were retained.²³ Nevertheless, this was not the end of the struggle between town and minister; Ruggles would be involved in disputes with the town until his death in 1768. At times he brought lawsuits and even petitioned the General Court in attempts to

²¹Ibid., 1:78-84.

²²Ibid., 1:118, April 1727.

²³Ibid., 1:124, Mar. 9, 1729/30.

assert his rights.

The pettiness of the town's dealings with Ruggles serves to underscore the serious economic repercussions of the social changes Rochester experienced. A more complex social and political order brought increased expenses: costs of charity and relief; costs of lawsuits to which the town was party; increasing costs for schools, roads, animal pounds, and herring weirs. Not until after 1710 did Rochester begin to send a representative to the General Court; this, too, resulted in added expenditures for the town. These and other increased expenses coincided with increased population. Yet in spite of the fact that there were more taxpayers, the people felt less able to pay.

One of the first clear signs of the evolving factionalism in Rochester emerged in 1732. A challenge to the eligibility of some voters came in the warrant for May 19, 1732. The town was "to consider of a proper method for regulating town voters in town meetings."²⁴ No action was recorded, not for this meeting nor for the next three years. In June, 1735, however, the town reconsidered the matter and acted on the basis of this warrant article:

also to come unto some proper method whereby we may know who are accepted to vote and who are not by taking a list of the names of those qualified to be called over at town meetings

²⁴Ibid., 2:61L, May 19, 1732.

it now being a proper season it being
a valuation year.

The meeting empowered the selectmen to draw up a list of the voters,²⁵ a list which, unfortunately, was never entered into the record books.

The need to draw up such a list shows several things about developments in Rochester. First, it demonstrates that rapid population growth had made old methods of operation obsolete; it had once been possible to keep track of all voters without drawing up formal lists of residents. The challenge also shows the growth of factionalism in town politics; it was necessary to know how many voters lived in the town and who they were so that, in cases of close votes only properly qualified men participated in the town's actions.

The eastern part of town soon requested a separation from Rochester to become part of the new town of Wareham; residents of Mattapoissett likewise asked for separation. Geographic questions thus became the predominant concern for Rochester by the middle 1730's; the fires of conflict and instability would burn for many years. Sectionalism emerged as the main theme in Rochester's history after 1730.

The Ambivalence of the Quakers' Position

As the pattern of political and social life in

²⁵ Ibid., 2:74L, June 25, 1735 (warrant); 2:74R, June 25, 1735 (meeting).

Rochester became more intricate, the Quakers' situation grew likewise more complex and confusing. Records reflect perplexing inconsistencies in the way Rochester treated its Quakers. The town's formula for exempting Quakers from religious taxation occasionally broke down, and then Quakers' goods were seized for nonpayment. Such harassment is hard to understand, for alongside those incidents is evidence of the Quakers' active participation in the town, as officeholders and committee members.

Local conditions began to strain Rochester's formula for religious toleration in 1714, when the decision to build a new meeting house led to a conflict. The need for more space so soon after the original meeting house was built in 1698 testifies to rapid population growth. The first meeting house had been financed by voluntary contributions rather than by taxation. The 1714 deliberations about a new meeting house led to new discussions on ways to finance town improvements.

Since the meeting house was used for town meetings as well as for religious services, townsmen may have argued that Quakers should contribute. Whatever their reasoning, Rochester's citizens passed the following vote in May, 1714:

inhabitants voted that a new meeting house should be built at their cost & charge & of the dimensions following [forty feet long and thirty-five feet wide] to be suitably finished within & without as is customary to be done in the neighboring towns & to be accomplished so far as shall be needful

for the benefit of sd inhabitants
 some time before the last day of
 October, which will be in the year
 1715.²⁶

It seems significant that this was not the annual meeting; perhaps there was a deliberate marshalling of forces to pass this vote in the absence of Quakers. Whatever the strategy or method involved, the decision was overturned two months later; the town clerk recorded a unanimous decision to enlarge the old meeting house rather than building a new one.²⁷ No further change was recorded, but later references to the "new" meeting house may indicate still another reversal.²⁸

The changes of plan illustrate that the town was divided over how much money to spend; the question of who should pay did not receive further discussion in the Rochester town records. This omission is apparently an example of the clerk's reluctance to write down controversy, for Friends' records show that Quakers were forced, against their will, to contribute. Within the Quaker Meeting eight Rochester Friends complained that they had had goods, livestock, or money confiscated by Constable Edward Bumpus,

²⁶Roch. Town Rec., 1:75, May 14, 1714.

²⁷Ibid., 1:76, July 13, 1714.

²⁸Ibid., 1:94, Sept. 5, 1717. James Winslow was to be paid for future services sweeping the new meeting house and for sweeping the old one in the past.

"for ye meeting house rate," or, as others expressed it, "for building ye Presbyterian meeting house."²⁹

Forcing the Quakers to pay for the new meeting house certainly constituted harassment; yet it is significant that such harassment occurred at a time when the town faced financial difficulty. The next major period of oppression of Quakers in Rochester came at another time of financial instability--Timothy Ruggles's 1727 challenge to the Friends' exemption from contributing to his salary. The town's response to Ruggles's action was slow in unfolding. In 1728 they voted him the same amount in salary that he had rejected the previous year; his insistence on taxing the Quakers was eventually honored, however. In mid-1729 the constables for 1728 seized the possessions of twelve Quakers as a contribution toward Ruggles's salary. Again the Friends recorded their sufferings, for example:

Taken from Gideon Gifford fifteen shillings in money it being money the constable owed him taken for Timothy Ruggles priest of Rochester in the county of Plymouth . . . by Jon Winslow Constable of sd town.

²⁹Society of Friends, Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, "Sufferings, 1688-1720," 29-30 (1717). Hereafter referred to as RIQM. "Sufferings" is the term used by Friends to refer to material losses resulting from their adherence to their religious beliefs. "Presbyterian" is commonly used by Quakers in Rochester and Dartmouth to refer to the orthodox religion. Quakers who lost property at this time were John Summers, Nicholas Davis, Elisha Wing, Shubal Barlow, John Wing, Stephen Wing, Jabez Hillard, and Jeremiah Griffeth.

Taken from Jabez Hilyard seventeen pounds of sheeps wool for the sd priest rate by Ebenezer Barlow constable of sd town.³⁰

These incidents, like compelling the Quakers to contribute to the meeting house, were based primarily on the town's real or imagined need for funds.

Beginning in 1729 there was a series of appeals to the town meeting to exempt Quakers from taxation, but the town simply did not act on these warrant articles; neither do the records mention any discussion of the issue. Either disagreements prevented action or the town simply chose to deny the requests by not taking action. Shortly before the confiscations of Quaker property in June, 1729, the following warrant item failed to receive the desired action:

to pass a vote that those that are professed Quakers may be free'd from paying to the ministers rate for ye present yr 1729 those that are the chief men among³¹ them to give a list of their names.

On several other occasions it was the constables who requested the exemptions, presumably to spare themselves from

³⁰Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, "Earliest Sufferings," 23, recorded 1731 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 4). Hereafter cited as NEYM. Those Friends whose sufferings are recorded are Jon Wing, Gideon Gifford, Nathan Barlow, John Summers, Jeremiah Griffen, Jabez Hillyard, Savory Clifton, Joel Ellis, Elisha Wing, Dorothy Wing (widow of Joseph Wing), Nicholas Davis, and Stephen Wing.

³¹Roch. Town Rec., 1:86, May 5, 1729, warrant for meeting May 19, 1729.

collecting the bills forceably.³² In these cases, too, the town failed to act. The result was to reinforce Ruggles's renunciation; the town in effect ended its traditional policy of Quaker exemptions at this time. Ironically, a law passed by the Massachusetts General Court in 1728 made Quaker exemptions mandatory throughout the colony.

Harassment unrelated to Rochester's financial crises also occurred occasionally. For example, Quakers' goods were sometimes seized for failure to attend military training. In 1717, when eight Quakers were forced to contribute to the meeting house, four of those same men also complained that the "militia clerk" James Winslow seized goods because they would not train.³³ Three similar instances occurred later. In 1719, Jeremiah Leavitt, "clerke of the Trainband in Rochester" seized a "felt hatt" and a silk neckcloth from John Wing, and a "p[ai]r of leather breeches" from Nicholas Davis.³⁴ In 1721, Leavitt struck again; he appropriated

³² Ibid., 1:92, Feb. 29, 1730/31, warrant for meeting Mar. 15, 1730/31; 1:128, May 8, 1731, warrant for meeting May 12, 1731.

³³ RIQM, "Sufferings, 1688-1720," 29-32 (1717). The men who suffered were John Summers, Nicholas Davis, Jabez Hiller, and Elisha Wing.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 37, 8/2/1719. The Quakers' method of referring to dates will be used when Quaker sources are cited. Eschewing the use of the "pagan" names for months and days of the week, Quakers used ordinal numbers instead. Until the calendar change of 1752, the first month was March. The dates are expressed by citing the day of the month first, then the month, then the year. For example, 4/7/1776 would be the fourth day of the seventh month, or July 4.

goods from Elisha Wing for his son's refusing to train.³⁵

As inexplicable as such random incidents are, it seems that the significant question to ask is why Quakers were so seldom punished for neglecting military responsibilities. Apparently either the Quakers generally did train or the town generally chose to ignore their absence. In either case, accommodation was being made, compromise in order to keep peace. Perhaps individual militia officers like Jeremiah Leavitt decided arbitrarily when and whom to coerce, or perhaps at these times the colony demanded greater participation in local militia units.

Two isolated incidents involving the seizure of Quaker goods for ministerial taxes during the early 1720's are even more puzzling. In 1721, Constable John Clap refused to return to Savory Clifton change due to Clifton after he paid other taxes. In 1724, Constable Joseph Haskell seized some money from David Irish, a wealthy Little Compton Quaker who had recently purchased more than five hundred acres of land in Rochester.³⁶ No ready explanation for these two incidents emerges. Perhaps personality clashes or the capriciousness of local officials was responsible.

In all, twenty-nine cases of individual suffering

³⁵ NEYM, "Earliest Sufferings," 6, 8/1721.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 6, 1721; p. 14, 15/9/1724. Irish's land purchase is recorded in Plymouth County Deeds, 17:46, May 4, 1721.

involving fourteen Rochester Quakers were recorded in the Friends' records between 1710 and 1735. Eight men were forced to contribute to the meeting house in 1717 and four of the same men suffered for failure to train in that same year; two men suffered in 1719; two in 1721; one in 1724 and twelve in 1729. An underlying current of hostility against Quakers may have existed to make such sufferings possible, but this resentment was usually curbed. As distressing as the seizure of their property must have been to Quakers, the amount of harassment they bore seems small.

One other aspect of discrimination against Quakers must be mentioned. During the early 1730's Rochester drew up lists of Quakers to be included in the town records. The General Court, giving way before pressure exerted by the crown had finally passed a colony-wide exemption of Quakers from ministerial taxation. The Rochester records stipulate that a 1732 list of twenty-six Quakers was drawn up by the selectmen, "agreeable to an act of the province made May 1731 to exempt persons commonly called Quakers from paying rates to the ministers."³⁷ Four names were added in 1733 and new lists were compiled in 1734, 1735, and 1736. These lists are reproduced in Table 8, in the Appendix.

In 1734 and 1735, however, the selectmen submitted only four names, and the Quakers themselves then had to

³⁷Roch. Town Rec., 2:59, July 18, 1732.

update the lists, claiming exemptions for additional members. The selectmen listed Savory Clifton, Elisha Wing, Stephen Wing, and John Wing (the son of the proprietor John Wing, who died in 1717). The Quakers then submitted the names of "those men that attend their meeting on the first day of the week," twenty-five additional names in 1734 (including the widow Mary Ellis), and twenty names in 1735.³⁸ In 1736, the selectmen again gave a full list, though it included only eighteen names.³⁹

No pattern in the personnel of the selectmen explains the reluctance to list all eligible Quakers in 1734 and 1735. In 1734, one of the selectmen, Samuel Wing, was himself included on the revised list submitted by the Friends. Perhaps what occurred during those years was a negotiating process. The town was naturally reluctant to lose tax revenue and listed only the leaders of the Quaker meeting; the Quakers were willing to extend exemption privileges as widely as possible and listed the maximum number of members. By 1736, a compromise had been reached and exemptions were granted to the most loyal Quakers, those who attended regularly and who were well-established residents of the community.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., 2:59, June 4, 1734; July 9, 1734; May 30, 1735; July 1, 1735.

³⁹ Ibid., 2:55, June 23, 1736.

⁴⁰ The compromise theory cannot be proved conclusively on the basis of available evidence, but there is much to

Illustrations of the harassment of Quakers cannot be denied nor can their significance be underestimated. Whatever the reason, the Rochester majority sometimes mistreated the Quakers in their midst. Too little is known about the experiences of Quakers in other towns, yet it would seem that Rochester's Quakers fared better than most Massachusetts Friends. A fuller understanding of the relationship between Friends and others in Rochester includes also consideration of the positive contributions made by Quakers to the town. During the years between 1710 and 1735, many Quakers served in various town offices. Table 7, in the Appendix, lists Quaker office-holders during these years.

The table shows that, for the most part, Quakers held "minor" town offices. It is unclear how much or how little

suggest that the Quakers were willing to be lenient in defining membership. This issue will be discussed more fully below, but the most interesting illustration of leniency is the case of Samuel Wing himself. As the youngest son of Quaker proprietor John Wing, Samuel, born in 1704 was certainly raised in the Friends' faith. When their father died in 1717, Stephen Wing was appointed guardian for his younger brother Samuel. Stephen remained a Quaker throughout his entire life, but Samuel was disowned from the Society when he married a non-Quaker woman in 1729. Disownment was an act of the Monthly Meeting, one level above Rochester in the Quaker organization. The local Rochester Meeting was apparently still willing to consider Samuel Wing a member. He was listed on all four of the 1730's lists of Quakers. His inclusion may reflect the fact that he attended meetings after being disowned or it may be the result of his family background. For guardianship see Plym. Probate Rec., 3:460. For disownment, Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes, Men Friends" (1727-1762), 22, 1/17/1729 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 52).

prestige was attached to such offices. They involved performing essential services for the town, and presumably, holding such an office indicated willingness to contribute time and effort for the betterment of the community. Three Quakers had especially long records of service during these years: Jabez Hiller, Stephen Wing, and Elisha Wing.

Election of Quakers to the office of constable was rare: only six Quakers were chosen for that office between 1710 and 1735. This shows that no systematic attempt was made to harass Quakers by placing them in this undesirable office.⁴¹ If chosen, Quakers usually refused to serve as constable and they were sometimes fined for their refusal, but refusal is not unique to Quakers and was in fact quite common. The records show that fewer Quakers served in town offices between 1715 and 1719 than in most other years and two were chosen constable; this may reflect the controversy at that time over the meeting house. Timothy Ruggles's challenge to the Quaker tax exemption, on the other hand, made no apparent impact on Quaker office holding.

If it is rare to find a Quaker serving as constable, it is equally rare to find a Friend holding the office of selectman at this time. Elisha Wing served in that office

⁴¹John M. Bumsted has suggested that Rochester deliberately harassed its Quaker residents by choosing them to be constable. He maintains that the town's intention was to raise revenue by fining Quakers for refusal to serve in the office. Bumsted, "Pilgrims' Progress," p. 44.

in 1723 and again the following year. In 1729, the twenty-five year old Samuel Wing launched a distinguished political career which was to last more than forty years. Samuel Wing served as selectman several times, beginning in 1731, and also held such offices as town clerk, town treasurer, and representative to the General Court.

The careers of Elisha Wing, Stephen Wing, and Samuel Wing provide a contrast which illustrates clearly some of the changes which occurred between 1710 and 1735, changes in the way Quakers were perceived by the rest of the town and in the way they perceived themselves. Elisha Wing, a cousin of proprietor John Wing, was one of the youngest and longest-lived of the first generation of Rochester's settlers. Born in 1669, Elisha Wing lived until 1757; he apparently came to Rochester sometime during the 1690's and in 1698 served as a selectman. He held that office again in 1703, 1723, and 1724, and was the only Quaker to be selectman between 1704 and 1731.

Though he served only four terms as selectman, Elisha Wing's important role in town politics is illustrated in other ways. His neighbors apparently regarded him as a fair and impartial man, for he served several times as moderator for town meetings. During the early 1720's he was moderator for two meetings at which the town discussed the colony's

loan money.⁴² He served for more than ten years as surveyor of highways, an office usually regarded as the most important of the "minor" positions. Much of Elisha Wing's land was apparently in the section of Rochester which separated to become part of Wareham. Unlike the parent town, Wareham seldom elected Quakers to town offices, and Wing's political career ended with the creation of the new town.

At the same time he served in town offices, Elisha Wing was also an active member of the Society of Friends. He frequently served as a "visitor," an important lay position within the Meeting, and also held important committee posts. Elisha Wing is one of the Friends in Rochester who consistently suffered for his beliefs. These sufferings, juxtaposed with his service as moderator, selectman and surveyor of highways, illustrate the ambivalent treatment Rochester accorded its Quakers.

Stephen Wing, like Elisha Wing, served important functions within the Quaker Meeting and consistently suffered for his Quaker beliefs. Unlike him, Stephen Wing never broke the pattern of minor office holding which is characteristic of Quakers during this era. Stephen Wing was fifteen years younger than Elisha; the eldest son of proprietor John Wing, Stephen was born in 1684 and grew up in Rochester. He was an

⁴²Roch. Town Rec., 1:104, Oct. 24, 1721; 1:108, Nov. 20, 1723.

active Quaker during his entire adult life and his two children, both daughters, remained Friends. In addition to his Quaker activities, Stephen Wing held minor town offices in Rochester regularly. Beginning in 1708 at the age of twenty-four, Stephen Wing served as fence viewer twenty-three times by 1745. He also served a few terms as surveyor of highways. Stephen Wing could not be counted among the powerful and visible political leaders of Rochester but he was willing to serve the town, performing necessary tasks in a quiet and unspectacular way.

Samuel Wing, on the other hand, rose to great political prominence; he ranks as one of the most important political leaders of Rochester's entire history. Born in 1704, he was the youngest son of proprietor John Wing. He is distinctive because he repeated the pattern established for leadership in the early years of the town's history: he began service when quite young and held high office immediately and repeatedly throughout his lifetime. Significantly, however, his preeminence in politics came at the expense of his religious views.

Samuel Wing's marriage to Anne Barlow⁴³ led to his

⁴³ Anne's father was proprietor Moses Barlow, an important resident of the Mattapoissett section of town. Moses, a relative of Quaker Aaron Barlow, was a member of the Congregational church. Anne, born in 1697, was seven years older than her husband. They were married in January 1728/29 by Timothy Ruggles. Marriage recorded in Roch. Town Rec., 1:27.

dismissal from the Society of Friends. Though he apparently continued to attend Quaker Meetings, at least during the early 1730's, Samuel Wing never held responsible positions within the Society of Friends. He apparently never applied to be reinstated into good standing⁴⁴ and the fact that none of his children remained Quakers further suggests that he strayed from the Friends' faith.

Thus, there are three patterns for Quaker office-holding during the 1710-1735 period. Elisha Wing, representative of the first generation of Rochester settlers, was able to combine important leadership in the community with leadership in the Rochester Friends' Meeting. Brothers Stephen and Samuel Wing, twenty years apart in age, provide opposite models of political participation for the succeeding generations of Rochester Quakers. Most Quakers who held office, like Stephen Wing, were content to combine minor political roles with religious leadership. Samuel Wing, on the other hand, sought an active political role but renounced religious leadership in order to attain his goal.

Although disowned by the Quaker Meeting, Samuel Wing apparently served both as an apologist for the Quakers

⁴⁴ It was not unusual for someone to be reinstated after being disowned for such a marriage. The person would confess that he or she was sorry to have violated Quaker teachings with respect to marriage. If the Meeting believed he or she was sincere, the person could be reinstated into good standing with the marriage intact.

and as a mediator between Friends and the rest of the community. Because of his prestige in the community and his familiarity with legal procedures, he was sometimes called upon in a personal capacity to help Quakers deal effectively with secular institutions. For example, he was involved in drawing up inventories for the estates of Joel Ellis in 1731, Joseph Benson, Sr., in 1737, and Jabez Hiller in 1755. He served as executor of the estate of Shubal Barlow in 1770.⁴⁵ None of these men was closely related to Samuel Wing; his role in settling these estates illustrates his relationship as a liaison between Quakers and the society at large.

In his official capacity as town officer, Samuel Wing also spoke for the Quakers. The most obvious example is Wing's behavior as town clerk. The importance of the individual town clerk's decisions must be stressed; each clerk decided what he would or would not write down in the town records. Samuel Wing, when he was clerk, tended to mention issues which involved Quakers. For example, when the family of Benjamin Burge requested charity from the town in 1729, Town Clerk Samuel Wing was careful to record in the minutes the names of those who donated food and other necessities to help the Burges.⁴⁶ Seven of the ten donors

⁴⁵Plym. Probate Rec., 7242-O.S. Joel Ellis, 1902-O.S. Joseph Benson, Sr., 10113-O.S. Jabez Hiller, 962-O.S. Shubal Barlow.

⁴⁶Roch. Town Rec., 1:123, Dec. 23, 1729. Contributors were Quakers Elisha Wing (6s 3p), Nathan Jenne (6s), Stephen Wing (5s), Savorie Clifton (2s 3p), John

were Quakers, though the Burges were not. The notation of the contributions and the format in which it was recorded are unusual. Though such information was not generally included in Rochester's town records, Samuel Wing chose to mention an incident which showed the Quakers as good citizens, compassionate and generous to those in need.

The town reimbursed those who contributed to the Burge family. Nevertheless, the Quakers' willingness to help their neighbors gives important insight into their own feelings about their place in the community. The charity to the Burge family took place only a few months after twelve Friends, including four of the seven donors to the Burges, had suffered for failure to pay religious taxes. The Quakers' generosity in the face of the town's mistreatment of them speaks eloquently of their desire to put their religious beliefs into action in their daily lives.

This magnanimity combined with the record of Friends in holding town offices shows that the Quakers in Rochester wanted to participate in community life to the full extent that their consciences would allow. Eschewing military drills and a ministry paid through taxation, the Quakers apparently sought to compensate for not participating in

Mendall, Jr. (2s 3p), Samuel Wing (4s 6p), John Wing (7s 6p), and non-Quakers James Foster (6s 8p), Ebenezer Barlow (2s 6p), John Clapp (5s). The record lists commodities donated and their value.

those areas by performing other services for the town. The years between 1710 and 1735 clearly saw a change in the nature of Friends' participation in town life, however. As time passed, Quakers could no longer expect to serve, as Elisha Wing had done, in active leadership posts in both town and Quaker Meeting. It became necessary for Quakers to choose between leadership in the secular or the religious realm. Most, like Stephen Wing, chose to put the Friends' Meeting first, but they did not renounce participation in the secular life of the town. Instead, they emphasized service rather than leadership in their secular lives. The decline in secular leadership by practicing Quakers accelerated during the years after 1730 and coincided with a general decline in the importance of religious diversity as a controversial issue in town life.

Between 1710 and 1735 in Rochester, rapid population growth was at the heart of changing social, political, and economic conditions. The town meeting, struggling to keep abreast of new circumstances, was at times ineffectual; indecisiveness and conflict were common as the meeting adopted new forms and discussed new issues. The impact of such changes on Quakers was perhaps even greater than on other residents of Rochester. Friends experienced ambivalent treatment at the hands of the town. The years after 1735 would see continuing change in Rochester, with geographic rivalries replacing religion as a controversial issue.

C H A P T E R I I I
"UNHAPPY CONTROVERSY IN THE
TOWN OF ROCHESTER"

The Fragmentation of the Community

The fragmentation of the Rochester community was accomplished through three geographic separations between 1735 and 1745. This trend, the most significant aspect of Rochester's experience between that time and the American Revolution, was related in complex ways to developments which had begun earlier and which continued after 1735: population growth, the existence of conflict, and the inability of the town meeting to resolve problems confronting the town. Fragmentation permanently altered the course of the town's political and religious development. The Quakers' position became less central than in earlier years. Although Rochester's political developments are thus less directly relevant to the analysis of the Quakers' lives, a general understanding of the town's political, social, economic, and religious concerns is essential in order to see the Quakers in an accurate perspective.

The three separations which occurred in Rochester were different from each other in cause and in result. In

1739, the eastern section of Rochester joined with the Agawam precinct of Plymouth to form the new town of Wareham. The other two separations involved the creation of precincts, subdivisions which established their own churches but remained part of the town of Rochester.¹ In 1736, Mattapoissett was set off as a precinct, and in 1744, the area near Snipatuit Pond (now known as North Rochester) became part of a new precinct which eventually included residents of several towns.

Distance from the meeting house was the reason most commonly used to justify requests for separation in Rochester, and apparently in other towns as well. All three Rochester regions mentioned distance as a factor behind the need for separation. In January, 1736, after residents of Mattapoissett had been authorized to create a new precinct, they asked to be a separate town because of distance. North Rochester residents joined with people in surrounding towns to petition the General Court for separation. They described themselves as people "who live in the remote skirts and

¹The terms "separation" and "fragmentation" as used here will refer to both the creation of new towns and the formation of new precincts. It is my impression that most groups, at the time they agitated for separation, would have preferred the complete independence of a new town, but regarded precinct status as preferable to the status quo. Documentation of this theory awaits a comparison of the records of many towns. In Rochester, while Wareham asked to be a separate town and was granted this right, Mattapoissett asked to be a town but instead became a precinct. Evidence for the north precinct is missing from the town records.

corners of the several towns aforesaid." Ironically Wareham, the only section to achieve the status of a new town, apparently made least use of distance as a reason for separation. There, the only extant reference to distance as a problem survives in an individual claim made after the new town was established. John Bumpus, questioned for failure to attend worship in Rochester, described "impotency of body that was the cause of his absenting himself the way being far and since the public worship has been set up near him he has duly attended on it."²

The Rochester residents' use of distance to justify separation may seem inappropriate in view of the town's history of scattered settlement. Residents had always lived far from the meeting house; traveling great distances to religious services was not new. Nor could separation be sought on behalf of the needs of school children, for the schoolmaster in Rochester had, since the early eighteenth century, traveled to four or five sections of the town to hold classes. A significant change in residents' attitudes toward distance had occurred: the widely scattered residential pattern created by the community's founders was used by their descendants in the 1730's to justify the fragmentation of the town. Increased population made it

²Roch. Town Rec. 2:75, Jan. 6, 1735/6; Massachusetts Archives, 115:225, June 13, 1747; Rochester Church Records, 1:47, Dec. 16, 1739.

possible to establish additional churches and thereby eliminate the necessity for long journeys to worship services.

In addition to distance, however, Wareham and the North Rochester area each added another justification for separation. Wareham's motivation was a financial one. Residents of the Agawam section of Plymouth courted some residents of Rochester to join them in founding a new town. Agawam had already achieved precinct status, but "upon more mature consideration of our circumstances finding ourselves too small and impotent to maintain public worship," asked to be joined with the easterly end of Rochester, whose inhabitants "have obtained a vote of the town to go off by ourselves."³ This alliance, a marriage of convenience between two regions which sought independence from their parent towns, had a basis in financial need. Yet knowledge of this situation is inadequate as an explanation of the original desires for separation.

The North Rochester residents were the most distant from the center of Rochester and probably had the most legitimate case for separation on those terms. Yet their 1747 petition to the General Court also contained the names

³Mass. Archives, 114:333-34, "Petition of residents of Agawam & the easterly end of Rochester to Establish a New Town," 1739. The vote of the town of Rochester referred to here, to grant precinct status to this group, went unrecorded in the town records.

of "some few who are uneasy respecting the ministry where they belong."⁴ The assumption that theological concerns spurred separation is an obvious one during these years of the Great Awakening. It is possible that there was real religious turmoil, but evidence also reveals that important political disaffection was a factor.⁵

While distance, economic expediency, and religious disagreement all affected Rochester residents' desire to form new towns or precincts, these motives cannot be considered a full explanation. The desire for greater opportunity to hold leadership positions and to participate in the decision-making process of the community seems to be a common feature of all three Rochester separations. Increasing population made it impossible for all those who desired political power to hold important town offices. This situation yields clues about unarticulated motivations for separation in Rochester.

Separation, however, was a last resort, tried only after other solutions had failed to provide sufficient

⁴Ibid., 115:225, June 13, 1747.

⁵See Bumsted, "Pilgrims' Progress," p. 393, note 23. Writing of the Great Awakening in this region, Bumsted cites "the tendency . . . to discuss the ecclesiastical disorders of the 1740's in terms of revival issues rather than stressing the continuation of various local issues only indirectly related to the revival." Though Bumsted does not mention the Rochester north precinct, events surrounding the creation of that precinct illustrate the commingling of religion with a long-standing political dispute. A detailed analysis of this situation appears below.

opportunity. Within the town meeting there had been earlier attempts to resolve the dilemma posed by growing numbers of potential office holders. The number of offices had been increased and some tasks had been delegated to committees or special agents. Still another tactic was a more frequent turnover among holders of high office. The position of selectman, dominated by three powerful men during the early eighteenth century, was later allotted to more men who served fewer terms.

Separation suggested itself after these measures proved inadequate. Creating new towns or precincts would produce more opportunities, and those involved in agitating for separation were generally men whom the high office of selectman had eluded. While individual ambition alone was not sufficient reason to cause separation, when such ambition combined with other factors, agitation was the result. Concern over the relative power of various sections of the town was one such factor. During the mid-1730's, selectmen were generally residents of the central section of Rochester or of the Sippican area, now the town of Marion.⁶

⁶Documentation of the place of residence of all selectmen is not possible. Residents of the areas which separated can be identified, those in Wareham and North Rochester by petitions to the General Court, and Mattapoissett residents by a 1740 precinct assessment list. More difficult is distinguishing between residents of the town center and the Sippican area, the regions which did not separate. Although the data are imprecise, it seems clear that there was a concentration of power in the hands of residents of the center and Sippican.

To individual ambition and geographic rivalries was added still another ingredient: concern over the declining political influence of once-powerful families. The economic and social position of prominent families was threatened by continued division of land holdings among increasing numbers of sons in successive generations. To this picture must be added the threat of loss of political influence by the sons and grandsons of the founders of the community, a loss related to increased population. In each Rochester separation, leaders of the movement for fragmentation included the middle-aged sons of men who had been powerful during the early eighteenth century. Detailed study of each separation will reveal the interplay of these three factors: individual ambition, concern with geographic identity, and pride in family position.

Mattapoissett had been accustomed to having representation among the selectmen during the early years of the eighteenth century. Benjamin Dexter, one of the three dominant men during those years was a Mattapoissett resident. Between 1710 and 1725 there was only one year during which no selectman was from Mattapoissett. Between 1726 and 1735, however, Mattapoissett was represented only three times.⁷

⁷In 1728 "Mr." Benjamin Hammond served and in 1733 and 1734, "Capt." Benjamin Hammond was elected. There were two men with this name but I believe the same man held this office during these three terms. I disagree with the

Thus, before the creation of the precinct, Mattapoissett was undoubtedly conscious of a waning of her influence in town politics.

Events in Mattapoissett after the formation of the precinct lend credence to the theory that power was important in motivating people to seek separation. In becoming a precinct Mattapoissett acquired certain rights: to establish a church, hire a minister, build a meeting house, and levy and collect taxes to finance these activities. No sooner had the residents set about these tasks than they began to quarrel bitterly among themselves. The prospect of freedom from Rochester had been a goal uniting Mattapoissett's people; decisions about how to mold the new institutions they would create proved to be divisive. Having obtained power, they had to delegate a few from their number to exercise it. The nature of the conflict in Mattapoissett during its early years is too complex for analysis here, yet exercise of the newly-won power was clearly the source of the disputes.⁸

published Hammond genealogy about which Benjamin Hammond held the military title. See Roland Hammond, History & Genealogy of the Descendants of William Hammond of London England and His Wife Elizabeth Penn through Their Son Benjamin of Sandwich and Rochester Massachusetts (Boston:1894).

⁸Mattapoissett's early records are filled with references to the problems: Mattapoissett Church Records, 1:11, Sept. 28, 1740; Mattapoissett Precinct Records, p. 5, Mar. 21, 1736/7; p. 9, May 1, 1738 (warrant); p. 10, May 1, 1738 (meeting); p. 11, May 14, 1739; p. 12, July 13, 1739; p. 13, Nov. 26, 1739; p. 14, Feb. 13, 1739/40; p. 15, Feb. 26, 1739/40. In addition, the Rochester Church received pleas from Mattapoissett for help in straightening out its affairs: Rochester Church Records, 1:[2L], April 21, 1738;

Members of Mattapoissett's most prominent families led in the organization of the precinct. Jabez Hammond, eldest son of proprietor John Hammond, was thirty-eight when the General Court recognized him as "one of the principal inhabitants of the new precinct," and designated him to convene the first meeting. Jabez's brother, Benjamin Hammond, Jr., was the precinct's first clerk. The first Precinct Committee consisted of Jabez's father, John Hammond; Capt. Benjamin Hammond, John's brother and also a proprietor; and Thomas Dexter, a member of another important proprietary family.⁹ Clearly the originators of the movement for independence in Mattapoissett were long-time residents who felt they had a stake in the community. As individuals, as

1:[2R], July 14, 1736; 1:40, Aug. 24, 1738. Mattapoissett also asked the General Court to intervene: Mass. Archives 12:1-16, 1738-39.

The dispute originally involved the hiring of Elisha Tupper as minister. Some opposed his ordination because he lacked a liberal education; he was never ordained, and Ivory Hovey became minister in 1740. An analysis of the opposing factions in the Tupper dispute, as revealed by signatures on petitions to the General Court, shows a dispute between two branches of the prominent Hammond family. Tupper subsequently married the daughter of Capt. Benjamin Hammond, and her brothers were Tupper's supporters. Another interesting aspect of the petitioning to the General Court is the following: "they could have it that the first imbodyed into a chh have more power then others . . . we rather think all brethren in chhs are equal as to the power of privilege whether first imbodyed or received after." The complexity of the situation, as illustrated by these aspects of the dispute, suggests a struggle for power rather than a religious turmoil.

⁹Matt. Prect. Rec., p. 2, June 9, 1736; Dec. 9, 1736.

family members, and as residents of a particular area of town, these men felt the need to solidify the political power they saw waning.

For Wareham, the situation was different. Wareham residents were more thoroughly excluded from high public office than men in Mattapoissett. When separation agitation began, thirty-one men from the northeastern section of Rochester signed petitions asking the General Court to allow them to join Agawam in creating a new town. Of those thirty-one signers, none had served as a selectman in Rochester. Quaker Elisha Wing was the only resident of this area who held any political power in Rochester, and significantly, Wing's name is not found on the separation petition.¹⁰

Yet many of those who signed were members of families which had been early Rochester residents. A comparison of the separation petition with the list of Rochester proprietors in 1712 shows that nearly two-thirds of the signers were members of those proprietary families.¹¹ Included among the signers were two sons of Peter Blackmer,

¹⁰Mass. Archives, 114:333-34, "Petition of Residents," 1739.

¹¹The 1712 list is the most recent compilation of proprietors. Because of the twenty year time lag no attempt was made to trace individuals, but comparison of surnames, in most, if not all cases, gives accurate indication of family relationships. Only sixteen surnames are represented in the thirty-one signers. Seven surnames (44%) borne by twenty individuals (64.5%) appear on the 1712 proprietors' list.

one of the three prominent men of an earlier political era. Blackmer, who did not himself live in the section which became Wareham,¹² married twice and fathered seven sons and three daughters. John Blackmer, born in 1690, presented to the Rochester town meeting a petition on behalf of the creation of Wareham in 1738. John and his brother William both signed the Petition to the General Court for the creation of Wareham.¹³

The Wareham region of Rochester was settled somewhat later than Mattapoissett and Sippican, the areas of original house lots. Fathers like Peter Blackmer who had many sons to provide for, might choose to settle some of those sons on lands they could select in outlying regions. But political power was less easily transferred, as the Blackmers' experiences illustrate. Of Peter Blackmers' sons, only Joseph, born in 1697, became a selectman in Rochester; he served only two terms, during the 1720's, a record which hardly matches his father's political eminence. Is it any wonder then, that elder sons William and John, living at a distance from the center of town, cut off physically and politically from the mainstream of town activities, opted for a new chance in a new community?

¹²In 1704 Peter Blackmer lived near Merry's Pond, an area still in Rochester today. Rochester Historical Society, 1704 Town of Rochester, Massachusetts (map showing residences, compiled 1969).

¹³Roch. Town Rec., 2:83L, Mar. 1, 1737/8; Mass. Archives, 114:333-34, "Petition of Residents," 1739.

For the northern section of town the story is even more complex. Petitioners for the creation of the north precinct had held political power in Rochester, but increasing political factionalism led them to seek separation. At the town's annual meeting in 1737, Noah Sprague, a selectman the previous year, protested against the new slate of officers. A warrant in the Rochester town records tells something about the incident:

ther[e] hath been an unhappy controversy in the town of Rochester respecting voters in town meetings in sd town & some part of the Freeholders or other Inhabitan^{ce} [sic] of sd town have already preferd a petition to the Great & General Court . . . by way of complaint against the town preceding respecting voters^s at their annual meeting in March last.¹⁴

The General Court ruled in favor of the dissidents; new elections were held and a new slate of officers was chosen. Noah Sprague was elected town clerk and held that office annually from 1737 through 1742. In 1742, Sprague was representative to the General Court, and he was a selectman in 1750 and 1751.

Although the details of the conflict are obscure, there can be no question that the separation of the north

¹⁴Ibid., 2:79L, Mar. 1, 1736/7; 2:80R, June 13, 1737 (warrant); 2:81L, July 6, 1737. The cited petition to the General Court has not been located. The controversy about the eligibility of the voters arose early in the 1730's and was discussed above. The final list of ninety-six eligible voters was submitted to the town in 1736, but was not, unfortunately, entered into the records.

precinct in 1744 was intimately related to this political dispute. Popular legend ascribed the split to a dispute between Minister Timothy Ruggles and Noah Sprague, who had so recently emerged as a political leader. Abraham Holmes, writing in 1836 at the age of eighty-two, told what he had heard as a boy about the separation:

Somewhere about the year 1750 an unhappy controversy arose between Mr. Ruggles and Noah Sprague, Esq. It began about some hay and there was not much of a Christian disposition on either side; both being men of great talents and influence, both gathered parties. But at that time ministers had an advantage they do not now possess and after Council and reconciliation becoming more and more impracticable Sprague and his party seceded and formed a full parish in the N.W. part of town, a part of Middleboro and a part of Freetown.¹⁵

Since Holmes was an old man, writing about events which had happened before his birth, his account must be used cautiously. Fortunately, other records corroborate the events he described, though he was wrong about the date.

The church records show that Ruggles accused Sprague of stealing some hay on March 21, 1739. Subsequent deliberations dominated the church records, kept by Ruggles himself. According to those records, Ruggles had a decided

¹⁵ Abraham Holmes, "Memoirs of Abraham Holmes, Esq." (1836), typescript copy, Rochester Historical Society, 75. Holmes's use of the words "unhappy controversy," a description previously used in the town records, suggests Holmes reviewed those records when preparing his memoirs.

advantage in church votes: Sprague was "suspended from participation in special ordinances" after members judged his behavior to be "sinful and scandalous" and a violation of the fifth and eighth commandments. A council held in July, 1739, apparently ruled against Sprague, for he ended up paying the expenses of the council.¹⁶

In 1744, Rochester residents living in the northwestern area of the town received from the General Court the right to establish a new precinct; in 1747 the Court enlarged the precinct and included residents of other towns as well. Noah Sprague was one of those signing the 1747 petition to the General Court. Of the signers, some claimed that they were too far from other churches and others were "uneasy respecting the ministry where they belong."¹⁷

It would be naive to blame a dispute "about some hay" for so much unrest, and it seems equally unlikely that the matter was based wholly on religious differences. Rather, it

¹⁶Roch. Church Rec., 1:42, Apr. 25, 1739; 1:43-44, June 21, 1739; 1:44, June 30, 1739; 1:44, July 13, 1739; 1:46, Dec. 11, 1739.

¹⁷Mass. Archives, 115:225, "Petition of Sundry Inhabitants of the towns of Rochester, Middleboro, Dartmouth, & Tiverton alias Freetown," June 13, 1747. This petition reviews the history of the precinct's creation in 1744, but the original 1744 petition has not been located. The Rochester Town Records do not mention this separation. There is no indication whether Noah Sprague's affiliation with the new precinct was based on his place of residence or only on his dispute with Ruggles. His father, Samuel Sprague, is known to have lived within the bounds of the first precinct, however.

seems that the creation of the north precinct marked a new direction in the continuing struggle over the exercise of political power. Wareham and Mattapoissett illustrate the formation of political subdivisions with definite geographic boundaries. The creation of the north precinct saw removal of the necessity of geographic integrity in a new precinct. The significance of the north precinct was in bringing together as a political and religious unit people whose bond was one of common beliefs rather than only geography.

Like leaders in the creation of the other subdivisions, Noah Sprague was seeking to follow in the footsteps of a politically eminent father. The elder Sprague, Samuel, who died in 1740, had served eleven terms as a selectman, mostly during the 1720's and 1730's; he was one of the most powerful political figures of his era in Rochester. His son Noah sought to attain a similar political position and was willing to sacrifice the town's unity in order to enhance opportunities for the exercise of political power.

The Rochester residents' justifications of the fragmentation of their town, although important, must thus be seen as only partial explanation of a very complex situation. Rochester found itself, during the 1730's, experiencing continued population growth, to the extent that there were not enough town offices to satisfy all who wanted to exercise power and responsibility. Rochester had been beset with

conflict for many years; the town meeting had been ineffectual in resolving disputes. In such a community it is easy to understand how frustrated ambitions could contribute to the dissolution of the community. But dissidents who sought the establishment of new towns or precincts were driven by forces greater than individual ambition. Such ambition was augmented by concern for the position of families and the power of particular regions of the community.

The solution sought by these men was, in a sense, patterned on a precedent set many years earlier: they would found new communities and mold new political and religious institutions. The reaction of the Rochester town meeting was equally conservative. Town records show only negative responses to residents' requests for separation. In 1732, Rochester resisted a proposal to build a "new" meeting house in Mattapoissett.¹⁸ It is not clear whether this was a separation request or an attempt to relocate the center of the town, but more explicit separation requests were submitted frequently during the remaining years of the decade.

Mattapoissett continued agitation for separation until the precinct was established in 1736. Even after the

¹⁸Roch. Town Rec., 2:59R, March 20, 1731/2.

precinct was created the area continued to request complete separation, the founding of a new town.¹⁹ Petitions for the separation of the Wareham area began during 1734, as this warrant article attests:

to consider a pition [sic] of Isaac Bumpus and sundry others with him to know by a vote whether the town will set them off part of the east end of the town, that they may join with Aggawam.²⁰

This particular request was refused by the town, as were similar requests in subsequent years.²¹

It was the General Court rather than the town which eventually granted separation. Petitions from Wareham and Mattapoisett were first addressed to the town; only after the town's refusal did these regions apply to the General Court. The north precinct, on the other hand, applying five years after the creation of Wareham, apparently went directly to the General Court without first petitioning the town. This suggests that a general procedural change was occurring. Rochester, like other towns, was undoubtedly confused and threatened by the possibility of fragmentation. The General Court, able to see a larger picture and traditionally

¹⁹Ibid., 2:75R, 76L, "Petition for a new town because of distance," Jan. 6, 1735/6; 2:79R, Mar. 15, 1735/6.

²⁰Ibid., 2:68L, Mar. 1733/4.

²¹Roch. Town Rec., 2:82R, Sept. 13, 1737; 2:83L, Mar. 1, 1737/8.

responsible for the creation of new towns, stepped in when Rochester refused to act.

The Rochester town records reflect this procedural change during the 1730's and 1740's. The records show separation requests from Wareham and Mattapoissett and the inevitable denials by the town. When the General Court intervened explanations in the records were minimal. The records show, in the case of Mattapoissett only that the town met to discuss the boundaries of the newly created precinct; details of its creation are absent from the records.²² For Wareham, the records show that Rochester voted its "consent" for the General Court's action.²³ By the time the north precinct was created, however, the General Court had taken over completely; the town records contain no mention of the separation.

It is not difficult to imagine at least one very good reason for Rochester's reluctance to see the separation of new towns and precincts. The creation of a new town brought a decrease in the original town's tax revenues. The creation of a precinct, on the other hand, would greatly increase the town's expenses: two ministers and two meeting houses would have to be maintained by the same group of taxpayers which had formerly supported only one church. For example, the

²²Ibid., 2:75R, 76L, Jan. 6, 1735/6.

²³Ibid., 2:87L, May 24, 1739.

Rochester town budget for 1736, when Mattapoissett precinct was created, called for raising one hundred eighty pounds for ministers' salaries. Of this sum, Timothy Ruggles was to receive one hundred thirty pounds, the same amount he had been voted the previous year. The other fifty pounds for the Mattapoissett minister represented a new town expense.²⁴

Rochester, with its history of preoccupation with financial matters must have felt particularly threatened by reductions in the number of taxable acres and polls and by increased expenses. The period of the fragmentation, as reflected in the town records, was one of continuing concern about finances. The town had trouble raising money for the schoolmaster's salary: a 1738 warrant asked the residents "to provide the town with a School ye Town being near Destitute."²⁵ Appeals for charity continued, appearing frequently during and after the fragmentation period.

The extreme difficulty Rochester experienced in getting men to serve as constable further testifies to the financial malaise of the town. Collecting taxes was apparently difficult during periods of financial unrest. In the mid-eighteenth century those chosen for this office in Rochester frequently refused to serve. Some men paid a fine

²⁴Ibid., 2:76R, Mar. 15, 1735/6; 2:72L, Mar. 17, 1734/5. After 1736, the Mattapoissett Precinct met separately to handle payment of its minister.

²⁵Ibid., 2:84R, Aug. 14, 1738, warrant.

of five pounds to avoid serving; others hired substitutes to serve in their stead. Some were successful as they begged the town to reconsider and choose another candidate; others were sued by the town because they would neither serve nor pay for an exemption. The town meeting spent a great deal of time each year in filling this apparently distasteful office; other time was spent deliberating pleas from men who had served and had been unable to collect all the money they were required to turn in to the town. Table 2 shows how many men were nominated constable each year before two willing candidates were found. The period of fragmentation, 1735-1745, was the most difficult era.

The financial insecurity Rochester had felt during the 1720's was a background to the requests for separation. Such requests surely aroused fears that the town's stability would be further jeopardized. Although town clerks did not record the reasons the town refused to sanction separation, financial concerns explain Rochester's desire to block the creation of new towns and precincts.

On both sides of the fragmentation issue was a narrow perspective, a focus on the immediate situation rather than on the long-range implications of the decisions made. Those who engineered the sub-division of Rochester apparently never articulated an appreciation for the long-range significance of their actions. It is ironic, therefore, that these actions were crucial in shaping the course of

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF CONSTABLE NOMINEES, * 1735-1760

Year	Constable Nominees	
	Annual Number	Five Year Totals Averages
1735	8	
1736	5	
1737	7	
1738	6	
1739	6	
1740	3	32 6.4
1741	9	
1742	9	
1743	4	
1744	3	28 5.6
1745	11	
1746	2	
1747	3	
1748	3	
1749	3	22 4.4
1750	3	
1751	8	
1752	4	
1753	4	
1754	2	21 4.2
1755	5	
1756	2	
1757	3	
1758	2	
1759**	5	17 3.4
1760	6	(6) (6.0)
TOTAL, 1735-1760		126 4.85

* Number of men asked in order to find two men who would consent to serve.

** Records for 1759 are illegible; five names can be deciphered but it is possible that even more men were chosen.

Rochester's history: changes in the political and religious institutions of the community had lasting effects on future generations of Rochester residents. The aftermath of fragmentation was a significant adjustment period for the town as a whole and for the Quaker segment of the population.

The most obvious change which accompanied the creation of the precincts within Rochester was an alteration in the purposes and responsibilities of the town meeting. The town retained its duty to provide roads and schools and to deal with other towns and with the colony government. The functions lost by the town were those related to the maintenance of the churches. The precincts decided such questions as the amount of the ministers' salaries and the location of the meeting house. Precincts chose officers and committees and one of their major duties was the assessment and collection of religious taxes.²⁶

Along with the division of governmental authority, however, there surely occurred a more subtle change. This was a change in the relationship of the residents to their town government. The town had been the citizens' main point of identification with and participation in governmental

²⁶The creation of Mattapoissett automatically made necessary the creation of a "first" precinct to handle church business for the original town church, business which had previously been handled by the town meeting. Town records contain no mention of the creation of the first precinct or of its business, but Ruggles's salary and other church related matters ceased to be mentioned soon after the creation of Mattapoissett.

processes. The creation of the precinct as a "lower" level, one closer to the people, took from the town its undivided claim on the attention and loyalties of its residents.

There is no written record which expressly documents a dilution in the strength of the town's hold on its citizens. Nowhere has anyone recorded his feelings that the creation of Mattapoissett or of the north precinct gave him a new and closer political affiliation than he had felt to the town itself. Yet in spite of a lack of explicit evidence, it could hardly have been otherwise. The very process of requesting separation from the parent town surely created and nurtured loyalty to the precinct. Resistance by the parent town can only have strengthened the persistence and determination of those who sought separation. The use of newly won power must likewise have reinforced identification with the new precinct at the expense of the town. Abraham Holmes commented on the sentiment of Mattapoissett residents:

For some reason (unknown to me) there has long subsided in the minds of the people of Mattapoissett, a distrust of the people in the first precinct, and they looked on²⁷ them with an eye of extreme jealousy.

Likewise for North Rochester the disputes continued for some time after the creation of the precinct. Since there was no

²⁷ Holmes, "Memoirs," p. 66. Although Holmes was speaking about his own lifetime, probably during the early nineteenth century, he seems to imply that the distrust originated earlier.

definite geographic boundary here, questions about the "membership" were particularly common. For example, in 1756, Timothy Stevens asked to be reunited with the first precinct. The incident provoked much strong feeling on both sides and it illustrates the intensity of people's loyalty to their precinct.²⁸

Still another aspect of the change which occurred in Rochester was emergence of the precinct as a potential voting faction within the town. Residents of the same precinct did not always agree on all questions. Yet many of the decisions left to the town as a whole had the potential to arouse geographic rivalries: the priorities of building new roads, the provision for schools, herring weirs, and other town services were issues on which voting was likely to be based on geographic loyalties. The frequent dissension over road-building which was reported in Rochester's town records for the 1740's may reflect the power of the newly-formed precincts to influence town actions.

The best evidence of the existence of factions based on the precincts can be found again in Abraham Holmes's memoirs. He mentioned particularly the cohesiveness of Mattapoissett residents. Furthermore, Holmes described a system for dividing the important town offices in Rochester between various regions of the town:

²⁸Mass. Archives, 13:764 [1756].

It had been considered for years that the interest of the town would be better served if the three Selectmen should be located in the outside quarters of the town, and that for the accomodation of all the inhabitants, that the Town Clerk and Treasurer should be located in the center district. This principle for a number of years had been reduced to practice.²⁹

Holmes does not indicate when such an arrangement was adopted, but seems to suggest that it evolved gradually.

Town records for the 1750's reflect discussions about the methods of choosing selectmen, and this is apparently related to attempts to achieve regional balance. In 1752, the clerk recorded a vote that the selectmen would be the three men with the most votes.³⁰ Someone had obviously proposed a different method, perhaps one based on geographical principles. In 1756, the clerk noted the decision to choose three selectmen.³¹ Three was the usual number; apparently someone had proposed a change, perhaps to allow representation of all sections of the town. The system described by Holmes was probably not adopted until late in the eighteenth century. Before that time, however, allocation of town offices gradually became more equitable than before fragmentation. The pressure exerted by the

²⁹Holmes, "Memoirs," p. 66.

³⁰Roch. Town Rec., 2:116R, Mar. 19, 1752.

³¹Ibid., 2:125R, Mar. 8, 1756.

organized precincts within the town meeting apparently brought greater balance.

The precincts' ostensible purpose was the management of religious activities, yet it is clear that in addition to their religious functions, the precincts emerged as political subdivisions motivated by concerns of power. They saw themselves in rivalry with each other and with the town as a whole. It was in this role that the precincts were able to face a long-standing community problem: the inability of the town meeting to resolve conflict.

The town meeting had long been ineffective in handling conflict. Rochester, like other towns, frequently sought outside intervention in handling conflicts. Appeals to courts and even to the General Court of the colony were a common part of Rochester's experience; church disagreements were frequently referred to councils. The creation of precincts neither eliminated conflict nor removed the necessity for seeking outside intervention. By producing a system through which differences of opinion could legitimately be expressed within the community, however, the fragmentation of the community provided an important modernization of the town's institutional structure.

The lasting significance of the fragmentation of Rochester, then, was the creation of an institutional structure able to serve a population increasing in numbers and diversity. This new structure reduced the work-load of

the town meeting by assigning some of its duties to the precincts. Furthermore, it de-personalized citizens' involvement with the town government by providing a "lower" level of government. At this new level were increased opportunities for office-holding and participation in local government--opportunities demanded by a growing population. Finally, the new institutional structure made it possible for the community to redefine the significance of conflict: inevitable differences of opinion, rather than being a mark of failure, were legitimate and necessary.

Quakers in a Changing Community

The changed institutional structure of Rochester is the context in which the Quakers' relationship to the community must be studied after 1735. This was not the first major institutional change in Rochester: early in the eighteenth century, the town meeting had superseded the proprietary as the major governing body. At that time, the Quakers had shared in the transition and had benefited by the transfer of power to the hands of resident landowners. By the 1730's, however, as the citizens made adjustments to new realities of town life, they created a political and religious institution, the precinct, which was incompatible with Quakers' religious views. The elevation of the place of the established religion in town life demonstrates the existence of a widening breach in attitudes between Quakers

and other residents of the community.

Such a breach was not caused by one group only: ideas on both sides were growing and developing. The town created new institutions in response to changing political and social conditions. This inevitably affected the Friends. But Quakers in Rochester had, even before the fragmentation of the community, lost interest in the pursuit of political power. They played no role in the political machinations which surrounded the requests for the creation of the town of Wareham or the new precincts within Rochester. Fragmentation was not a deliberate attempt by the town to exclude Quakers from town life, but was, in part, the result of conscious choices being made by Friends themselves. During the 1750's and 1760's the issue of military service for Friends emerged as a new factor in the relationship between Quakers and the town.

Rochester's town records for the years after 1735 are more perfunctory than for earlier times, perhaps because the creation of the precincts removed so much responsibility from the town. Quakers as a group are not mentioned in the town records, and references to individual Friends seem scarcer than in earlier years. Furthermore, the exclusion of Quakers from the precincts was formally acknowledged in various records.

In Mattapoisett, for example, the 1736 charter for the precinct, or religious society, specifically exempted

both Quakers and Baptists from religious taxation³²; records suggest that Quakers did not attend or participate in precinct meetings. Not only were Quakers excluded from these new institutions, they were considered a liability because they owned land but did not pay religious taxes. A 1756 petition by the north precinct to the General Court, describing the precinct's residents, says, "few inhabitants are included & some of them Quakers which makes the burthen lye heavy on us being a weak & infant parrishe." The petition estimated that the first parish contained two hundred polls while the third parish had seventy-five.³³ It is no wonder that this small precinct, struggling for financial survival, sometimes had difficulty viewing Quakers with tolerance and generosity.

Although Friends were excluded from Rochester's newest institution, the precinct, several of the leading Quaker men nevertheless remained active in its oldest, the proprietary. In 1759, six Quakers joined with a group of other members of the proprietary to request a meeting of that body to facilitate the final division of land and the "termination" of the group.³⁴ Quakers' participation in this

³²Information about the charter is contained in a mimeographed history of the Mattapoissett Congregational Church and precinct prepared and distributed by the church. The charter itself is now in the possession of the church.

³³Mass. Archives, 113:764 [1756].

³⁴Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:26, Nov. 1, 1759. Most names have only a first initial, but identification is

effort indicates an apparent relationship of cooperation between them and others in the proprietary. Quakers themselves thus helped bring about the end of an institution in which they played an important part.

If the Quakers were isolated because of their inability to participate in the precincts and the declining importance of the proprietary, two factors can be identified as contributing to the Quakers' integration within the community. First, the Quakers' residences were scattered throughout the community, rather than being clustered together. Some Quakers lived in the region which had become Wareham, some lived in Mattapoissett, some in Sippican, and others near Snipatuit Pond. As a result, Quakers came into daily contact with people who held more conventional religious views, and non-Quakers in all sections of town knew at least a few Quakers personally. Surely such contact must have helped to ease tensions and to promote friendly relationships.

The Quakers' status as members of the community's

possible in most cases. Signers of the call to meet were: Nath. Landers, Phil. Bumpus, S. Hiller, S. Briggs, C. Briggs, Barzil. Hammond, Aaron Griffith, S. Tripp, Eliz. Wing, T. Ruggles for self & M. Gill, S. Wing, N. Sprague, B. Wing, E. Briggs, C. Wing, W. Blackmer, J. Bumpus, T. Whitten, S. Briggs. In addition to former Quaker Samuel Wing, six signers were probably Quakers in good standing: Seth Hiller, Aaron Griffith, Samuel Tripp, Elizabeth Wing, Butler Wing, and Clifton Wing. Among the non-Quakers, the surnames are those of prominent families.

founding families was a second important factor. Of the Quaker men who could be described as active in community life between 1735 and 1760, only one, Roger Braley, was neither the son nor the son-in-law of a long-time resident. Most of the Quaker families held proprietary shares. This long residence in the community surely brought Friends some measure of respect. It is unfortunate that no tax records survive to provide information about the relative wealth of Quakers; such information would be useful in investigating the impression that at least some Quakers retained extensive land holdings.

This complex network of positive and negative factors makes it difficult to characterize the Quakers' position in the life of the Rochester community. A series of dealings between the town and Aaron Griffith during the 1750's illustrates the complexity of the situation. Griffith had an impressive family background: the grandson of Aaron Barlow, he had married Elizabeth, the daughter of prominent Quaker Jabez Hiller. After the death of his father-in-law in 1755, Aaron Griffith sought from the town clarification of a 1708 agreement concerning a town landing on Hiller's property.

Hiller had agreed to build a wharf for the use of the town, and in return he was entitled to collect "one shilling in money for each and every boat load of what sort soever" which was transported across his land. The privilege of maintaining this landing place was granted, by the town

meeting, to Hiller and to his "heirs and assigns forever."³⁵ By the time Aaron Griffith came into possession of this land, however, conditions in the town had changed greatly. Griffith asked "that something may be done respecting people's landing timber &c on his land under pretense of a former vote relating to a landing place."³⁶ What had been, in 1708, a mutual benefit to Jabez Hiller and the entire town had clearly become a nuisance fifty years later.

Griffith wanted the town to modernize its policy, to raise the fee to conform to current economic conditions, and to insure that the policies would be enforced and the fees paid. The town's response to each of at least three requests made by Griffith was to delay. In each case the meeting appointed someone to investigate and report back to another meeting. No record of subsequent action by the town can be found in the records.³⁷

The town's failure to grant what seems like a reasonable request, although it might seem to be harassment against Griffith because he was a Quaker, was probably no more than the town's usual reluctance to act on financial

³⁵Roch. Town Rec., 1:70, May 12, 1708.

³⁶Ibid., 2:133L, May 19, 1760.

³⁷For Griffith's other requests see: Ibid., 2:125L, Mar. 8, 1756 (warrant); 2:125R, Mar. 8, 1756 (meeting); 2:137L, Mar. 18, 1762. The records are very difficult to read in some spots, but no record of action after the 1762 request could be found.

matters. Aaron Griffith, though he grew up as a Friend and probably continued to attend the Meetings for Worship, was not one of the most zealous Friends and seems an unlikely target for discrimination.³⁸

Procrastination and inaction had long been characteristic of the Rochester town meeting, and this was particularly true when money was involved. No similar case in the town records shows Rochester's treatment of a non-Quaker, but the town meeting handled many other cases in the same slow and indecisive manner as they handled Aaron Griffith's requests. The fact that Griffith took his case to the town meeting in the first place may tell us something about his attitudes. He apparently did not expect to be the target of discrimination but expected to receive the same treatment which would be accorded any other town resident.

Other Quakers apparently felt, as Aaron Griffith did, that they were participating members of the community.

³⁸Griffith's name can be found only once in the Quaker records: Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1727-1762), 112, 3/1737. Griffith and his wife sent in to the Monthly Meeting a repudiation of past wrongdoings. The records do not give details about the incident, but the offense seems to have been the common error which the Quakers delicately referred to as "having a child too soon after marriage." The couple was married in June, 1736, and their first child, Jabez, was born in August of that year. There are no subsequent references in the records to disciplinary action against the parents; they apparently were not disowned. There is no proof that they remained active Quakers after this time, but a search of the records of the established churches in Mattapoisett and Rochester center failed to show any association with either of those churches. The couple probably continued to attend Quaker Meeting.

They felt a willingness and even a responsibility to contribute their talent to the community. Thus, Quakers continued a pattern which they had established in the past. Table 7, in the Appendix, showing Quaker office-holding, illustrates a continuing trend toward service rather than political power in the 1736-1760 period. Without aspiring to rise to the highest offices, Quakers were willing to hold lower positions. As fenceviewers, hog reeves, and sealers of lumber, for example, Quakers performed unglamorous tasks necessary for the smooth running of the community. These contributions, however, may have been valued less than in the past, since the town meeting had ceased to be the chief arena for civic activity.

Only Samuel Wing held high office, but his defection from the Society of Friends makes his inclusion on a list of Quakers questionable. As selectman, town clerk and representative to the General Court, Samuel Wing continued both to represent the interests of the Quaker community and to serve as a liaison with other segments of the town. For those who remained active in the Society of Friends, however, there existed an incompatibility between high office and religious principle. This conflict, less definite for earlier generations of Quakers, had apparently been clearly established for Samuel Wing's generation. For example, Seth Hiller, who was only one year younger than Samuel Wing, was named a selectman in 1745, at the age of forty. Hiller, an

active Quaker, declined the office and was replaced by Samuel Wing. Hiller was the last practicing Quaker to be chosen for the selectman's office during the colonial era.

Most Quakers who served in the lesser town offices were sons born into old Quaker families.³⁹ Other men in the community followed their fathers' patterns in seeking political power and responsibility. So, too, did the Quakers establish family precedents, sometimes for office-holding in general and occasionally for a specific office. For example, Jabez Hiller was a perennial holder of the office of sealer of lumber (or sealer of shingles); following his death in 1755, his son, Seth, became an equally frequent holder of the same office.

But long family tradition cannot be the only explanation for Quaker office-holding. Roger Braley, a newcomer to the community, got actively involved in town affairs shortly after his arrival about 1740. Braley, who lived near Snipatuit Pond, held office during the late 1740's and 1750's. In 1768 he served with several prominent non-Quakers on a committee to study the town's system of

³⁹Only five exceptions to this rule can be found. Roger Braley and his brothers-in-law Edmond Shearman and John Shearman, 2nd, were new arrivals to the town. Samuel Tripp, originally from Dartmouth, married one of two daughters of Stephen Wing, who had no sons, and lived on Wing's land. Jeremiah Devol was excused from service because he was actually a resident of Dartmouth. The location of the town line was in dispute at this time.

road maintenance.⁴⁰ Braley's experience seems to show that Quakers did not serve in Rochester town offices solely because of long-standing family association with the community. Rather, they followed individual inclinations when it came time to make decisions about community involvement.

Quakers were sometimes chosen for the distasteful office of constable during this era. Friends' religious scruples against serving as constable were based on the necessity to collect religious taxes. Such scruples did not protect Quakers from being chosen; the town granted the Friends no special exemption. Rather, Quakers were treated exactly as were other residents of the community. Some Quakers appointed constable were later exempted by the town; others paid fines or hired substitutes and a few actually served in the office. In 1743, Samuel Wing served as the substitute for Nathan Jenne, a Quaker. This incident is an example of Wing's protecting Quakers by mediating between them and the town; it was unusual for so prominent a man as Samuel Wing to serve as constable and unprecedented for him to agree to be a substitute for another. Table 3 shows the

⁴⁰Some of the many land transactions involving Roger Braley include his sale of land in Middleborough and a subsequent purchase of several lots in Rochester: Plymouth Land Records, 33:63, Mar. 30, 1739; 37:108, Apr. 8, 1743; 37:109, May 18, 1745; 38:144, Aug. 2, 1743. His service on the committee studying road maintenance is Roch. Town Rec., 2:150R, Mar. 7, 1768.

TABLE 3

NAMES AND NUMBERS OF QUAKERS NOMINATED*
AND SERVING AS CONSTABLE, 1735-1760

Year	Constable Nominees, Annual Number	Quakers Nominated and Serving		
		Nomin- ated	Serv- ing	Names
1735	8			
1736	5	1	1	Nathan Barlow
1737	7			
1738	6			
1739	6	1		John Mendall
1740	3	1	1	John Mendall
1741	9	1		Gideon Gifford
1742	9	1		Jeremiah Devol
1743	4	1	1	Seth Hiller
			(1)	Nathan Jenne (Samuel Wing, substitute)
1744	3			
1745	11	1		Shubal Barlow
1746	2			
1747	3			
1748	3	1		Roger Braley
1749	3	1		Benjamin Wing
1750	3	1		John Shearman, 2nd
1751	8	1		Roger Braley
1752	4	1		Jabez Wing
1753	4	1		Jabez Wing
1754	2			
1755	5	1		Edmond Shearman
1756	2	1	1	Philip Turner
1757	3	1		Samuel Tripp
1758	2			
1759**	5			
1760	6	1		Clifton Wing
<hr/>				
TOTALS				
NOMINATED	126	18 (14%)		
SERVING	52		4 (5) (10%)	

* Number of men asked in order to find two men would consent to serve.

** Records for 1759 are illegible; five names can be deciphered but it is possible that even more men were chosen.

pattern of Quakers chosen for constable. In light of the large numbers of other residents chosen, there does not seem to be discrimination against Friends.

The Quakers' experiences in Rochester after 1735 thus contain many indications that despite their unconventional views and despite the isolating implications of the creation of precincts, Quakers attempted to fit into the community. Most Quakers, as members of Rochester's oldest families, had undoubtedly been steeped in the town's traditions; yet even a newcomer like Roger Braley was eager to do his part. Quakers participated in the town meeting and held offices. Even when it came time at the town meeting to fill the unpopular office of constable, Quakers were no different from other residents.

The most convincing illustration of Quakers' loyalty to the town, however, can be found in an examination of military activities. It was in this area, more than in any other, that Quakers were, especially after 1750, pulled in two directions. As tension mounted between England and France, the town and colony assumed that all able-bodied male residents would drill and train, preparing themselves to fight when called upon to do so. Although no records for the Rochester militia unit are extant, the town records give clues to its importance in an increased use of military titles. Undoubtedly office-holding in the militia became another important way for individuals to distinguish themselves at a time when achieving distinction was a matter

of concern to many men. The town expressed its appreciation for the efforts of those who served as soldiers by voting in 1757 to remit poll taxes for soldiers in service as of 1755.⁴¹

The tension between France and England affected the lives of Rochester residents on another level as well. There was a need to raise money for the support of the "neutral French," refugees from Nova Scotia who were assigned to the town by the colony in 1756 to be supported at public expense.⁴² Rochester, with its history of concern about expenditures, must have viewed the care of these five "French neutrals" as an unfortunate long-term responsibility. Samuel Wing took charge of the situation and was later reimbursed by the town for his expenditures.⁴³

Whatever glory there was in military titles, whatever sense of pride in the soldiers' exploits, whatever patriotism emerged from the situation, many people in the community sensed real danger. Smallpox ravaged the countryside during the late 1750's and the established church interpreted the coincidence of war and disease as a mark of God's displeasure. They felt themselves "under a

⁴¹Roch. Town Rec., 2:128L, May 16, 1757.

⁴²Mass. Archives, 23:183, Aug. 18, 1756. Five refugees were assigned to Rochester and twenty to the neighboring town of Dartmouth.

⁴³Roch. Town Rec., 2:133R, 134L, Oct. 17, 1760.

sence of God's hand being in an awful manner stretched out against God's people In the Land manifested in a variety of judgments Especially in a consumptive wasting & destructive war." In their despair, church members prayed "for averting God's judgment both felt and feared,"⁴⁴

Confronting the stormy times in which they lived was, thus, confusing for Rochester residents in the 1750's. The Quakers in the community were undoubtedly exposed to their neighbors' conflicting emotions and perhaps shared them. Yet Friends were subjected to still another set of directives, traditional teachings of their religious body which emphasized that Quakers should eschew participation in the militia. The question of how Quakers should respond to the deepening military crisis of the 1750's was not simply a local matter, but was of broad concern. From the Quakers' Sandwich Quarterly Meeting held in the spring of 1756, came the suggestion that local Meetings should appoint special officers to deal with the situation. In case Quakers were impressed into service, they would be reminded by these officers to "walk not contrary to our Christian testimony."⁴⁵ This directive came to mean that Quakers should not serve in

⁴⁴Roch. Church Rec., [p. 5], Apr. 13, 1758.

⁴⁵Society of Friends, Sandwich Monthly Meeting, v. 41 (1755-95), 3/9/1756 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 45), hereafter cited as Sand. Mo. Mtg. This volume contains no page numbers; thus, citations will contain dates only.

military units nor should they pay fines or hire substitutes to go in their place. Rochester appointed Timothy Davis and John Mendall to serve in this new office. Later in the decade, Quakers sent lobbyists, including Timothy Davis of Rochester, to Boston to urge that the General Court exempt Quakers from military participation.⁴⁶

In addition to military service, Quakers questioned the morality of their paying taxes which might support military ventures.⁴⁷ While debate on such questions intensified within the Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends, individual Quakers strove daily to cope with the conflict between the values of the community and the teachings of their religious group. Individual Quakers in Rochester responded differently to this crisis of conflicting values. Two Rochester Quakers reported harassment because they would neither fight nor pay for substitutes. Nicholas Davis and Nehemiah Shearman submitted the following report of their sufferings:

⁴⁶Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 10/1757; 5/3/1758; 12/3/1758; 25/3/1758; 2/6/1758. The law passed by the General Court was unsatisfactory to the Quakers and they refused to submit the lists of members requested by the act.

⁴⁷Mass. Archives, 14:189-90, "Petition of Nathan Nye & John Sherman, Constables of Rochester." The General Court ordered on Feb. 12, 1760, that the Rochester constables not attempt to collect taxes from Quakers until the matter could be clarified at the next session of the Court. During this interim, Nehemiah Shearman left Rochester and settled his family in another community. The constables were asking the Court to grant them relief so that they would not have to pay the town for the money not collected from Shearman.

We the subscribers being impressed [,] Nehemiah Shearman by Ebenezer Clark and Nicholas Davis by John Winslow by order from Capt. Jabos Hammond for refusing to bare [sic] arms they demanded 10 pounds & by virtue of a warrant from Colonal [sic] Gamaliol Bradford they took 2 cows and 2 oxen valued at £13:6:8 from sd Shearman and from Nicholas Davis they tuck [sic] away £5:6:8 they tuck a[n] oxen £8.⁴⁸

The Sandwich Monthly Meeting, in an attempt to show support and sympathy for the position of these two men, solicited donations to help reimburse them for their losses.⁴⁹

The experiences of Davis and Shearman illustrate the problems the Quakers might face because they were not exempt from military service. Yet equally significant for an understanding of Rochester Quakers are the experiences of seven others. Between 1757 and 1759, seven Rochester Quakers were cited by the Monthly Meeting because they violated the Quakers' tenets regarding military service. Rather than face the humiliation and financial loss suffered by Nehemiah Shearman and Nicholas Davis, these other men chose either to attend militia drills when called upon to do so, or to pay a fine in lieu of service.

Three men, Seth Hiller, Edmond Shearman, and William Ellis, subsequently recanted their involvement with military activites. Hiller and Shearman apologized to the Meeting for

⁴⁸NEYM, "Earliest Sufferings," p. 41, [1756].

⁴⁹Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 2/1/1756. The money collected was small compared to the fines paid by the men.

"paying money in support of war," and William Ellis denounced his action in attending the militia exercises.⁵⁰ In a situation where community and religious values clashed, these three men, after first following the standards of the community, later chose to endorse the policies of the Friends.

For four other men, however, the standards of the community prevailed. After lengthy discussion, carried on over many months, Nathan Jenne, Joseph Wing, Philip Turner, and Caleb Mendall were disowned by the Friends. Each man refused to voice repentance because he believed his actions were justified; disownment resulted not because of the gravity of the offense but because the offender would not repudiate his action. In other words, the disowned men chose to uphold the principles of the community rather than those of their religious body.

The Quakers' position is most fully spelled out with respect to Nathan Jenne, who had:

gone contrary to the principles of us as
a people in paying money for ye support
of ye war and Destruction of Human
Creatures Consequent upon ye Present
National Differences which we conceive
is contrary to the Will of God.⁵¹

Jenne had not actually fought in the war or participated in

⁵⁰Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 7/1/1757; 10/1757 through 5/1/1759; 1/12/1758 through 1/6/1759.

⁵¹Society of Friends, Sandwich Monthly Meeting, 40 (1672-1754):195, 2/9/1757; Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 7/1/1757.

militia training like the others who were disowned. Philip Turner and Caleb Mendall were disowned for "attending trainings in a military capacity," and Joseph Wing for "having volunterely [sic] enlisted himself a soaldier for the kings service."⁵²

To dismiss lightly the disownment of these four men would be to oversimplify an emotionally charged situation. The protracted negotiations which preceded the disownment suggest the gravity of the situation for people on both sides. Tied by bonds of kinship to others who remained within the Society of Friends, these four disowned men risked bringing anguish to family and friends when they dared to reject the Quakers' standards. For Caleb Mendall, the discomfort must have been especially acute: his own father, John Mendall, was one of the first two Rochester Friends charged with ensuring adherence to the Quakers' policies.

Three distinct patterns of behavior thus emerged among the Friends who were called for military service in Rochester. Some chose to follow strictly the Quakers' teachings. Others, after wavering at first, remained loyal to the Friends' position when confronted by the Meeting. Still others found that the values of the community held more meaning for them than did the tenets of the Society of Friends. The confusion

⁵² Ibid., v. 41, 10/1757; 18/11/1757; 6/1/1758; 3/2/1758; 5/3/1758; 29/6/1759.

felt by many Rochester Quakers was undoubtedly related to the severity of the military crisis and the deep level of concern felt by the entire community. Also important must have been the feeling of belonging which had for so long been part of the Quakers' image of their place in the community.

The most significant development in Rochester between 1735 and 1760 was the institutional restructuring of the original town, accomplished by the creation of the new town of Wareham and the formation of two precincts within Rochester. These changes were accomplished only with difficulty. Many citizens were reluctant to see modification of the town's institutional structure, and even those who advocated the changes were unable to foresee the long-range implications of the innovations they proposed.

The structure which emerged from the period of change was more responsive to the needs of a population increasing in numbers and in diversity. Smaller political subdivisions provided greater efficiency by reducing the work load of the town meeting. There were increased opportunities for people to hold leadership positions and to participate in the decision-making processes within local government. In addition, the precincts provided a natural framework for the growth of political factions and for the expression of differences of opinion.

The Quakers within Rochester were affected in various ways by the pattern of the community's development. One

viewpoint of their situation would emphasize their increasing isolation from the mainstream of town activities. The creation of the precincts represents only one step in the process of alienation: the precinct became the second major community institution, after the church, from which Quakers stood aloof. In addition, Quakers had begun to eschew the pursuit of political power. Finally, the proprietary, an institution through which Quakers, as original settlers of the town, had traditionally exercised their influence, was now voting itself out of existence. This combination of factors might be seen as rendering the Quakers irrelevant to the major developments in Rochester at this time.

The inadequacy of such an interpretation is that it conflicts with the view these Quakers themselves held of their relationship to the town. In spite of the fact that they could not be involved in many aspects of the life of the community, these Quakers did not give up or withdraw altogether. They continued to attend town meetings, serve on committees, and hold town offices. They apparently intended to make the largest contribution to community life which was consistent with their religious teachings.

The military crisis of the 1750's shook to the core their limited but secure position within the life of the community. The overt conflict between community values and religious teachings brought confusion to the lives of many, if not most, Rochester Quakers. They found they could not

automatically reject community standards, so intimately did they share their neighbors' viewpoints. The dilemma posed by this military crisis was only temporarily resolved by the disownment of four dissident Quakers. The difficulties of the 1750's foreshadow additional unrest for Rochester's Quakers. The fervent patriotism of the Rochester community during the American Revolution influenced Quakers to support the cause of independence, even at the risk of jeopardizing their affiliation with the Society of Friends.

PART II

ROCHESTER AND THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS' ORGANIZATION

C H A P T E R I V

BUILDING

THE FRIENDS' ORGANIZATION

The Founding of the New England Yearly Meeting

Followers of George Fox brought the ideals and religious practices of the Society of Friends from England to the colonies within a short time after the organization's founding. In New England, Quakers could live safely only in Rhode Island, where the principles of religious toleration were established by Roger Williams. Nevertheless, a few Friends felt called to Massachusetts during the 1650's. Here some were executed for their persistence in returning to the colony after being expelled. Persecution and intimidation did not halt the subsequent spread of Quakerism, however. The principles of the Society of Friends attracted converts in Rhode Island, in Plymouth Colony, and even in Massachusetts Bay, particularly in the town of Salem.

Small groups of Friends in these areas met in homes and meeting houses to worship God in silence. George Fox, eager to hasten the spread of the Society, traveled extensively during 1671 and 1672 visiting English colonies on the American continent and in the West Indies. Fox's goal was to bring not only spiritual enrichment but also

organizational strength and conformity to the small groups of Friends. In New England, Fox visited during the fourth month of 1672, and addressed a women's meeting held at the home of William Coddington in Rhode Island.

In England, the evolution of Friends' practices had included creation of a second type of Meeting in addition to Meetings for Worship. This was a Meeting for Business, at which Friends discussed the teachings of the Society of Friends and attempted to evaluate their conformity to those teachings. A primary purpose of George Fox's religious visit to the colonies in 1671 and 1672 was the establishment of similar Business Meetings among Quakers in the new world. New England Quakers began to create a network of Business Meetings on the basis of Fox's urging. The resulting multi-level organizational structure developed gradually; new Meetings and even new levels were created as the number of Friends in New England grew. The levels of Business Meetings were like concentric circles, each level encompassing Friends from a wider geographic area.

The basic unit in the organization was the local Meeting. In each local community, the same group of Friends which met to worship God in silence would congregate on other occasions to discuss the teachings of their Society. Such Meetings, known as "Preparative Meetings," were generally held monthly; sometimes more than one small worship group would be combined within the same Preparative Meeting.

Early in the eighteenth century, a formal procedure for Preparative Meetings evolved: each Meeting would review a series of questions, known as "queries," designed to help members evaluate their compliance with Quaker standards.¹

By early in the eighteenth century, New England Friends had created three levels above the local Meetings. The Monthly Meeting, generally made up of several Preparative Meetings, was the Society's main record-keeping unit; Monthly Meetings recorded births, deaths, and marriages, and kept minutes of their sessions. Above the Monthly Meetings were Quarterly Meetings,² and finally was the New England Yearly Meeting, which drew Friends from the colonies of Rhode Island and Massachusetts.³

¹The use of the queries began in 1701. See Arthur J. Worrall, "New England Quakerism, 1656-1830" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1969), p. 51. For earliest recorded New England queries, see RIQM, "Minutes" (1681-1746), p. 20, 1706. Sets of questions covered fourteen topics: apprenticeship agreements for Friends' children; fashions and language; holding and attending meetings; the importance of making wills; the desirability of having Friends' schoolmasters to educate children; marriage procedures; smoking and drinking; resolution of disputes between Friends; the recording of sufferings; military concerns; "hireling" ministers; religious training of children; Friends' burying grounds; and the recording of births and deaths. Queries were changed from time to time, after discussion in Meetings at all levels of the organization had culminated in a decision at the Yearly Meeting.

²The first Quarterly Meeting in New England was formed in 1699 when the Rhode Island Monthly Meeting divided itself into several Monthly Meetings and formed the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. By 1705 Quarterly Meetings had been established in the rest of Quaker New England.

³Theoretically the Yearly Meeting in various regions were equal and autonomous. In actuality, however, some were

Each subordinate Meeting designated official representatives to report to the next higher level its answers to the queries: Preparative Meetings reported to Monthly Meetings, Monthly Meetings to Quarterly Meetings to the Yearly Meeting. All Friends were encouraged to attend Business Meetings at all levels. Such Meetings were usually held following special Meetings for Worship, and the social aspects of such gatherings were also important. Yet factors such as distance and weather sometimes made attendance difficult, and the appointment of official representatives generally insured that each Meeting would have someone in attendance to report to the higher Meeting, to participate in its deliberations, and to return to the lower Meeting with news of the proceedings.

The organizational structure created by George Fox and refined by Friends in later years thus played an important part in facilitating communication within the Society of Friends. Communications within the organization moved in two directions. Questions and problems raised by the Preparative Meetings as a result of discussions of the queries were presented for consideration at Monthly Meetings. If a matter were controversial or otherwise particularly

preeminent. As the eighteenth century progressed, the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia became the most important Yearly Meeting in the colonies. Even more important was the London Yearly Meeting. Opinions and advice from these Yearly Meetings were regarded as having special significance.

vexing, it might be subsequently referred to the Quarterly and perhaps even the Yearly Meeting. To the local Meetings from the upper levels of the organization came not only advice on questions raised at the lower level but also suggestions about matters which were of general concern to Friends or which needed the attention of the local Meetings.

Discussion of the theology and the practical customs of the Society was important to George Fox. He envisioned a Society where individual Friends and entire Meetings in various parts of the world would feel a unity of purpose based on close communication of their mutually held beliefs. Fox's 1671 trip to the colonies illustrates one important method of communication within the Society. Leaders or preachers would travel, when they felt called by God to do so, to other Meetings, preaching and praying, sharing their insights and inspirations. The tradition of such religious visits, begun by Fox, remained important to the Society. A religious visit from a traveling Friend was an important event for any Meeting. It brought new perspectives and contact with Friends in other areas.

"Epistles"--letters from individual Friends or entire Meetings--were another means of maintaining communications within the Society. Epistles were read aloud at Business Meetings when first received; if their advice was especially timely, they were copied for subordinate Meetings and were re-read either at regular intervals or on special occasions

when the message was relevant. Such important epistles formed the basis for a permanent written body of rules, known as a Book of Discipline. New England's first Book of Discipline recorded George Fox's 1672 address at Newport as well as written communications received from Fox and other leaders of the Society.⁴

The various means the Friends used to communicate with each other--religious visits, epistles, and permanent records kept in Books of Discipline--gave the Society's doctrine flexibility. Friends could adapt their theory or practice to accommodate new conditions or issues which arose. This flexibility was one of the strengths of the early Society of Friends. It allowed different emphases to flourish at different times and in different places. Within the organization's structure was room for each Meeting to act on the basis of its own unique perspective. The tension between such local uniqueness and the need and desire for overall uniformity was a creative force within the Society during its early years.

Rochester's Place in the
New England Quaker Organization

Each individual Quaker's relationship to the New

⁴Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, "Antient Epistles, Minutes, and Advices on Discipline, 1672-1735" (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection), pp. 9-10. This Book of Discipline is also known as "Our Book

England Friends' constantly evolving organization was colored by his or her own local Meeting. In the first place, the individual's most direct point of involvement with the organization came at the local level. The perspective from the "bottom" of the Friends' organization gives a different view from that offered by most historical studies, since those studies generally examine the organization from the "upper" levels. Secondly, within each local Meeting for Worship and its parallel Business Meeting, the Preparative Meeting, members balanced the Friends' religion with the standards of the local community in which they lived.

Rochester's location helped isolate its Quakers from the mainstream of developments within the New England Yearly Meeting. Removed as the town was from Rhode Island, the center of activities for New England Quakerism, Rochester sent few members to the annual sessions of the Yearly Meeting. Consequently, Rochester experienced participation in those Meetings only vicariously, through epistles or reports from a few Friends who attended the Newport Meetings each June. The contrast between the rural and agricultural lifestyle which prevailed in Rochester and the urban environment familiar to many Rhode Island Quakers was still another factor contributing to the uniqueness of the

of Original Agreements." A secondary account of Fox's journey to New England and the organizational history of New England Friends is found in Worrall, "New England Quakerism," pp. 37-38.

Rochester Meeting.

Rochester's brand of Quakerism and its relationship to the organization formed by the Society of Friends in New England changed during the course of the eighteenth century. Until 1740, Rochester was only peripherally involved in the organization, except at the local level. Between 1740 and 1775, Rochester grew to become a more important regional center of Quakerism and a vital participant in Monthly Meeting and Quarterly Meeting affairs.

In establishing their Meeting, Rochester Quakers followed a pattern set by early Friends: their initial energy and attention were devoted to setting up Meetings for Worship rather than Business Meetings. Among the early settlers of the new town of Rochester were some families--Hiller, Wing, Davis, Ellis and others--which had relatives involved in the Quaker movement in Sandwich, on Cape Cod. Those people were probably the originators of the Quaker religious Meetings in Rochester. The date of the first Meeting is unknown, but an early reference in the records of the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting shows that Meetings were underway in Rochester by 1702.⁵

Although assigned a place in the organization as part of the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, Rochester Friends apparently had some difficulty conforming to the

⁵Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), p. 8, 22/4/1702.

organizational expectations of the Society. The Rochester Meeting's own leaders reported to the Monthly Meeting in 1709 that "Friends in Rochester are negligent in not attending their Preparative Meeting."⁶ Almost annually between 1705 and 1712, the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting investigated and admonished Rochester for failure to send representatives to the Monthly Meetings, admonitions which were prompted by several consecutive absences. For example, in 1710 Dartmouth appointed one of its members to "write to friends at Rochester to stir them from delinquency."⁷

The records supply no clues about the reasons for Rochester's failure to participate in Preparative and Monthly Meetings. The distance was greater for Rochester than for the other Preparative Meetings which comprised the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting; traveling to the Monthly Meeting may have been difficult, particularly in poor weather. But since Preparative Meetings were held locally, distance should not have prevented attendance at that level. The committee sent by Dartmouth to visit Rochester in 1711 reported finding "things not well amongst them and that was the reason that they have neglected the Monthly Meeting."⁸ But such a report

⁶Ibid., p. 66, 16/3/1709.

⁷Ibid., p. 90, 6/8/1710; also p. 21, 4/1705; p. 22, 5/1705; pp. 27-28, 19/5/1706; p. 28, 15/6/1706; p. 34, 3/1707; 23/4/1707; pp. 38-39, 1707; p. 59, 17/11/1708-9; p. 93, 2/1711; p. 108, 18/12/1711-2.

⁸Ibid., p. 94, 21/3/1711.

is too vague to provide understanding of the reasons for Rochester's negligence. Although this was a time when the Rochester town meeting was involved in formulating a compromise for exempting Quakers from religious taxation, no evidence connects town politics with the Quaker meeting's difficulties. The most logical explanation still seems that the burdens of organizational participation were too great for the small group in Rochester which worshipped God in the silent manner of the Friends.

By 1712 the Rochester Friends had apparently taken control of the situation, for they turned their attention toward a meeting house. They asked aid from the Monthly Meeting "to assist them in the settlement of and security of their Meeting House land." It is not clear whether the meeting house itself had actually been built by then, but a similar request in 1717 is more definite; it asks for aid "toward the orderly set[t]ling of the land whereon their meeting house stands and the house and also their burying place."⁹ Concern for proper adherence to civil legal procedures was a characteristic of the Friends; Fox himself had encouraged attention to such matters.

In the years between 1712 and 1730, Rochester

⁹Ibid., p. 117, 15/10/1712; p. 168, 15/5/1717. The advice in 1717 was that the land should be deeded in the names of five individual Friends: Savory Clifton, Stephen Wing, Nicholas Davis, Thomas Hathaway, and Joseph Taber. A search of the Plymouth County Land Records was unsuccessful in locating this deed.

Preparative Meeting was generally conscientious about its participation in the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting. During the 1730's, however, Rochester again received admonitions for failure to send representatives to the Monthly Meeting; again the visitors reported that things were not well with the Rochester group.¹⁰ Dartmouth Quakers were individually and collectively helpful to Rochester, willing to assist the new Meeting and its members. Yet despite this good will, Rochester's Quakers seem never to have achieved real equality as contributing members of the Monthly Meeting.

Only after 1740, with reassignment to the jurisdiction of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting (under the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting)¹¹ did Rochester Preparative Meeting reach institutional maturity. Between 1740 and 1775 two changes enabled Rochester to flourish as a regional

¹⁰On several occasions the visitors reported finding difficulties; for example in 1730 they reported "things for the most part was pretty well excepting some few things not so well as we could desire, but upon reproof there was promise of reformation." Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1727-1762), p. 37, 21/7/1730. See also p. 44, 15/1/1730-1; pp. 53-54, 1/1733. It is impossible to tell whether conditions were actually worse or whether a new consciousness of the need to follow procedures led visitors to mention long-standing practices which they believed required amendment. Rochester's absences were noted in these places: p. 79, 4/1734; p. 80, 5/1734; p. 109, 11/1736-7; p. 117, 7/1737; p. 119, 10/1737.

¹¹Sand. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1672-1754), 40:145, 5/7/1740. The minutes note that the change took place at the order of the Yearly Meeting. Sandwich Monthly Meeting consisted of Preparative Meetings at Sandwich and Falmouth. The Quarterly Meeting consisted of only two Monthly Meetings, Sandwich and Pembroke.

center for Quakerism. First, an abrupt and dramatic rise in the level of Rochester's participation resulted directly from its new affiliation with Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Not only did Rochester quickly become an integral part of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, but individual Friends moved into leadership positions they had not held when affiliated with Dartmouth. The great increase in the level of Rochester's activities can be traced to specific policies which seem to have been deliberately designed by the Sandwich Monthly Meeting to achieve maximum participation from its members.

One such policy was rotating the location of Meetings. Both the Sandwich Monthly Meeting and the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting began to meet in various towns including Rochester. Within two months of its inclusion in the new jurisdiction, Rochester was the site of a Quarterly Meeting. In the summer of 1741, Rochester requested that it be permitted to host two Monthly Meetings each year.¹² The significance of this policy is considerable, for it brought more Quakers into contact with the workings of the larger organization. Without traveling great distances, Rochester Friends could attend Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and this surely aided their integration into the world-wide Society .

¹²Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:146, 9/1740; 40:147, 3/5/1741. Before Rochester was assigned to Sandwich all Meetings seem to have been held at Sandwich. The rotation system apparently began when Rochester joined the Monthly Meeting; Meetings were held at Falmouth in addition to Rochester and Sandwich.

to which they belonged. The responsibility for hosting Meetings added still another important dimension to these Friends' participation. Making arrangements for the Meetings themselves and for hospitality to those who traveled from other towns demanded a type of involvement not previously required of Rochester Friends.

Other procedures followed by Sandwich were designed to broaden participation by including more individuals in leadership posts. In Dartmouth, a few people dominated the Monthly Meeting and not many Rochester Friends became influential. Over the years, Dartmouth minutes mention only three Rochester men, Timothy Davis, Nicholas Davis, and Elisha Wing, being chosen delegates from the Monthly Meeting to the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. Sandwich on the other hand, not only made a practice of including a Rochester man in its delegation to almost every Quarterly Meeting, but also chose a number of different men. Appointments to other positions were also spread more widely. During the last twenty years of its affiliation with Dartmouth, Rochester Meeting saw only six different men serve as visitor (a local position held by two men serving concurrently). Within only ten years of association with Sandwich, eight different men had served, including five who had not served under Dartmouth.¹³

¹³ Those serving during the Dartmouth affiliation were Stephen Wing, David Irish, Elisha Wing, Savory Clifton, John Wing and Nicholas Davis. Under Sandwich, Clifton, and John

Sandwich followed an apparently deliberate policy of appointing new members and newly married men to special committee assignments or to delegate positions. This seems to have been an attempt to bring these men who experienced important changes in their lives into active roles in the Monthly Meeting. As a result of this and other policies, Sandwich Monthly Meeting developed into a democratic and egalitarian Meeting at a time when other Meetings were beginning a long trend toward developing oligarchic tendencies.¹⁴ For Rochester the new involvement with the Sandwich Monthly Meeting brought broader participation and a more intense commitment to Quakerism.

These differences between the policies of Dartmouth and Sandwich Monthly Meetings illustrate the Meetings' development of unique identities. The variations in the case of Sandwich and Dartmouth can be related at least in part to differing economic and social conditions in the two regions. Historically, the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting was attuned to Rhode Island, with its increasingly urban and sophisticated lifestyle. The Dartmouth Friends' Meeting had originated as a Preparative Meeting within the Rhode Island Monthly Meeting. In 1699 that Meeting divided itself: each

and Stephen Wing served, along with John Mendall, Nathan Jenne, Daniel Wing, Shubal Barlow, and Nathan Davis. Visitors had the responsibility for meeting with Friends to discuss their compliance with Friends' policies.

¹⁴This oligarchic tendency is discussed in Worrall, pp. 46, 54, 129.

Preparative Meeting, Dartmouth included, became a Monthly Meeting, and together they formed the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting.

Although a few Sandwich Quakers had settled in Dartmouth during the seventeenth century, most Dartmouth Friends traced their ancestry back to Rhode Island. Thus, family heritage combined with organizational history to create in Dartmouth an affinity for Rhode Island. In later years, Dartmouth itself became an important urban area: the town of New Bedford, formed from part of Dartmouth in 1787, was a growing city and a center of the whaling industry. On the other hand, Rochester could more easily identify with Sandwich, for Sandwich was, like Rochester, more rural and less well-to-do than Dartmouth.¹⁵ Family connections for most Rochester Friends led back to Sandwich, and this probably heightened the sense of identification and belonging there. Thus family, social, and economic affinity combined with the policies of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting to make Rochester Preparative Meeting more at home and more active in the Sandwich Meeting than it had been with Dartmouth.

In 1761 a second important development facilitated

¹⁵Worrall comments on the contrast between Sandwich and Pembroke Quakers on one hand and Rhode Island Quakers on the other. He observes that Sandwich and Pembroke Monthly Meetings experienced a loss of identity when grouped with Rhode Island, and he attributes this to their "poor" economic status, p. 65. Furthermore, few Sandwich Quakers had any input into the oligarchic government of the New England Yearly Meeting, especially during the late eighteenth century.

Rochester's emergence as a regional center of Quaker activity. A redefinition of the boundary between the Sandwich and Dartmouth Monthly Meetings gave Rochester Preparative Meeting additional territory and more members. The change was authorized by the Yearly Meeting, which proclaimed that the Acushnet River was to be the boundary between the two Meetings. All Friends living east of the river were annexed to the Rochester Preparative Meeting and the Sandwich Monthly Meeting.¹⁶

People in Dartmouth from the river east to the Rochester town line, and even those in the northwestern part of Rochester itself, were, in a sense neglected by their respective towns. The north precinct, drawing people from several towns, illustrates the hazy allegiance people in remote areas felt to the towns which claimed them. The boundary between the towns of Rochester and Dartmouth had been a source of frequent debate and negotiation; during the mid-1750's a commission was at work to establish the line once and for all. In the general haggling over boundaries,

¹⁶ Sand. Mo. Mtg., vol. 41, 6/3/1761; 28/3/1761; 3/7/1761; 20/11/1761; Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes, Men Friends" (1762-1785), p. 16, 21/12/1762 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 52); NEYM, "Minutes of Men Friends" (1683-1787), p. 259 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 1). The Yearly Meeting may have been motivated, at least in part, by a desire to balance the strength of the Monthly Meetings. Dartmouth would certainly have been regarded as the stronger Meeting, so perhaps it was felt that adopting a new boundary which made good sense geographically would augment the strength of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting.

at least one parcel of land--originally owned by Quaker John Summers, who died in 1732--was transferred from Rochester to Dartmouth and finally back to Rochester. Occasionally someone taxed or selected for town office in Rochester would claim exemption based on his residence in Dartmouth. Such confusion was undoubtedly heightened because some people owned land in both towns.¹⁷

Like the political subdivisions, the Friends' organization had difficulty meeting the needs of people in this area. Dartmouth Monthly Meeting had its headquarters on the west side of the Acushnet River, remote from those on the river's east bank. Thus, the river was a logical boundary between the Monthly Meetings. Three small clusters of Friends were affected by the realignment of the boundary between the Sandwich and Dartmouth Monthly Meetings.

In Dartmouth, very close to the Rochester town line, the Long Plain Meeting House was begun in 1758, and was intended to serve Friends in both towns.¹⁸ Rochester Friends

¹⁷Roch. Town Rec., 2:119R, Sept. 10, 1753; 2:126L, April 26, 1756. Part of the confusion involved a section, known as the "gore," acquired by the Rochester proprietors early in the eighteenth century. The problem with the assignment of John Summers's land is discussed in Ibid., 2:125L, March 8, 1756 (warrant); 2:126R, Oct. 19, 1756 (warrant); 2:127L, Oct. 19, 1756 (meeting). At that meeting the town decided to petition the General Court to have Summers's land restored to Rochester. They said that the assignment of this land to Dartmouth was "contrary to our former agt agreement an[n]o dom[in]i 1701 and act. assembly in April, 1754."

¹⁸Sand. Mo. Mtg., vol. 41, 17/11/1758.

who lived near Snipatuit Pond had, since the 1740's, held Worship Meetings in homes during the winter season, presumably because it was difficult to get to the main meeting house in bad weather. The erection of a meeting house in this neighborhood was a recognition of the needs of these Quakers; it must have been a factor in the Yearly Meeting's decision to clarify the boundary between the Monthly Meetings.

A second group, smaller than the Long Plain Meeting, lived in the Sconticut Neck region of Dartmouth. These people, part of the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, also held Worship Meetings in homes in their area during the winter months. They too became part of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting and the Rochester Preparative Meeting when the boundary changed in 1761.

Finally, Quakers in the Acushnet section of Dartmouth comprised the strongest and best organized of the three groups annexed. Separated by the river from the rest of Dartmouth, Acushnet had early developed a strong sense of identity. The establishment of traditional worship services in Acushnet preceded by more than twenty-five years the General Court's official creation of a precinct in 1747.¹⁹ Quakers were

¹⁹Mass. Archives, 115:235-36, Oct. 28, 1747. Acushnet was created after the north precinct in Rochester, and people in Acushnet had the right to choose affiliation with that parish. Consequently when Acushnet became a precinct, the Court was careful to exclude from taxation not only Quakers and Baptists but also any people who had exercised the option of becoming a part of the north precinct.

numerous in the area, and they must have felt similarly remote from the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting. By 1709 Acushnet Quakers had requested and received permission to hold Worship Meetings in homes in their region; by 1725 they had acquired a donation of land on which to build their own meeting house.²⁰ Until their transfer to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, they functioned as a Preparative Meeting within the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting.

The addition of Friends from Acushnet, Sconticut, and Long Plain gave a big boost to Rochester Preparative Meeting's membership. It is unfortunately impossible to determine how many members Rochester gained by the redefinition of the Meeting boundaries. Names of ten men who can be identified as residents of the new territory appear in the Monthly Meeting records by 1764, but most worshippers' names were undoubtedly not cited in the records. Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, after repeated requests from Sandwich, finally drew up a list of members whose affiliation was transferred. The list itself was not entered into the Sandwich records, however, although the receipt of the list was acknowledged there.²¹

²⁰Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), p. 60, 21/12/1708-9; p. 117, 24/10/1712; p. 118, 15/11/1712; p. 257, 15/9/1725; p. 257, 20/10/1725; p. 269, 17/2/1727; p. 270, 15/3/1727; 19/4/1727; p. 272, 17/5/1727; 19/10/1727; "Minutes" (1727-1762), p. 19, 16/10/1727; p. 27, 21/7/1730.

²¹Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1762-1785), p. 16, 21/12/1762; p. 18, 1/1763; pp. 19-20, 21/2/1763; pp. 21-22,

Whatever the exact number of Friends involved in the transfer, the real significance of the change was an alteration in the relative strength of the parts of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Although membership numbers are not available, financial contributions to various causes espoused by the Meeting can give an indication of the relative size and wealth of the Preparative Meetings. Table 4 shows that before the new territory was added, Sandwich Preparative Meeting generally contributed nearly half of the money raised by the Monthly Meeting for specific causes. After the realignment, Rochester Preparative Meeting contributed more than Sandwich Preparative Meeting.

Rochester Preparative Meeting not only assumed more financial responsibility within the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, it also became a more frequent host for Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Even in 1760, when the changed boundary had been proposed but not yet officially adopted, a suggestion was made that the new Long Plain Meeting House be included in the rotation as the site of some Monthly and Quarterly Meetings.²² By the mid-1760's, the Monthly Meeting had established a tradition of meeting four times each year at Sandwich, four times at Long Plain, twice at Rochester and

21/3/1763. Sand. Mo. Mtg., vol. 41, 3/12/1762, 25/3/1763. Names extracted from the records for 1763 and 1764 are: Thomas Hathaway, Jonathan Clarke, Isaac Howland, John Russell, Stephen Hathaway, Bartholomew Taber, William Wood, Jethro Hathaway, Gideon Allen, Samuel Allen.

²² Sand. Mo. Mtg., vol. 41, 29/3/1760; 3/7/1761.

TABLE 4

SELECTED EXAMPLES OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO SANDWICH MONTHLY MEETING
BY ROCHESTER, FALMOUTH, AND SANDWICH PREPARATIVE MEETINGS, 1750-1775

Year	Amounts Contributed at Preparative Meetings			Total Con- tributed	Purpose*
	Rochester	Falmouth	Sandwich		
1750	£ 3/13/ 4	£ 3/ 0/ 0	£ 6/13/ 4	£13/ 6/ 8	lobbying for a Quaker in jail in Taunton
1760	16/ 6/ 0	12/19/ 9	25/ 2/10	54/ 8/ 7	general use of Yearly Meeting
1769**	49/ 6/ 7	19/14/ 7	29/12/ 0	83/13/ 3	charity care of elderly female Friend
1774	/19/ 0	/ 9/ 0	/12/ 0	2/ 0/ 0	general use of Yearly Meeting
1755	5/18/ 6	2/15/ 0	5/ 1/ 6	13/19/ 0	general use of Yearly Meeting

* Friends at this time solicited contributions for specific causes. Examples were selected from among representative cases for which all Preparative Meeting contributions were reported at the same meeting, rather than using other cases for which collections were reported in segments covering several Monthly Meetings. Most omitted cases are charity collections, which are unrepresentative of the Monthly Meeting's structure, most contributions coming from the area in which the beneficiary lived.

** Same contribution was reported again in 1772.

Compiled from: Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:179, 2/1/1750; Ibid., vol. 41, 1/8/1760; 2/6/1769, 6/3/1772; 6/8/1774; 4/8/1775.

twice at Falmouth. Within the Monthly Meeting, then, Long Plain had in some ways superseded Rochester, though there was still only one Preparative Meeting encompassing Rochester, Long Plain, Acushnet and Sconticut.

The period between 1740 and 1775 was thus an important era for Rochester Quakerism. Two changes in the boundaries of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting were responsible for the dramatic rise in the level of participation by Rochester, the assignment of Rochester to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting in 1740 and the enlargement of Rochester Preparative Meeting's jurisdiction in 1760 to include Quakers who lived between the Rochester-Dartmouth town line and the Acushnet River. These two developments enhanced Rochester's participation in the organizational structure of the Society of Friends to an important degree. By the Revolutionary War era, Rochester was an important regional center for Quaker activities.

Rochester's role in the organization during the years after 1740 included involvement in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Members of the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting resided in rural communities, made their living by farming or as craftsmen serving their rural village neighbors. The socially and economically homogeneous Sandwich Quarterly Meeting was still much less sophisticated than the oligarchy of wealthy urban Friends who dominated with increasingly rigid authority the New England Yearly

Meeting. It was this homogeneity within the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings which had enabled Rochester to function effectively within the context of local and regional Quakerism. Rochester Friends were active participants during the 1750's and 1760's as the Sandwich Monthly Meeting emphasized the refinement of procedures and traditions in an attempt to purify the Society of Friends. This locally initiated effort was an example of a Monthly Meeting's uniqueness.

In the larger organization of the New England Yearly Meeting, social and economic differences dictated significantly differing outlook. Rochester Friends did not achieve influence or a high level of participation in the activities of the Yearly Meeting. Not until the American Revolution, however, did the tension between Rochester's Quakerism and the outlook of the Yearly Meeting bring division within the Society.

C H A P T E R V
FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING
FRIENDS' POLICIES .

Consensus and Conformity

The unique practices which characterized the Society of Friends during the colonial era were the result of the Quakers' sincere effort to apply Christian principles consistently throughout their lives. Out of values such as justice, humility, simplicity, equality, and order emerged the behavior which set Quakers apart from more conventional religious groups. The Quakers' refusal to swear oaths, remove their hats as a mark of respect, or pay taxes to support "hireling priests" perplexed their more traditional neighbors.

The process through which such practices evolved was as distinctive as were the policies themselves, however. Quaker Business Meetings arrived at decisions not by majority vote but only when the Meeting reached a consensus. Action was slow; members discussed issues until there was a unanimous agreement. If the clerk of a Meeting felt that the group had arrived at such a state, he would proclaim the "Sense of the Meeting," and a new policy would emerge. It

might take months or even years before consensus was achieved.

As they attempted to reach consensus, Friends often found it helpful to refine complex issues by breaking them into more manageable sub-categories. There were, for example, at least three separate aspects of slavery. Participation in the slave trade was one element of the slavery system. Beyond this, the purchase of additional slaves was sometimes differentiated from ownership of slaves acquired in the past. Even a discussion about a seemingly minor topic could result in differentiation between various circumstances. For example, when the Sandwich Monthly Meeting discussed the wearing of wigs in 1722, members made the following distinctions:

if any fri[e]nd by reason of age or sickness have lost their hair may wear a small decent wig as much lik[e] their one as may be but fer [sic] any fri[e]nd to cut of[f] their hair on purpos [sic] to wear a wig¹ seems to be more prid[e] than prophet.

Consideration of a series of small issues rather than one large topic often aided Friends in reaching consensus.

A gradual approach to change necessarily characterized the Friends' policies. Yearly Meetings'

¹Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:107, 6/2/1722. The discussion at Sandwich was apparently prompted by the receipt several months earlier of an epistle from the Yearly Meeting in London cautioning against extravagant or unnecessary wigs.

decisions against slavery came in stages: the Meetings would first "advise" Friends against an aspect of slavery, hoping to guide individual Friends voluntarily to relinquish their involvement. Only later would the Yearly Meetings adopt policies requiring disciplinary action against those who had not complied voluntarily. By proceeding in such a gradual manner, Quakers were able to reach consensus on a variety of issues.

In the context of such a system of formulating policies, two observations about the Friends' organizational structure seem especially relevant. In the first place, the autonomous character of the various Yearly Meetings is significant. Comprised of members from a large geographic area, each Yearly Meeting was responsible for evolving its own Book of Discipline; the queries differed from Yearly Meeting to Yearly Meeting. Visitors and epistles would be exchanged by the various Yearly Meetings, opinions discussed, and advice proffered. But in the final analysis each Yearly Meeting determined its own policies after individual Friends attending the Yearly Meeting had arrived at consensus.

The slavery issue illustrates the disparity between policies of Yearly Meetings throughout the colonies. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting "advised" its members of the moral ambiguity of slavery in 1696; North Carolina did not issue similar advice until 1772. Philadelphia subjected slaveowners to religious discipline in 1719, but New England

did not do so until 1760. For the Philadelphians, only twenty-three years separated "advices" and "discipline." New England's discipline followed the advices by forty-three years.²

A second implication of the manner of decision making relates to the role of Meetings at the local level in the organization. Important decisions and policy changes were formally adopted by the Yearly Meeting, with many local Meetings playing contributing roles. Through participation at the level of the Quarterly Meeting, the Preparative and Monthly Meetings sent their concerns to the Yearly Meeting. But the major relationship of the Preparative Meeting to the Yearly Meeting was as a recipient: epistles and reports from the delegates conveyed the actions of the Yearly Meeting back to the local group.

Although this method of operation gave the Local Meeting only an indirect role in the formulation of official Quaker positions, the local groups nevertheless played a critical role in implementing those policies. Using the same basic principle as the Yearly Meeting--seeking consensus--Preparative and Monthly Meetings adopted local plans to carry out policies delineated by the Yearly Meeting. Visitors inquired about individual Friends' compliance, they reported

²Sydney V. James, A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth Century America (Cambridge, Mass.: 1963), pp. 128-129.

to the Preparative Meetings, and any instances of violation were handled by the Monthly Meeting. Just as the policies of various Yearly Meetings differed, there could be great latitude between local Meetings with respect to both interpretation of policies and thoroughness of implementation efforts.

This role of the local Meeting should be seen in the context of the Friends' great respect for the importance of procedures. Quakers from George Fox on believed it necessary that things be done in an orderly, correct manner. By the late eighteenth century, however, there was a tendency for the procedures to become ends in themselves rather than merely the means to achieve policy objectives. Because the role of the local Meetings involved not making policies but their implementation, local Meetings were most susceptible to losing sight of larger objectives.

The Rochester Preparative Meeting,
the Monthly Meetings, and Friends' Policies

The Rochester Friends' involvement in Quaker issues and policies falls into different patterns during different eras. A common theme, however, is the importance of the local perspective in coloring Rochester's view of the beliefs and practices which made Quakerism so distinct. During the early eighteenth century, Rochester Friends expressed their concern for larger Friends' issues in their community rather

than within the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting. Later, Rochester Friends were very active in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, but after 1750, they seemed less interested in substantive issues. Instead they focused their attention narrowly on discipline and procedures for defining membership in the Society of Friends. During the Revolutionary War era, at least some Rochester Friends expressed a broader viewpoint. They were concerned about taxation, an issue related to the crisis over the disownment of Timothy Davis.

It is difficult to assess the intensity of Rochester's interest in important Quaker issues during the early eighteenth century. Rochester Friends apparently did not participate actively in the discussions about oaths, military participation, and religious taxation which were frequently cited in the minutes of the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting during the years before 1715. These were years when Rochester Quakers were just organizing, when the establishment of religious Meetings took precedence over involvement in the business of the Monthly Meeting. Rochester Friends sometimes failed to send a representative to Monthly Meetings; they did not hold leadership positions in the Monthly Meeting; and they seldom raised issues for discussion there.

Yet Rochester should not be dismissed as unconcerned. Most discussions within the Monthly Meeting during these years related to specific situations in the town of

Dartmouth. In 1709, the Monthly Meeting was concerned about religious taxation in Dartmouth as well as about residents being impressed into the Dartmouth town militia. In 1712 and 1713 the Meeting was preoccupied with oaths: Valentine Huddleston, a Dartmouth resident, took an oath and testified in civil legal proceedings and Benjamin Russell took an oath of office to serve as constable in Dartmouth.³ Rochester Friends, although interested in similar events within their own community, did not raise the issues for discussion at the Monthly Meeting.

After 1712, Rochester began to send representatives to the Monthly Meetings with greater regularity. There is still no indication that Rochester Friends initiated discussions on important problems, but at least delegates brought reports to the Preparative Meeting and informed local members of the significance of the Monthly Meeting's concerns. These were years when Dartmouth was alive with consideration of the vital issues of the day. Dartmouth Monthly Meeting was in the forefront of anti-slavery discussions which flourished in New England at this time.

During the First Month of 1716, Dartmouth questioned the practice of purchasing slaves. The Rochester group was

³Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), pp. 69-71, 15/6/1709; p. 61, 9/1/1709; pp. 113-114, 21/5/1712; p. 114, 18/6/1712; p. 120, 16/1/1713; p. 121, 3/2/1713; p. 122, 20/2/1713; pp. 126-127, 21/7/1713; p. 127 19/8/1713; p. 128, 16/9/1713.

not present when the issue first came up. They sent a representative later that year, however, to the Meeting at which "most of ye meeting" concluded that "it would be most agreeable to our holy profession to forbear for time to come to be in any wayes [sic] concerned in purchasing any slaves."⁴

Dartmouth's situation remained the major focus of Monthly Meeting deliberations. Local sufferings continued to spark discussions of Dartmouth Friends' military and taxation problems. In addition, epistles, visitors, and reports from higher Meetings broadened the scope of the discussions by suggesting other issues for consideration by the Monthly Meeting. In 1718 an epistle from the London Yearly Meeting urged Friends to maintain simplicity and equality in their lifestyles; in 1721 the New England Yearly Meeting drew their attention to the problem of marriages between cousins; in 1723 an epistle from "old England" urged care in the selection by local groups of their delegates to higher Meetings.⁵ Appeals to the government in England sought relief from religious taxation.⁶ Such efforts were undoubtedly organized outside the local Meeting.

⁴Ibid., p. 158, 19/1/1716; p. 162, 17/10/1716.

⁵Ibid., p. 177, 21/5/1718; p. 214, 6/1721; p. 233, 25/1/1722-3.

⁶Ibid., p. 166, 20/3/1717; p. 256, 15/9/1725; p. 261, 18/2/1726.

Rochester Friends contributed three pounds toward such a lobbying effort in 1726. This surely shows their concern about the issues important within the Society of Friends. Yet the perspective of the Rochester Friends during the early years of the eighteenth century was essentially a local one. Within their town meeting, and without bringing the problem to the attention of the Monthly Meeting, these Friends succeeded in gaining recognition for their views on religious taxation. Only when they suffered for their views, did the Rochester Friends bring their problems to the Monthly Meeting. Records reveal that Rochester Friends suffered the confiscation of possessions both for failure to participate in military drills and because they were unwilling to contribute toward the construction of their town's new meeting house.⁷ They understood and supported basic Quaker tenets but most of their attention remained turned toward their local situation during the years before 1740.

After their Preparative Meeting was reassigned to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, the Rochester Friends became more deeply involved in the affairs of their new Monthly Meeting. This is not to suggest that they lost their local perspective; rather they were more inclined to bring local

⁷See Chapter I above for discussion of town actions granting the Friends exemption from religious taxation.

situations to the attention of the Monthly Meeting. But, ironically a subtle change in emphasis had already begun. Fewer philosophical discussions about issues occurred and instead attention focused on practical implications of the implementation responsibility.⁸ Sandwich Monthly Meeting, even during the 1740's, was very businesslike and efficient in procedural matters, marriages, discipline, scheduling and regulating Worship Meetings. During the 1750's Sandwich launched an intense campaign to purify the Meeting and to enforce regulations more strictly.

Only one substantive issues was discussed by Sandwich during the 1740's. Nicholas Davis, an influential Rochester Friend, was apparently suspected of harboring unorthodox sentiments about warfare. The Meeting listened in 1749 to an epistle from Davis in which he "denied his allowing of a defensive war & very much shoad [showed] his dislike to any such thing."⁹ But the questioning of Davis foreshadows a general preoccupation at Sandwich and Rochester with strict attention to policies and regulations. The desire for reform began when the visitors noted in a regular report to the Monthly Meeting in 1750 that they had found "great declention

⁸The Dartmouth Monthly Meeting records for the 1730's reveal a similar emphasis on enforcement procedure. Further study of the records of other Monthly Meetings would be useful in order to determine how widespread was the trend.

⁹Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:176, 1/2/1749.

from the ancient testimony in some [Friends.] Nevertheless we believe there is a remnant that stands faithful for the honour of truth."¹⁰ At least some Rochester Friends deplored what they believed to be deviation from Quaker teachings.

Historians have credited Samuel Fothergill, a distinguished visitor from England who traveled extensively in the colonies during the mid-1750's, with mobilizing Quakers in New England to launch reform campaigns.¹¹ Rochester's expressed desire for moral reformation had originated before Fothergill's visit, however, and Fothergill's contribution may have been to give to their vague sense of malaise a specific program for action. Reform in other New England Monthly Meetings came later. Sandwich Monthly Meeting initiated its reform program independent of suggestions from the Yearly Meeting.

That program consisted of an attention to procedural correctness. The reform campaign in Sandwich Monthly Meeting was based on an assumption that morality was intimately related to adherence by Friends to specific rules and procedures of their Society. Such legalism, characteristic of eighteenth century Quakerism generally, might be described as a trend running counter to the original basis for the

¹⁰Ibid., 40:179, 2/1/1748-50.

¹¹Worrall, p. 55; James, A People Among Peoples, pp. 141, 161-162. Sandwich Monthly Meeting began its reform campaign ahead of other Meetings in New England.

Friends' religion--the ability of the individual to make religious judgments for himself or herself based on personal communication with God. Tension between respect for the individual and the need for corporate unity would later cause great unrest at Rochester during the era of the American Revolution.

Conscious of "Great Declention from the Primitive Christian purity," Sandwich in 1755 appointed a Monthly Meeting committee to set into motion the process of reform. A major emphasis was on setting standards for membership in the Society of Friends. The committee was charged with drafting a statement describing the Meeting's consciousness of a need for reform, articulating a membership policy, and drawing up a list of individuals whom the committee judged met the standards for membership.¹² For the first time in its history, the Sandwich Monthly Meeting evolved an elaborate process for membership: previously it was really only necessary to attend meetings to be considered a member.

The minutes of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting are, in

¹²Sand. Mo. Mtg., 41:1-3, 6, 3/1/1755. In selecting the committee, the Monthly Meeting remained true to its policy of giving representation to each Preparative Meeting. Rochester's representative was Timothy Davis, who at age twenty-five, was already emerging as a leader. To symbolize their intention to begin anew, the Monthly Meeting began a new record book at this time. The list of members appears at the beginning of this new book.

the final analysis, the best evidence of the new preoccupation of the Meeting with procedures. Because of the attention after 1755 to membership standards and discipline cases, the Meetings had little time for any other type of action. If the minutes are an accurate reflection of the proceedings, Meetings consisted almost entirely of appointing committees, hearing committee reports, and either taking action or, more commonly, deferring action for later consideration. The Monthly Meeting itself seems to have had little time to discuss relevant issues; such substantive discussions were relegated to the sessions during which committees "labored with" those accused of violating Quaker teachings. It is ironic that during this period of intense moral fervor, when Friends so earnestly desired to reform, they busied themselves with the technical aspects of implementing policies and left little time for consideration of the philosophical and moral bases of their religious faith.

Family Relationships and Rochester's Membership Policies

The Sandwich Monthly Meeting's formulation of membership policies in 1755 represented a new emphasis for the Friends. Without a membership policy, people had previously "joined" the Society simply by attending the Meetings for Worship, endorsing the Friends' beliefs, and

otherwise adopting a Quaker lifestyle. Family relationships had formed the basis of individuals' relationships to the Society of Friends.

From the early days of their Society's existence, Friends recognized family life as an element central to the Quaker religious lifestyle. In the first epistle from George Fox to be preserved by New England Friends, the founder assumed his readers understood the centrality of family life. Building on this basic appreciation for the family's importance, he urged particular diligence in visiting and caring for widows and orphans, and further exhorted Friends to teach blacks and Indians about the sanctity of marriage.¹³ The Quakers' emphasis on the importance of recording births, deaths, and marriages and on making wills reflects other aspects of their deep concern for the family.¹⁴

By instruction and example, Quaker parents instilled in their children respect for the teachings of the Society of Friends and prepared them to carry on its traditions. Three of the fourteen early queries for the New England Friends involved aspects of bringing up children. One query suggested that when Friends' children were apprenticed, they

¹³George Fox, "Address at the Barbados Women's Meeting," in NEYM, "Antient Epistles, Minutes and Advices," pp. 1-6.

¹⁴RIQM, "Minutes" (1681-1746), p. 20, 1706; Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), pp. 52-53, 16/6/1708.

should be placed with masters who were themselves Friends. Another urged that Quakers establish their own schools to protect their children from exposure to "the world's fashion and language." Still another query dealt with the religious education of Quakers' children.¹⁵ The common theme was the need to insure that children would absorb and retain Quaker teachings and would follow them in spite of the temptations of the larger world outside the Society of Friends.

The attention given to proper child-rearing practices reflects the Quakers' expectation that their children would, when they grew up, marry within the Friends' circle and establish new Quaker families. Marrying an outsider was a serious offense, one which consistently merited disownment from the Society. Thus, each Quaker who married, whether for the first time or subsequently, made a public statement about the strength of his or her obedience to Quaker teachings. Not only was marriage an occasion which called for affirmation of a person's dedication to the Friends' principles, it was also an event which required appearances before the Monthly Meeting. Many Quakers who worshipped weekly on the First Day seldom attended the Monthly Meeting or participated in its deliberations; a person's marriage might be his or her first exposure to the Friends' Business Meetings.

¹⁵RIQM, "Minutes" (1681-1746), p. 20, 1706.

Proper procedures to be followed at the time of marriage included getting the approval first of parents, then of the Preparative Meeting, and finally of the Monthly Meeting. Failure to follow any one of these steps could result in disciplinary action. One Rochester couple was disowned in 1714, not because either was an inappropriate partner, but because they did not follow the correct procedure when they married.

Whereas Benjamin Hilliard and Hannah Davis now . . . Hilliard the daughter of Timothy Davis and Sarah his wife of Rochester both of ym [them] being under ye care of friends, have proceeded in marriage contrary to ye advice of friends & ye good order established amongst us the Society of people called Quakers for wch their so doing we do disown ym and their practis[e] and we do desire ye Lord may give ym a light of their outgoings and a heart of repentance.¹⁶

The marriage ceremony itself was for the Quakers a simple one, gaining its legitimacy from the words spoken by the man and woman rather than from the presence of an outside authority, either religious or secular. Before engaging in the simple ceremony, however, Friends were obligated to

¹⁶Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), p. 140, 20/10/1714; p. 143, 21/11/1714-5. Hannah Hiller sought readmission to the Society and was received: Ibid., p. 221, 19/12/1721-2. She died in the mid-1720's and Benjamin Hiller remarried in 1728. His second wife, Priscilla Irish Hiller in 1742 sent the following statement to the Monthly Meeting: "I Priscilla Hiller, wife of Benjamin Hiller am sorry for proceeding in marriage contrary to the good order to Friends & desire to come under care of Friends." Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:153, 29/7/1742.

follow the more complicated pre-nuptial procedures,¹⁷

If the procedure for marriage was a well-established and easily understood formality, the choice of a partner might prove more difficult. In a small Quaker group like the Rochester Meeting, the number of potential partners was small. The few Quaker families in Rochester quickly intermarried; then, since marriage between cousins was prohibited by Friends, the pool of potential spouses for Rochester Quakers was effectively reduced still further.

The remedy for the problem of limited selection was, of course, to choose a partner from another Meeting. There is no documentation of the informal rituals which must have been necessary to facilitate courtship, particularly among the young. Attendance at Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, visits to friends and relatives in other communities, and perhaps most important, the apprenticeship of young people to

¹⁷The marriage approval procedure required the couple to attend two consecutive Monthly Meetings. Men and women met separately; at the couple's first appearance, each group appointed a committee to investigate the respective partners. The committees were charged with determining that neither party had been previously engaged and that financial arrangements were in order. In cases of remarriage, care was taken to protect the inheritance rights of any children involved.

The following month the couple returned, the committees reported, and if all was in order, the couple received the Monthly Meeting's permission to marry. Another committee was then appointed to attend the marriage and to observe whether the ceremony and the festivities which followed were conducted with decency and decorum. A report by this committee was made to the Monthly Meeting following the marriage.

Quaker masters in neighboring towns, all afforded opportunities for the selection of suitable marriage partners.

Nevertheless, in spite of the Friends' efforts to encourage appropriate romances and to protect their children from exposure to the outside world, it must have been easier and more convenient to meet, fall in love with, and marry a neighbor. Many marriages surely occurred between young people who saw each other on a day-to-day basis in the neighborhoods in which they lived. The problem of keeping one's children within the Society of Friends must have been a vexing one for parents, particularly for those with many children. Parents themselves were liable to be disciplined by the Meeting if they gave permission for their children to marry outsiders.¹⁸

By 1755, Friends in Rochester and the other Preparative Meetings of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting obviously felt a need to strengthen their system for upholding the teachings of the Society of Friends and

¹⁸No Rochester parent was disowned for such an offense, but several were asked by the Meeting to justify their roles in their children's marriages. In 1717 Timothy and Sarah Davis were questioned about the marriage of their daughter Sarah to Benjamin Clifton; in 1743 David Irish was questioned about his son William's marriage to Dinah Dexter, and John Wing and Savory Clifton were asked about the marriages of their daughter and grandson respectively. Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), pp. 166-167, 15/3/1717; Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:157, 5/1743.

perpetuating its membership. Comparison of various records suggests that a tradition of leniency had evolved in Rochester by the 1730's. Between 1717 and 1729, fourteen Quakers suffered the loss of money or material goods for refusal to comply with civil laws which violated their religious scruples.¹⁹ These thirteen men and one woman comprised the nucleus of the Rochester Meeting at that time, those most dedicated to the Friends' teachings. Table 8, in the Appendix, shows whose these Friends were; most of their surnames appear repeatedly in the Friends' records throughout the eighteenth century.

Many more Friends were considered members of the Rochester Meeting by the 1730's, however. Lists of Friends were compiled for Rochester's town records during the 1730's as a result of the colony's order exempting Quakers from religious taxation. These lists, entered in the record book between 1732 and 1736 contain a total of thirty-seven names (including two widows) who were heads of households.²⁰ Table 9, in the Appendix, shows which names appeared on the lists.

¹⁹RIQM, "Sufferings, 1688-1720," pp. 29-30, 1717; NEYM, "Earliest Sufferings," p. 6, 8/1727; p. 14, 5/9/1724; p. 23, 1729. A discussion of these sufferings is found in Chapter II above.

²⁰Roch. Town Rec., 2:55, 59, 1732-1736. Lists vary in length, some containing many names, others only a few. They apparently were the result of a negotiation process between the Quakers and the town. A discussion of these lists is found in Chapter II above.

Simple population growth does not account for the great increase in numbers. While it is possible that the sufferings of earlier years represented harassment by the town of a few selected Quakers, it is more likely that some people who attended the Quaker Meetings preferred to pay the tax asked of them rather than to undergo such harassment. It seems clear that during the 1730's it was the Rochester Friends themselves who were eager to put the broadest possible interpretation on the meaning of Quaker membership. They supplemented shorter lists drawn up by the town's selectmen adding the names of all "those men that attend their meeting on the first day of the week."²¹ Attendance at Worship Meetings was, then, the most important criterion for membership in the minds of the Rochester Quakers.

Samuel Wing's inclusion on these lists in spite of his disownment in 1729 for marrying a non-Quaker is the best known, but by no means the only, illustration of Rochester's willingness to disregard the Society's formal requirements in favor of community values and family ties. Benjamin Hiller had been disowned even earlier, in 1714, but he, too, appeared on the lists. Similarly, Rest Davis Summers was disowned in 1732 for her marriage to William Randall. Randall, although not officially a Quaker until he and his wife were formally admitted to Friends' care in

²¹Ibid., p. 59, July 1, 1735.

1737,²² was nevertheless included in the Rochester Quakers' list for 1735.

Such inclusiveness was repudiated during the 1750's, when new concern for strict adherence to Quaker policies culminated in formulation of a more formal definition of membership. After it delineated the new criteria, the Monthly Meeting's designated committee drew up a list of Friends who could be considered members. The list contains the names of only twenty-nine men and eighteen women from Rochester,²³ a decrease from Rochester's own assessment of

²²Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1727-1762), p. 56, 4/1732; p. 57, 5/1732; p. 100, 1/1736; p. 110, 1/1737. Rest Davis Summers Randall, the daughter of Timothy Davis, was born in 1700 and in 1720 married John Summers, Jr. After Summers's death she married William Randall in 1732. Since Randall was not a Quaker, the marriage resulted in her disownment. In 1735, however, Randall was included in the list of Quakers submitted to the town for tax exemption. The 1736 list omits his name. In 1736 the couple petitioned for admission into the Society of Friends and their request was granted in the First Month, 1737.

²³Sand. Mo. Mtg., 41:1-3. The list itself does not identify members' residences. While it is relatively easy to pick out most Rochester residents, persons with the surname Wing pose something of a problem. Wings lived in many parts of the territory encompassed by the Sandwich Monthly Meeting. The list contains the names of 33 Wings (eighteen men and fifteen women); in several cases more than one person shared the same first name. Thus, some confusion in identification is possible, particularly among the women. Identification here has been conservative; there may be other women who properly belong in the Rochester group. The total list for the Monthly Meeting contains 146 names.

The major drawback of the list as a research tool is that it was not maintained over time and consequently represents only a static picture of the situation. Many inconsistencies can be found upon close examination of the

its membership during the 1730's. Table 10, in the Appendix, shows which Rochester Friends' names appeared on the 1755 list.

The process of establishing new standards attempted to eliminate confusion which had resulted from earlier flexibility. Informal policies had been practiced for two generations in Rochester and longer on Cape Cod. By 1755 the Meeting felt a particular need to clarify the status of children whose parents either had been disowned or had converted to the Friends' religion. Thus, in 1755, it was agreed that the first standard to be applied in determining membership was the test of birthright membership: a person was entitled to membership if his or her parents were both Quakers. Yet, because earlier generations had not always kept complete or precise records, even this standard was not clear-cut. The committee charged with drawing up the membership list thus had a difficult task, presumably consulting memory and oral tradition in addition to written records.

After the determination of birthright membership, others who were not birthright members were given an

list. Some people admitted after 1755 were included on the list, but others were not. Hannaniah Gifford, admitted in the Tenth Month, 1757, was included; Roger Braley, Jr., admitted in the Second Month, 1757, was not. In any case the list is obsolete after 1761, since new members acquired as the result of the boundary change were not added to the list.

opportunity to apply formally for membership, so that their names would be included on the official list.²⁴ Some people who had for years been active in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting had to become members by following the application procedures during the mid-1750's. For example, Shubal Barlow, who had served as a visitor for the Rochester Preparative Meeting in 1747, was officially admitted as a member in 1755.²⁵

When the membership list had been drawn up, the Sandwich Monthly Meeting carried the process of membership definition one step further. The Meeting began disciplinary action, frequently leading to disownment, against some people whose names did not appear on the list of members! Generally these were people associated with the Friends by family heritage or past attendance, but whose lifestyle or behavior violated the Friends' teachings in some way. For example, two daughters of William and Rest Randall were disowned during the late 1750's. Both women had married outsiders,

²⁴The application procedure began when a person asked to be "taken under Friends' care." The applicant was then visited by a committee, usually two Friends, who discussed the applicant's understanding of Friends' teachings and the degree to which he or she followed those teachings in daily life. The committee also looked for a sincere attitude on the part of the applicant. When the committee was satisfied that the applicant should be admitted, the entire Meeting usually affirmed the committee's recommendation. Occasionally, an applicant was asked to acknowledge repentance for some past sin before being admitted.

²⁵Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 19/3/1755; 4/4/1755.

but neither the sisters nor their parents had been included on the membership list.²⁶ Apparently the Quakers' newfound zeal led them to take this disciplinary action in order to make their standards very clear to the outside world.

Even this new zealousness could not accomplish a thorough reformation among all Quakers, however. Neither the informal standards of the 1730's and 1740's nor the systematic definition of membership adopted in 1755 dealt adequately with the status of Friends who were disowned. The wording of the documents which made disownment official implied that Friends regarded denial as a temporary state, imposed only until the person saw his or her folly, confessed, and requested readmission. In actuality, however, some disowned Friends never sought the resoration of membership. Yet though they were denied official status as Friends, such persons were not disassociated from the families which had reared them, or from the Quaker beliefs they had internalized during their formative years. Thus, disowned Quakers retained an emotional, intellectual, and religious attachment to the Society of Friends in spite of their severed membership privileges.

The original intention of Friends in defining

²⁶For proceedings against Deliverance Randall, see Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:194; v. 41, 7/1/1757; 4/3/1757. Against Thankful Randall see *ibid.*, v. 41, 30/6/1758; 4/8/1758; 1/9/1758.

membership in 1755 was to restrict participation in Business Meetings, but non-members were not prevented from attending Worship Meetings. Just as in the established church many people came to worship who were not members in full communion, non-members probably attended Friends' Worship Meetings.²⁷ The existence of a group of worshipping non-members, bound by family ties to the Society of Friends, was an important aspect of Rochester Quakerism in the last half of the eighteenth century.

A list compiled during the late 1770's by the Rochester proprietors includes the names of more than twenty-three Quaker proprietors in Rochester and nine in the section of Wareham which had originally belonged to

²⁷This point is difficult to document since no records of Worship Meetings were kept. My feeling that the disowned Friends must have attended Worship Meetings is based on the fact that lists compiled during the 1730's and again in the 1770's for town tax purposes include the names of some of these "marginal" figures. Quakerism remained a social and cultural tradition in many families even after formal religious ties were severed by disownment. For example, David Wing, son of Samuel Wing, is described as a Quaker in a genealogical account of the family: "He remained all his life zealously attached to the Society of Friends." Conway P. Wing, A Historical & Genealogical Register of John Wing of Sandwich, Mass. and his Descendants, 1632-1888, 2nd ed. (New York, 1888), p. 87. In fact, Samuel Wing was disowned in 1729 for marriage to an outsider; David was born that same year. Neither father nor son is mentioned in the official Friends' records after 1729, and neither is listed on the 1755 membership list. The Rochester Proprietors compiled a listing of their members during the late 1770's. Quakers were listed separately, but David Wing was included with the non-Quaker proprietors. Roch. Prop. Rec. 3:22.

Rochester.²⁸ Faded and torn pages make it impossible to decipher other entries on the list. Included are four men who had been disowned for irregular marriage, three others disowned for military offenses, and several others who, although married, apparently did not marry according to the Friends' regulations. This list, reproduced in Table 11 in the Appendix, illustrates the existence of an "extra-legal" family-based group of Rochester Friends.

The inclusion of the names of women on the 1755 membership list of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting allows a closer view of the families within the Rochester Meeting. Six individuals, three men and three women, are listed without their spouses. In other words, six families can be identified in which only one parent was officially considered to be a member of the Society.²⁹ Children in these families

²⁸Roch. Prop. Rec., 3:222 (copy, 2:247-249), "A List of the Names & Real Estate of the Inhabitants of Old Rochester (so called) as born on the State Bills, to which the Ministree belonging to said Rochester proprietary was divided by, among the several Parishes in said Rochester," n.d. Quakers are differentiated from others on the list. Because of the illegibility of some names, exclusion from the reproduced list cannot be regarded as evidence that a person was not a Quaker or was not in Rochester at this time. Property values included when the list was drawn up are also, unfortunately, illegible. Discussion of the division of the ministry share of the proprietary is found in Chapter VI below. The list must have taken quite some time to compile. The proprietors' action had come in 1771. The list was apparently begun before the death of Bathsheba Wing in 1777 but not completed until after the death of William Ellis in 1778.

²⁹Spouses of the following individuals, although living, were not included on the list: Shubal Barlow, Nathan

were not regarded as members until they made formal application for membership. The continuing existence of such families within the Rochester Meeting illustrates the impossibility of maintaining a "pure" group of members in spite of the 1755 attempts to reform the Monthly Meeting.

An inevitable result of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting's new attention to the purity of its membership was an increase in disciplinary actions. Table 12, in the Appendix, showing discipline cases which involved Rochester Friends, reveals a striking increase in the number of cases considered during the second half of the 1750's. Nearly twice as many cases were investigated during those five years as had been considered during the previous fifteen years, 1740-1755.

In addition to greater frequency of disciplinary action, however, the appearance of new types of offenses is also significant. During the 1740's all the cases involved some infraction of the marriage regulations, but in the next decade, people were disciplined for a greater variety of offenses. It is unlikely that people in Rochester behaved differently during the 1750's: what had changed was the attitude of the Monthly Meeting.³⁰

Davis, Elizabeth Devol, Simon Hathaway, Hannah Shearman, and Mary Tripp.

³⁰The procedure followed in the case of an infraction of rules was both careful and thorough. A Preparative

This is the context of the disciplinary actions against Rochester men during the mid-1750's for military infractions. These men were apparently caught by the Friends' changing values. At some point during the lenient 1730's and 1740's, Rochester Friends had apparently begun to tolerate military participation or at least payment of a fine to avoid service. Suddenly, offenses which might have been overlooked a short time earlier were subject to close scrutiny. These military offenders were forced to reassess the relative importance to them of community standards and religious values. Those who could not accept Quakerism on its new, stricter, terms were disowned.

Two non-military disciplinary cases during these years illustrate interesting and significant facets of Rochester's local brand of Quakerism. The confession made by Savory Clifton in 1751 is an extraordinary one:

Whereas I the subscriber through ye

Meeting, when it became aware of misbehavior in one of its members, brought the matter to the attention of the Monthly Meeting which in turn appointed a committee to investigate the case. The committee's job would be to verify the facts and then to "labor with" the offender to bring him or her to acknowledge the error and repent. A written acknowledgment was sometimes required. If the offender did not "give satisfaction" he or she would be disowned; the Monthly Meeting drafted a document describing the offense and declaring that the Monthly Meeting disassociated itself from the offender. This document was then read aloud at the close of a Worship Meeting in the offender's community. These proceedings were sometimes carried on for many months or even years before the case was resolved.

frailty of old age without due consideration requested the prayers of an hirlin [hireling] priest and his church for Butler Wing's family which hath been a trouble to me and honest friends which request I condemn and am sorry for it and hope friends will pass it by.

Savorie Clifton³¹

A father whose eldest child was born in 1690, Clifton must have been in his eighties by 1751. He had been a loyal Quaker for his entire life, active in the Rochester Meeting and respected by its members.

The solicitation of prayers from a "hireling priest" would seem to be anathema to Quakers, so basic was their opposition to religious taxation and a paid clergy. Clifton himself had been one of the Friends who suffered for refusing to contribute toward minister Timothy Ruggles's salary in 1729. How then, can Clifton's action be explained? It seems to be understandable only in the context of a tolerance and mutual acceptance between Rochester residents of all religious persuasions, a tolerance which existed in spite of the occasional persecution of Quakers in Rochester. Attitudes within the Rochester Preparative Meeting demanded a stricter attention to Quaker precepts during the 1750's, but Savory Clifton remembered an earlier era.

³¹Sand. Mo. Mtg., 40:185, 16/9/1751; 40:184, 2/8/1751. Clifton's daughter, Bathsheba, born in 1708, was married in 1730 to Butler Wing, son of Elisha Wing. Three children of the couple survived to adulthood: Elisha, born in 1733; Clifton, born in 1735; and Bathsheba, born in 1738.

A second relevant disciplinary case is that of Rose Hiller, whose acknowledgment of past sins was part of an application for membership in the Society. Hiller's case illustrates both the deep feelings of attachment Quakers felt to their religion and the Society's complete willingness to forgive someone whose repentance was sincere. Born in 1718, Rose Hiller was not considered a birthright member. Her parents, Benjamin and Hannah Hiller, were disowned in 1714 for disorderly marriage; only her mother was ever re-admitted. Nevertheless the children were undoubtedly raised as Quakers and the family apparently attended Worship Meetings.

Rose Hiller's early life was marked by unhappy events. Her mother died by the time she was ten; as a young woman she was disappointed in her marriage prospects. Her fiance, Jonathan Irish, drowned before they could be married. She then became engaged to Joseph Savery, but her father forbade the couple to marry. As an adult, Rose Hiller was the mother of three illegitimate children, a lifestyle perhaps less shocking to eighteenth century sensibilities than to those of the nineteenth, but nevertheless not condoned by good respectable Quakers. What is significant about Rose Hiller's story is that when she was not included on the membership list compiled by the Sandwich Monthly Meeting, she acknowledged her past errors and applied to become a member in good standing. Apparently her Quaker

heritage was a vital part of her life, even though her lifestyle had been unconventional. The Quaker Meeting, for its part, forgave and welcomed her into membership.³²

The Meeting and the committees representing it were never hasty; each case received full consideration. The cases of Savory Clifton and Rose Hiller show the Meeting's willingness to forgive and restore the membership of someone who sincerely intended to mend his or her ways. But while not peremptory in its action, the Meeting nevertheless insisted on conformity to its new standards. Practices which had been overlooked in the past could no longer be tolerated, so the official membership list excluded many who had long considered themselves Quakers. Since not all Friends were as willing as Clifton and Hiller to reform, a new exclusiveness was the result of the new policies.

The long-range implications of the new exclusiveness are revealed by analyzing data extracted from the Monthly Meeting records. Marriage-related discipline cases (Table 12) and marriages involving Rochester Friends (Table 13, Appendix I) show the role of marriages in perpetuating

³²For information on Rose Hiller's life, see Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes" (1699-1727), p. 139, 15/9/1714; pp. 139-140, 20/10/1714; p. 143, 21/11/1714-5; p. 221, 19/12/1721-2; Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 2/3/1759; 24/3/1759. Additional information may be found in the Rochester Vital Records, in Vital Records for the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, and in the will of her aunt, Dorcas Davis Hiller, the wife of Seth Hiller: Plymouth County Wills, 10107-O.S., Dorcas Hiller.

Rochester's Meeting. In the first place, the marriage lists in Table 13 show that, particularly before 1740, Rochester Friends sought as marriage partners Friends from other towns. Of twenty-seven marriages, all but eight involved one partner from another town. Marriages between Quakers from Rochester and those from Dartmouth were the most common.

In addition, both tables together show how often Rochester Friends violated the Quaker marriage regulations and were disciplined for their actions. Until 1770, many more Friends married appropriately than married irregularly. Between 1755 and 1760 there was a high proportion of improper marriages, perhaps because people needed time to adjust to the new expectations of the Meeting; these people may have continued past practices only to discover that now more was required. After 1770, there was again a dramatic increase in the instance of improper marriage leading to disownment.

There was apparently a breakdown in the system for inculcating Friends' values into the children who came of age and married during the 1770's. Perhaps the increasingly complex social fabric with its worldly temptations overcame the emphasis on Quaker family life and other traditional values. It may be no coincidence that it was the young people raised after the imposition of stricter standards who were more apt to choose a partner deemed unsuitable by the Friends. It was at this time that the breach widened between "official" membership on one hand and inherited traditional

affiliation on the other. Official membership may have seemed to some either too difficult to attain or unnecessary. When the time came for this generation to marry, fewer were willing to make the public gestures validating their membership in the Society.

Many people, of course, did wish to establish or retain their formal ties to the Quakers. Particularly after 1755, when the membership of both partners was a prerequisite for a proper marriage, some people applied for sanction of a marriage within a few months of joining. Table 5 shows new members received by the Rochester Meeting. During the early years of the century no procedure for admitting members was deemed necessary. In 1755 many people joined who had already assumed an active role in the Monthly Meeting affairs. These people should not properly be categorized as "converts"; if these are excluded from consideration, seven of fifteen other converts joined the Friends in conjunction with plans to marry someone who was already a Quaker. Of those eight converts who came without the incentive of an impending marriage, five were members of Quaker families. These facts illustrate still further the extent to which the family remained the institution primarily responsible for recruiting new members.

Another factor which affected the character of the membership of the Rochester Friends' Meeting was migration. Throughout the eighteenth century Rochester experienced a

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO ROCHESTER PREPARATIVE MEETING

Residence = Residence listed if it is not Rochester

Year	Name	Identity Not Verified	Residence	Joined in Conjunction with Marriage	Previously Active	Admitted
1737	William Randall			1735 married Rest Davis		✓
1751	Elizabeth Hammond widow			Summers 1751 2nd marriage to Thomas Hicks of Portsmouth		✓
1753	John Jenne		Dartmouth			✓
1755	Shubal Barlow				✓	✓
	Rebecca Griffeth				not recorded	✓
	Simon Hathaway				✓	✓
	Hannah Hiller ^a					✓
	Mary Jenney ^b					✓
	John Mendall				✓	✓
	Hannah Shearman ^c					✓
	Nehemiah Shearman					✓
	Barnabas Wing				✓	✓
	Elizabeth Wing	✓			✓	✓
1757	Hananiah Gifford					✓
1758	Ruth Griffeth			1758 married Clifton Wing		✓
1759	Rose Hiller					✓
1761	Thomas Irish	✓				✓
	[Tripp?]					✓
1764	Benjamin Bumpus					✓
	Elizabeth Tripp			1764 married Sylvanus Swift		✓

(con. next page)

(Table 5, con.)

Year	Name	Identity Not Verified	Residence	Joined in Conjunction with Marriage	Previously Active	Admitted
1765	Richard Delino Prince Hiller		Acushnet	1765 married Mary Taber 1766, certificate for marriage in Oblong		✓ ✓
1771	Nathaniel Delino Peleg Delino					✓ ✓
1773	Electious Renols [Reynolds?]					✓
1777	Theophilus Peas, Jr. Thomas Taber ^e					✓ ✓

^aHannah Hiller: 1759 married non-Quaker; disowned.

^bMary Jenney: Wife of John Jenney?

^cHannah Shearman: Wife of Edmond Shearman.

^dTheophilus Peas, Jr.: 1781 disowned for refusing to submit a disput to arbitration.

^eThomas Taber: Blacksmith.

great deal of migration to and from the town. Among Quakers, a unique type of record-keeping used particularly in the last half of the eighteenth century allows monitoring of the comings and goings of official members of the Society of Friends. Quakers required those who moved to take certificates of recommendation for presentation to Friends in their new communities. The Meeting minutes carefully record both requests for such certificates and the presentation of certificates by those who arrived in the community. These and other records reveal a surprising amount of relocation and incidental travel. Table 14, in the Appendix, shows certificates requested by and issued to Rochester Friends.

For the early eighteenth century, it is more difficult to gauge migration. Generally it seems that more Quakers came to Rochester than left before midcentury, but thorough documentation awaits a comprehensive study of Plymouth County land records. The beginning of an efficient mechanism for awarding certificates for relocation coincided with the 1755 reforms in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Between 1750 and 1780, only ten individuals and families presented certificates indicating arrival with intention to settle in Rochester.³³ During that same period more than

³³The following presentations of incoming certificates have been excerpted from Sandwich Monthly Meeting records: 1750, Anna Allen, from Pembroke; 1756, Peleg Gifford and family from Dartmouth; 1760, Mehitable Wing from Dartmouth; 1766, Jeremiah Austen from South Kingston;

sixty people received certificates to leave Rochester. Sometimes those who moved to other communities later returned to Rochester. Young men frequently traveled in search of land or work opportunities; sometimes groups of young men spent the summer in other communities where work was plentiful.

Table 14 reveals that four locales received most of Rochester's emigrants. From at least mid-century, Rochester residents settled in the neighboring town of Dartmouth, in a part of eastern New York along the Hudson River (near the present-day town of Pawling but then known as "Oblong" and "Ninepartners"), and in Smithfield, Rhode Island. Late in the 1770's Rochester Friends began to go "eastward" to settle in what would become the community of Falmouth, Maine. In each of these areas, Rochester Friends saw both opportunities for economic well-being and also the security of an established Quaker settlement. A second important fact revealed by Table 14 is the significance of the 1770's as a period of migration. During that era not only were there more migrants, there were also more young men making exploratory journeys and temporary arrangements for seasonal work.

1767, Richard Kiley and wife from Smithfield; 1768, John Williams and wife from Dartmouth; 1772, William Eastis from Pembroke, Abraham Devol and family from Ninepartners, and Richard Lake from Newport; 1776, William Lake from Portsmouth.

Over the course of the eighteenth century the family was, for Rochester Quakers, the institution charged with perpetuating the Society of Friends. The family accomplished this both by teaching the Friends' ideals and by providing children to be the next generation's members. Until the 1770's, the system worked more or less consistently. Most children stayed within the Society, settling in or near the community where they were born and raised. Even the imposition in 1755 of stricter standards for membership did not supplant the family, for many Rochester Friends apparently believed that Quakerism was based on family tradition as much as on following particular regulations and procedures.

Yet no matter how liberal an interpretation is placed on the meaning of Quaker membership, it is clear that the size of the Rochester Friends' group did not keep pace with the rapid population increase which characterized Rochester and the colonies in general during the eighteenth century. The number of Friends in Rochester remained approximately constant, while the population of the town grew dramatically. The lists of Quakers in the 1730's contain thirty-seven names and the proprietors' lists of the late 1770's show thirty-two legible names and a few more which cannot be read.

Population figures for the town as a whole are elusive, but whether or not exact numbers can be found, growth was demonstrably great. In 1712 the list of

proprietors containing sixty-two names probably included most heads of households in the community. By 1740, the Mattapoissett region alone had nearly that many people, for fifty-two names appear on an evaluation list. A 1776 evaluation list for Rochester has 236 names, and the 1790 federal census shows the population of Rochester as 2,644 individuals comprising 442 families.³⁴ Rochester Quakers, relying primarily on the same few families to supply members, lagged behind such rapid growth.

The 1770's were a watershed for the membership of the Rochester group. At a time when Friends were already failing to keep pace with the community's population growth, more young people left the Friends' Meeting than ever before. Some "left" by marrying outside their religious group; others migrated and settled in new communities; still others followed Timothy Davis and abandoned the official organization of the Society of Friends. These changes reflected the turmoil Friends saw in the world about them; the American Revolution brought social, political and

³⁴Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:11-12, 1712; Matt. Prect. Book, p. 34, June 23, 1740; Mary Hall Leonard, Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, "A Rate Bill of the Inhabitants of Rochester, 1776," pp. 360-363; United States Census, First Census, 1790, unpublished schedules for Plymouth County, Mass., p. 465 (Rochester totals).

The evaluation list published in Mary Hall Leonard's book bears a notation that it is reproduced "from an original in the possession of Lemuel LeBaron Dexter." The current whereabouts of this list is unknown.

economic chaos. Rochester Friends had a history of participating in and absorbing the values of the secular community in which they lived. Changing patterns in the 1770's reflect, then, not only changing situations within the Society of Friends, but also exhilarating and frightening new conditions in American society at large.

PART III

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION'S IMPACT ON ROCHESTER

C H A P T E R V I

ROCHESTER DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ERA

The Town Meeting's Response to the Revolutionary Crisis

In 1774, when Abraham Holmes was a youth of twenty, the British government's Coercive Acts inspired special town meetings throughout Massachusetts. Writing in his memoirs about his participation in the Rochester meeting, Holmes commented that he was "scarcely known in this part of town, having always lived in the remote northwest corner of the town in another Parish."¹ This observation contains an important characterization of pre-revolutionary Rochester: the precincts had replaced the town meeting to become the foci of religious, social, and political life in a town rapidly growing larger and more diverse.

Circumstances as cataclysmic as the American Revolution were required to challenge the trend toward decentralization and localism in Rochester. As the relationship between England and the colonies deteriorated during the late 1760's and early 1770's, the Rochester town meeting saw the introduction of new issues into its usual

¹Holmes, "Memoirs," p. 19.

routine of deliberating about roads, schools, and herring weirs. Consideration of matters significant first at the colony level and later with statewide and even national significance restored the town meeting to a pre-eminent position and broadened the scope of the citizens' concerns.

Timothy Davis, one of Rochester's leading Quakers, described the Friends as traditionally uninvolved in influencing governmental activities:

we, as a society, concern not
ourselves in setting up or pulling
down the kingdoms of the earth ;
nor seek to have much share in
legislation, or execution of human
laws yet friends to all just laws
and administration ;

Davis's words heighten the irony of later events within the Rochester Friends' Meeting--Davis's own disownment for too intense an interest in revolutionary activities. Rochester's Quakers were not disinterested in revolutionary issues, but their concerns were expressed largely within the Society of Friends rather than through secular political channels.

Separate but parallel involvement in the revolution on the part of town meeting and Quaker Meeting thus characterized Rochester. Town meetings during the mid-1770's were held more frequently than previously, and the recording of business required more space in the record books. This is

² [Timothy Davis], A Letter from a Friend to some of his Intimate Friends on the Subject of Paying Taxes (Watertown: 1776), p. 1. Davis's pamphlet is transcribed in Appendix II and analyzed in Chapter VII below.

the most obvious indication of the impact of the rebellion on Rochester's town meeting. The new issues which demanded discussion and resolution by the town can be divided into three separate categories. First, during the late 1760's and early 1770's, the colonies were concerned about their treatment at the hands of the British; various offenses by the mother country were aired before the Rochester residents, usually upon the receipt of letters from Boston. Later, after the colonists proclaimed their independence, Rochester residents discussed the need to create new political institutions. Finally, toward the end of the war, citizens were preoccupied with the financial demands placed upon them by the revolution.

Prerevolutionary protests against British treatment were first noted in Rochester's town meeting records in 1768. At the annual meeting that year, Rochester responded to the Townshend Acts, voting "to concur with the town of Boston in those measures they have taken to promote industry etc[.] and suppress extravagances in imported goods."³ These people knew the seriousness of their actions, for they subsequently asked the ministers in town to "appoint a day of fasting and prayer to almighty God for direction."⁴ After a hiatus until 1772, Rochester resumed its protestations, in

³Roch. Town Rec., 2:150L, Mar. 7, 1768.

⁴Ibid., 2:152L, Sept. 22, 1768.

response to a communication from the newly formed Boston Committee of Correspondence. Again participants in the town meeting gave enthusiastic support to assertions about British injustices to the colonies.⁵

Following the Boston Tea Party and the resulting Coercive Acts, the Revolutionary concerns of the Rochester town meeting escalated. In June, 1774, the residents discussed "difficulties which we labour under at this time with respect to an abridgment of our liberties." That meeting, the one which marked the beginning of Abraham Holmes's political career, endorsed the non-importation agreements and appointed separate committees to solicit support for the "covenant" and to correspond with Boston and other towns.⁶ Rochester instructed its General Court Representative to oppose recent parliamentary acts "altering legislative and executive authority of this province."⁷

As alienation between mother country and colonies grew, the likelihood that ties would be severed brought a new set of problems for the colonies to confront. In Rochester as in other towns, citizens wondered as early as 1774 whether to assess and collect the customary province taxes, and if

⁵ Ibid., 3:107L, warrant and minutes, Dec. 28, 1772, adjourned to January 11, 1773.

⁶ Ibid., 3:112L, warrant and minutes, June 30, 1774.

⁷ Ibid., 3:113L, Sept. 29, 1774.

so, to whom they should pay those taxes.⁸ By May, 1776, Rochester supported formal separation from the crown; the citizens voted that "when the honorable congress shall think best to declare themselves independent of the kingdom of Gt. Britain . . . we will defend them with our liyes & fortunes."⁹

In addition to the military campaigns, the colonists now faced the task of creating political institutions to replace those they had renounced. Rochester's most direct involvement in this process was to ponder and debate proposals for the Massachusetts state government. The specific suggestions of the Rochester residents reflect a concern that local communities not be swallowed up by the state government nor lose the ability to make decisions affecting local situations. The town sent to its delegate to the state constitutional convention the following advice:

we advise you to use your influence that there may be more than one Judge of Probate of Wills &c. in a county & that the several towns in the state may have liberty of registering their own deeds; and that all commissioned officers both civil & milletary [sic] be renewed as often as may be with propriety thought necessary and that the power may continue in the people as far as may consist with good government and that you have a

⁸ Ibid., 3:113R, Sept. 29, 1774 adjourned to Oct. 25, 1774; 3:114R, Nov. 1, 1774; 3:115R, warrant Mar. 1, 1775; 3:116L, Mar. 1, 1775.

⁹ Ibid., 3:121L, May 23, 1776.

vigilant eye in ye election & settlement
of ye council and that no one holds 2
commissions at one & the same time¹⁰
whereby bad tendencies may arise.

When the state constitution was presented to the voters for ratification, Rochester residents voted separately on each article. They approved most sections, but defeated a few. Along with the vote tallies, the town clerk recorded the citizens' suggestions for amendments and their reasons for disagreement with some articles.¹¹ Rochester residents thus showed a lively interest in the formation of their state government.

Accounts of debates on such issues contain the only clues about how many Rochester residents participated in town meetings. The minutes show how many votes were cast for and against various issues as well as state officers. For example, at a meeting held in May, 1778, for consideration of "the form of government Published for inspection of the inhabitants of this state . . . the persons then present & voting . . . were 53 for & 2 against the said form of government &c."¹² Voting on the actual state constitution, the document which would be the basis of the state

¹⁰Ibid., 3:134L, Aug. 19, 1779, adjourned to Aug. 26, 1779.

¹¹Ibid., 3:136R, 137L, 137R, May 22, 1780.

¹²Ibid., 3:128R, May 28, 1778. Occasionally, conditional approval was given with specific objections being noted.

government, occurred two years later. At that time more than twice as many men voted, showing a higher level of concern when the actual document was considered.¹³

Financial participation marked another level of involvement by Rochester residents in the American Revolution. When Rochester citizens pledged in 1776 that they would support the cause of independence with their "lives and fortunes," they probably had no idea how great a financial drain the revolution would be. Rochester was a relatively poor town; in the context of its traditional resistance to increased expenditures, the level of support given to the war effort is impressive testimony about the depth of Rochester's devotion to the new nation's independence.

The town responded with generous donations to the colonial cause when, early in the war, requests came for goods and supplies to support the army. Rochester raised money for guns, drums, fifes, and cloth for army uniforms; later the residents responded to annual requests for beef to

¹³Ibid., 3:136R, 137L, 137R, May 22, 1780, adjourned to the following Friday. Voting by article took a long time, and attendance fluctuated, apparently as men came and went over the course of the meeting. On May 22, when voting began, 121 men participated; after the adjournment, attendance was smaller. Only 52 men voted for the first article considered on the second day and the highest number voting that day was 110. The peak was reached in mid-day with lower attendance at the beginning and end of the meeting.

feed the army.¹⁴ In order to raise money for such purposes, Rochester participated in 1775 in a joint fund-raising scheme with several other towns. They sponsored a voyage, under Captain Moses Barlow of Rochester, to the West Indies to purchase sugar and molasses, commodities which they sold to raise money for the war.¹⁵

Such enthusiastic and diligent support was undermined later in the war, however, by the rampant inflation which resulted from the instability of the new nation's economy. Rochester welcomed a call, in 1779, for a convention to be held in Concord to discuss measures to stabilize the currency. The residents stated that they were "sensible of the necessity of strenuous effort to be used if the currency cannot be made better at least to prevent its growing worse." Rochester participated in the conference and the subsequent establishment of price ceilings applied to all goods and services.¹⁶ Such measures did not alleviate already existing inflation, however, nor did they completely restore the

¹⁴ Ibid., 3:117R, warrant and minutes, Aug. 7, 1775; 3:118R, warrant, Oct. 10, 1775; 3:121L, warrant, May 23, 1776; 3:122L, May 23, 1776; 3:127L warrant and minutes, May 14, 1778; 3:139R, warrant, Oct. 12, 1780; 3:140L, Oct. 12, 1780; 3:143L, warrant, July 16, 1781; 3:143R, warrant and minutes, Aug. 2, 1781; 3:148L, warrant and minutes, Dec. 30, 1782.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3:116R, warrant, July 3, 1775; 3:117L, July 3, 1775; 3:118R-119L, Oct. 10, 1775; 3:119L, Oct. 31, 1775; 3:120R, Mar. 1, 1776.

¹⁶ Ibid., 3:132R, July 12, 1779; 3:133L, Aug. 19, 1779, adjourned to Aug. 26, 1779.

confidence of the residents.

It became difficult for Rochester to recruit its quota of soldiers, "by reason of disappointments many soldiers have met with in the course of a few years in the depreciating of their wages before they were paid." The town promised it would adjust wages to account for any depreciation, and it also agreed to pay each enlistee a bounty of twelve pounds payable in "gold, silver or produce of the land."¹⁷ Still Rochester was unable to supply as many soldiers as were requested of it, and the bounties added a new financial burden to the town.

By 1782, the situation was acute, in Rochester as elsewhere throughout the new nation. Under the Articles of Confederation, the national government could request the states to contribute but could not compel them to do so. An urgent plea went out from Congress in 1782 and the warrant for their own town meeting in August of that year implored Rochester's citizens "to come prepared to pay their respective sums as it will greatly contribute to the salvation of our country." Not even that entreaty could stir the overextended Rochester residents: immediately after hearing the circular letter read, they voted to adjourn

¹⁷Ibid., 3:138L, June 19, 1780, adjourned to June 23, 1780.

their meeting.¹⁸

The discussion of the revolutionary issues by the Rochester town meeting had almost ceased by 1783; and the focus was once again local. Yet the revolutionary generation had experienced the initial exhilaration of agitating against the crown, the deliberate creation of new political institutions, and the financial sacrifice made necessary by the war; these people would not return to the isolation of the pre-war era. After the Massachusetts constitution was adopted, only about forty men participated in most state elections, but the town nevertheless maintained some interest in state officers and issues.¹⁹

The political legacy of the revolution was expressed at the local level in a concern "that there may be a better regulation in town meetings for the future." To promote order at town meetings, voters adopted rules aimed at keeping extraneous commotion to a minimum, at insuring that only eligible town residents voted in the meetings, and at dispersing the power to nominate members of committees.²⁰ Rochester's new rules supplemented regulations promulgated

¹⁸Ibid., 3:147L, warrant and minutes, Aug. 20, 1782.

¹⁹Ibid., 3:139R, Sept. 4, 1780; 3:124L, April 2, 1781; 3:146L, April 1, 1782; 3:149R, April 12, 1783; 3:155L, April 5, 1784.

²⁰Ibid., 3:153R, warrant, Feb. 6, 1784; 3:154R, Mar. 10, 1784.

by the state government.

In addition to this heightened political awareness, another by-product of the revolution was a unity unprecedented in Rochester's history. Rochester's fierce devotion to the cause of the war, particularly in its early phases, was a significant development in a town whose history was characterized by dispersion and disharmony. Abraham Holmes, whose memoirs have contributed to local popular legend about Rochester's passionate support for the revolution,²¹ depicted a spirited, even rowdy support for the colonies' cause, accompanied by intimidation of any citizens whose enthusiasm seemed lukewarm.

Holmes's account, written at the end of his life, can be expected to contain exaggerations and embellishments, yet the town records also reveal efforts to intimidate those who did not participate in the town's unified support for the cause. As early as 1772, when Rochester discussed the injustices of British policies, the meeting warned that any resident who deserted the cause of liberty for personal gain would be considered an enemy.²² Some subsequent efforts to

²¹Anecdotes from Holmes's recollections have been perpetuated because of their inclusion in the works of Mary Hall Leonard, the historian of Rochester who wrote near the beginning of this century. See Leonard, Mattapoissett and Old Rochester; and "Revolutionary Records of a Country Town," New England Magazine, N.S. 19 (Nov. 1898]:189-209.

²²Roch. Town Rec., 3:107L, Dec. 28, 1772, adjourned to January 11, 1773.

squelch dissent were promulgated by the state, but Rochester seems wholeheartedly to have supported such measures. In the spring of 1777, following a recent state law, Rochester appointed one of the residents to "take evidence against those that are enemical [sic] to the American States."²³ During the country's financial crisis the Rochester meeting included in its minutes a harsh resolution warning that since, "the salvation of this country under providence in a great measure depends upon ye establishing ye credit of ye continental currency," anyone violating the new regulations designed to bring stability would be "deemed infamous & held up to view as an enemy to ye independence[,] freedom & happiness of his country" and would be punished by having his name printed in newspapers throughout the state.²⁴

Quakers in Revolutionary Rochester

It is against this background of exhilarating change and increased political awareness that the experiences of the Rochester Quakers during the revolutionary era must be drawn. The resulting picture is one of ambiguity and contrast. The Friends' religion prohibited both military service and any other involvement in revolutionary

²³Ibid., 3:123L, May 21, 1777.

²⁴Ibid., 3:134L, Aug. 19, 1779, adjourned to Aug. 26, 1779.

activities. Thus, it is not surprising that no Quakers served on committees formed to hasten accomplishment of the goals of the revolution. The Rochester town records contain no hint that Quakers were in any way drawn into the new revolutionary consciousness which gripped the town,

Only in the records of the Friends themselves is there evidence that the Rochester Friends were less than neutral about independence for the colonies. Timothy Davis's 1776 pamphlet urged that Quakers pay their taxes to the new revolutionary government which had taken control of the colony of Massachusetts.²⁵ Davis did not advocate participation by Quakers in military campaigns, nor did he espouse any other active role in the Revolution; nevertheless his position on taxation was so controversial as to lead to his disownment and the subsequent disruption of the Friends' organization in the Rochester area. His pamphlet and the furore it caused stand alone as evidence that the revolutionary sentiment touched the lives of Rochester Quakers.

The Rochester town records, although they show no involvement by the Quakers in the revolutionary crisis, reveal that the Friends' participation in other town

²⁵ [Davis], Letter on Paying Taxes. In the Rochester town meeting the issue of to whom taxes should be paid had been discussed in 1774 and 1775. See Note 7 of this chapter.

activities followed a pattern established many years earlier. This pattern shows three familiar characteristics: first, Quakers believed they should be useful and generous citizens of the community in all ways consistent with their religious views; second, they eschewed political power; and third, their status depended largely on their families' long residence in the community.

Usefulness to the community was demonstrated during the Revolutionary War era in several ways. As in the past, Rochester Quakers held lower town offices which involved performing services at some inconvenience to the officeholder. Table 7, in the Appendix, shows that during these years Quakers served as surveyor of highways, hog reeve, sealer of lumber, warden, inspector of alewives, and even occasionally as constable. In addition to such office-holding, Quakers on several occasions held special committee assignments. For example, in 1770, Seth Hiller was one of two men designated to make recommendations concerning both the town's system of road maintenance and also its method of providing schools. In 1778, as Rochester was again modifying its school system, Quaker Philip Turner was chosen to handle school funds for his district,²⁶

Still another illustration of the Quakers'

²⁶Roch. Town Rec., 3:102R, Nov. 5, 1770; 3:130L, Nov. 13, 1778, adjourned to Nov. 20, 1778.

neighborliness during these years is their increasingly frequent involvement with the poor and ill of Rochester. Even though residents who provided care for such citizens were reimbursed by the town, caring for a needy neighbor was a genuine service to the town. It seems unlikely that Friends and others who provided charity were motivated by hope of financial gain. Repayment was almost certainly delayed or neglected as the revolutionary financial crisis worsened. Instances of Quakers providing such care increased during the latter part of the war as both need and financial insecurity increased.²⁷

Philip Turner's election as a selectman in 1781, and his subsequent refusal to serve²⁸ suggest that the Quakers' failure to hold the town's highest office was the result not of inability to be elected but of a conscious choice by Friends to eschew political power. The town may have feared that Turner would refuse, since for that year only voters separated the positions of selectman and tax assessor. By removing from the selectman's duties the assessment of religious taxes, the town may have hoped to induce Turner to serve. In any case, the fact of his election seems to

²⁷ Ibid., 3:116R, May 26, 1775; 3:134R, Noy, 15, 1779; 3:140R, October 30, 1780; 3:148L, Nov. 6, 1782, adjourned to Noy, 20, 1782; 3:144L, Oct. 29, 1781.

²⁸ Ibid., 3:141R, Mar. 15, 1781; 3:142L, warrant and minutes, April 2, 1781.

indicate that Turner was admired and respected by his fellow citizens.

A final dimension of the Quakers' position in Rochester was their long residence in the community and their status as descendants of the town's early proprietors. As in earlier years, most Quaker town office holders during the Revolutionary War years were descended from such families. Philip Turner was the grandson of the prominent Quaker Elisha Wing.²⁹ Other office holders with surnames such as Hiller, Mendall, Clifton, and Wing were likewise descended from early settlers of the community.

Documentation of the wealth of Rochester Friends as it compared with the wealth of other residents would, if it were possible, clarify the Quakers' position in the community. Unfortunately the only tax assessment information available for Rochester is a list from 1776 which is of limited usefulness. It reveals that two Quakers, Seth Hiller and Jeremiah Austin, a relative newcomer who had settled in Rochester in 1767, were among the six highest

²⁹Turner was born on July 8, 1720, according to Rochester Vital Records. His mother, Sarah, was Elisha Wing's daughter; she was disowned by the Friends for fornication three months before her son's birth. Dart. Mo. Mts., "Minutes" (1699-1727), p. 197, 18/2/1720. In 1738, Sarah Wing married John Rogers, a prominent Quaker from Marshfield. Sand. Mo. Mt., 40:140, 2/10/1737-8. Elisha Wing's will verifies the relationships between himself, Sarah Rogers, and Philip Turner. Plymouth County Wills, 23140-O.S., Elisha Wing.

assessed men in town. Table 6 summarizes this assessment list, and reveals that, as a group, these Quakers were somewhat wealthier than their neighbors.³⁰

Although evidence about wealth is inconclusive, action taken by Rochester's proprietors testifies to the influence Quakers maintained in that body, and as a result, in the community at large. The "ministry share," land set aside by the founding proprietors for the support of religion, was in 1771 designated a fund to benefit all religious organizations then represented in the town. This decision by the proprietors settled an issue which had been debated in Rochester for many years.

The issue of dividing the ministry share was first raised at a town meeting in 1746, soon after the creation of the Mattapoissett precinct. Some residents (assuredly those who lived in Mattapoissett!) maintained that the new precinct was entitled to a portion of the ministry income.³¹ The town

³⁰This information must be used cautiously. The assessment list is reprinted in Mary Hall Leonard, Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, pp. 360-363. Entitled "A Rate Bill of the Inhabitants of Rochester, 1776," this list is said to have been "copied from the original in the possession of Lemuel LeBaron Dexter." That original list is apparently no longer extant, and the list as reprinted seems not to be complete as a record of Rochester heads of families. For example, the list includes the names of only twelve men identifiable as Quakers, while the list of Quakers compiled for the proprietors' book later that decade contains twenty-three legible names and others too faint to read. Of those twenty-three names, only one, William Irish, can be found on the 1776 valuation list. The total valuation list as reprinted contains 236 names.

³¹Roch. Town Rec., 2:104R, warrant, May 19, 1746.

took no action, but discussed the question again from time to time; after further fragmentation of the community, some residents suggested that the share itself be sold so that the income could be divided. The matter was controversial, with votes swinging back and forth, apparently according to which residents were present at a particular town meeting.³²

Appropriately, the issue was settled not by the town meeting but by the proprietary. The division was to be implemented by a seven-member committee charged with a duty:

to improve the share of lands, meadowes [sic] & lotted swamps, called the ministry share. . . . and the net produce of the said improvements, be by them yearly paid into the treasuries of the several Precincts, parishes or Societies according to the proportions they may bear to each other, as valued on the town's state bill for the use intended in the original Donation of the same.

To insure fair distribution the proprietors specified that the committee would include two representatives from Rochester's original parish and one each from the town of Wareham, the Mattapoissett precinct, "Mr. West's Precinct" (Snipatuit), the Society of Friends, and the Baptists.³³

³² Ibid., 2:133L, March 17, 1760; 2:133L, 133R, warrant and minutes, May 19, 1760; 2:135R, May 18, 1761; 2:143R, 144L, warrant and minutes, Mar. 4, 1765; 2:149R, 150L, warrant and minutes, Oct. 20, 1767. No indication appears in the records at this time that Quakers or Baptists would be included in the division.

³³ Roch. Prop. Rec., copy, 2:32, 1771. Baptists in Rochester applied in 1772 for exemption from religious taxation, Roch. Town Rec., 3:94L, July 9, 1772. Recorded here is a document listing the names of twenty-two Rochester

These few pieces of evidence from town and proprietors' records paint an unfinished picture of the place of Quakers in Rochester. The decreasing frequency of references to Quakerism in the official records suggests that as the eighteenth century lifestyles grew more complex, Quakers were both less prominent and less noticeable; Quakerism had ceased to be so controversial an issue in town life. Yet two personal reminiscences of life during the mid-eighteenth century in Rochester provide first-hand observations about the Quaker's relationships with their neighbors. The resulting picture, still only impressionistic, fills in some additional details and allows us to see the Quakers more fully.

Abraham Holmes's comments reveal much about how the Friends were perceived by at least some of their fellow townsmen. Commenting about religious developments in Rochester during his childhood, Holmes said:

Congregationalism was the prevailing and almost Universal religion of this part of the country. To be a Baptist or a Quaker was considered to be a mark of disgrace and operated as a proscription to public office; . . . It was with great difficulty [that] a Baptist or a Quaker, especially a Baptist, could be

residents who claimed exemption from religious taxation in the first precinct because of their affiliation with the Third Baptist Church in Middleboro. This registering with the town may have been related to the division of the ministry share, for it placed on record the number of Baptists.

exonerated from paying taxes to the Parish minister to support the Worship from which he conscientiously dissented.³⁴

Holmes's statement, puzzling in its oversimplification of the Quakers' position in Rochester, is nevertheless an important reflection of attitudes toward religious dissent.

Three separate issues are involved in Holmes's suspicion and disapproval of the Quakers. First, he maintained that Quakerism was a mark of "disgrace." Second, he pointed out that Quakers lacked political power. Finally, Holmes stated that Quakers and Baptists both experienced difficulty in getting exemptions from religious taxation. These three allegations must be analyzed separately if their significance is to be understood.

The "disgrace" of being a Quaker is difficult to document, for it involved private attitudes and individual behavior rather than public policy. Perhaps in the early days of the community, when the population was smaller, the Quakers' eccentricities were more easily tolerated than in Holmes's day. Progress brought to Rochester an influx of new residents who had familiarity neither with the Quakers' important role in the founding of Rochester nor with the town's tradition of toleration. In the context of such change in the community, Holmes reminds us of the likelihood that Quaker children were ridiculed because their clothing

³⁴Holmes, "Memoirs," p. 7.

was peculiar and their speech stilted. Young men may have been branded as cowards when conscience led them to refuse to drill with the militia.

It is precisely because there are no surviving records of such private humiliation suffered by Quakers that Holmes's statement is so important. It is impossible to know how frequently Quakers faced actual taunts or derision, or how they reacted when such incidents occurred. What Holmes has documented, however, is that by the second half of the eighteenth century, communication and understanding had diminished between the Quaker minority and the other residents of Rochester.

Holmes's second point is that Quakers were denied political power. In one sense this statement is more easily examined and documented; the Quakers' office holding and participation in town government is a matter of public record. In another sense, however, Holmes has distorted the picture by oversimplification. Holmes's implication that voters denied Quakers high offices lacks an appreciation of the extent to which Quakers themselves chose deliberately to forsake the pursuit of political power. Holmes's assumption that the Quakers wanted political power but could not achieve it fails to take the Friends' own attitudes into account.

Holmes's third point is perhaps the most puzzling, for he maintained that it was extremely difficult for Quakers and especially Baptists to receive exemption from religious

taxation. Since both the colony and the town had, by the time of Holmes's birth in 1754, long traditions of exempting Quakers, and since the Friends' records apparently contain no mention of "sufferings" by Quakers who refused to pay religious taxes, Holmes's contention is confusing.

Several explanations seem possible for the discrepancy between Holmes and other records. Holmes may simply have been mistaken, since he was writing fifty years after the fact; his memory may have deceived him. He may have been correct about the Baptists but not about the Quakers. Also, since the revolutionary years were a time when many people born into Rochester Quaker families had not maintained formal membership in the Society of Friends, these people may simply have paid religious taxes without attempting to fight for exemptions. It is also possible that constables or precincts were not willing to uphold the Quakers' exemptions but pressed them to pay.

In evaluating the significance of Holmes's remarks, it is useful to distinguish between official discrimination--policies or laws which interfered with the Quakers' practice of their religion--and informal discrimination practiced by individual citizens. Official discrimination must be conceded to be negligible in the areas mentioned by Holmes; tax exemptions were officially granted and failure to hold political office was voluntary on the part of the Quakers. Only with military service, an area Holmes did not

mention, was there an official policy which discriminated against Quakers. But informal discrimination by individual residents was not regulated by law nor was it subject to measurement and documentation in sources now available to historians.

The memoirs of Samuel West contain other, quite different, observations about the Quakers in Rochester during the mid-eighteenth century. West, who lived in Rochester during his boyhood, was the son of Reverend Thomas West, minister of the church in Rochester's north precinct. That area of town was the home of many of Rochester's Friends, and West thus had ample opportunities to observe and evaluate the Quakers who were his neighbors. According to West, the habits and outlook of the Friends were simple and unsophisticated, but their theology contained a healthy refutation of some of the narrow and pessimistic tenets of Calvinism.

West observed that he himself had arrived at Harvard a naive boy in comparison with his classmates, even though most of them were younger than he. West attributed his lack of sophistication to the environment in which he spent his early years. Describing Rochester as an "obscure village," he stated:

I had scarcely seen a populous town or been in the company of people more polite than those good neighbors whose plainness of dress, speech and behavior constituted a part and in their opinions a very

essential part of their religion. . .³⁵
 My school master was a worthy Quaker,

West associated the Quakers' views with the naivete of his own boyhood and contrasted those views with the enlightenment of city people.

Yet in describing the Quakers' theology, West identified the Quakers with the liberal trend he had found since leaving Rochester. Raised by a minister father who preached a strict and gloomy Calvinism, West later rejected those principles and came to agree with more liberal religious traditions. But back in Rochester, West credited the Quakers with influencing his own father to adopt more liberal views. Describing his father, West said:

After his settlement in the ministry surrounded as he was by sectaries, it led him into frequent disputes, especially with the Quakers, and although he maintained his cause with much resolution, he was a fair disputant and found that their system (absurd as many parts of it are) was capable of very plausible support, and its most essential parts of complete defence. This tended to liberalize his mind and to scatter those prejudices which had formerly prevailed over his better judgment. When I say that the most essential opinions of the Quakers are capable of a complete defense I refer to those which are opposed to the

³⁵ Samuel West, "Memoirs" (1807), American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, p. 27. West, who lived from 1738 to 1808, came to Rochester from Martha's Vineyard with his family in 1748. He completed his studies at Harvard in 1761 and subsequently served as minister in Needham and later at Hollis Street Church in Boston. Another Samuel West, a cousin, was minister in Dartmouth.

absurd notions of the Calvinists with respect to Original Sin, total depravity, predestination, irresistible grace, etc.³⁶

Thus, West approved of the influence the Quakers had in Rochester and saw them as an earnest and effective force within the community.

The contrast between the comments of West and Holmes seems great. Since both observers lived in the same precinct, the one which included the northwest region of Rochester and part of other towns, both might have held the same opinion of the Quakers. Two things may account for their differences. In the first place, the disparity points out the significance of individual variations in personality and perspective. Quakers were treated differently by each of their neighbors and their contributions to the community were likewise assessed according to differing scales of value.

A second factor was the passage of time. West, born in 1738, was sixteen years older than Holmes. His observations indicate that he had an intimate knowledge of the Quakers based on day-to-day contacts with them. Holmes's remarks on the other hand, reflect little personal familiarity or acquaintance with members of the Quaker group in Rochester. The differences may be a symbol of the changes which were occurring in Rochester during the eighteenth

³⁶Ibid., p. 148.

century's middle years. The town grew more populous, more political, more diverse; citizens may have had less time, necessity, and opportunity to get acquainted with others who were different.

At the same time, the Quakers were developing their own particular concerns which must have influenced their relationships with their neighbors. The most important events during the Revolutionary War years were, for the Friends, the disownment of Timothy Davis and his followers and the subsequent creation by them of a separate organizational structure. Even those Friends not actually affiliated with Davis's Meeting were caught up in the controversy. The Davis incident brought revolutionary concerns to Rochester's Quakers. Even though those concerns were not expressed within the traditional structure of the town meeting, Rochester's Friends nevertheless shared with their neighbors the broadening of perspectives beyond the local community.

C H A P T E R V I I

"DISOWNED WITHOUT JUST CAUSE"

TIMOTHY DAVIS, ROCHESTER'S QUAKERS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Early Career of Timothy Davis

Timothy Davis was probably Rochester's most eminent Quaker in 1776. As the tension between colonies and mother country was flaring into open warfare, Davis stated succinctly his opinions about the conflict's implications for the Friends.

The peaceable profession which we have long made to the world . . . will not admit of our taking up arms, . . . we may nevertheless expect to be taxed in common with other people, to pay the charge of the unhappy war, together with such civil charges as may arise for the support of the government.¹

Although the taxation question was a difficult one for Friends, Davis, writing anonymously, convincingly supported his opinion with precedents from the New Testament, from traditional Quaker writings, and from the experiences of seventeenth century English Friends.

Davis's basic contention was that, while the conflict between England and her American Colonies was lamentable,

¹[Davis], Letter on Paying Taxes, p. 2.

Friends should pay taxes to the new governments in whose jurisdiction they lived since they derived benefits from those governments. God had placed these governments over them just as He had previously wanted them to be colonists of the English. Even when part of the tax revenues would be used for military purposes, Friends should pay their taxes. Davis, in justifying this contention, emphasized that Christ, in advising Peter to render unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's, did not distinguish between taxes for military and non-military purposes. Davis also pointed out that Friends in England paid all taxes except the priests' rates.

Well aware that his admonition to pay taxes to the revolutionary governments was controversial, Davis observed that seventeenth century English Friends had supported whatever new governments came into existence. They had supported Oliver Cromwell when he succeeded Charles I, Charles II when he succeeded Cromwell, and William of Orange when he succeeded James II. James, said Davis, had forfeited his reign by his flirtation with papists. George III, by his insensitivity, was demonstrating that there were other ways a king could forfeit his crown. Citing Biblical evidence to show that kingship was not necessarily the preferred form of government, Davis inferred that there was nothing inherently wrong with opposition to a king. Finally, commenting on the taxation question in New England, he criticized Friends who felt "religious scruples" about paying their taxes.

Timothy Davis was heir to a strong tradition of Quaker leadership. His grandfather, also named Timothy Davis, had settled before 1700 in Rochester, where he was a proprietor in the new community and served three times as a selectman. Within the Rochester Friends' Meeting, the elder Timothy Davis was an early leader and a minister.

Nicholas Davis, the only son of the first Timothy and father of the second, was born in 1690, and had begun his ministry by the age of twenty. Following Nicholas' death in 1755, his sons remembered him this way:

He strove to live in peace with all men
and [was] generally well Beloved by
those with whom he was acquainted
Especially his neighbors and more
especially his friends of the Same
Denomination.²

This observation exemplifies the new attitude toward community roles which emerged among Rochester Quakers early in the eighteenth century. Friends began to emphasize peace and harmonious relationships over power, and the religious community over the secular.

Timothy Davis and three of his four brothers held

²Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, "Testimonies," 1 (1761-1874):1 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 3). Timothy and Nathan Davis compiled this "testimony" following their father's death at the request of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting for the compilation of "some of the Living Services and dying sayings [of] Ministers Elders and other[s] whose lives have been Remarkable for True Pyety and Faithfulness." Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 5/12/1760; 28/3/1761.

important positions within both the Rochester Preparative Meeting and the Sandwich Monthly Meeting; they served as delegates to Quarterly Meetings, aided in the compilation of written answers to the queries, and were members of disciplinary committees. Timothy's service to the Meeting began when he was still in his twenties. In 1755, during the re-ordering and strengthening of the Sandwich Monthly Meeting's requirements for membership, twenty-five year old Timothy Davis was one of four men chosen to compile the membership list. That same year he was entrusted with the important position of clerk, whenever the Monthly Meeting, in its regular rotation of sites, met at Rochester. He held the clerk's position until 1764, when he asked to be removed and was succeeded by his brother, Nicholas, Jr.

At this same time, Timothy Davis was involved in issues and tasks with broader significance. During the 1750's he was part of several groups which mediated differences between Friends and the civil authorities, particularly when questions of military participation arose. In 1756 he was appointed by the Monthly Meeting to "assist the visitors when any difficulty shall arise On account of Impressment Or any thing of that Nature in Advising that they walk not contrary to our Christian testimony thereunto relating." Two years later, he was on a joint committee of Sandwich and Dartmouth Friends to "determine what is proper respecting a late act of this province whereby Fri[e]nds are

upon cert[a]in condition clear from Muster Impresses." Three months after the appointment of this committee, the Monthly Meeting raised money to defray Timothy Davis's expenses on a trip to Boston, probably so that Davis could lobby for redress of Friends' grievances in military matters.³

Still higher in the Friends' organization, Timothy Davis was active in the business of the New England Yearly Meeting. He served during the late 1760's and and early 1770's on a committee to "Solicit the Governor of the Massachusetts on behalf of Suffering Friends."⁴ The committee seldom had problems brought before it, but Davis's service is nevertheless significant. In 1774, Timothy Davis was one of the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting's representatives at the Yearly Meeting (a position held even more frequently by his older half-brother Nathan, who served in 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1775; Nathan was also one of the original members of the New England Meeting for Sufferings, formed in 1775).

Although such positions were very important to the Society of Friends' maintenance of its structure, spiritual leadership was equally important, if less easily documented. Timothy Davis pursued an active career as a minister. In the tradition of Quaker ministers like George Fox and Samuel

³Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 3/9/1756; 5/3/1758; 2/6/1758.

⁴Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, "Minutes of Men Friends," 1 (1683-1787):291, 13/6/1771 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 1).

Fothergill, he sometimes felt called to make religious visits outside the boundaries of his own home Meeting. Timothy Davis traveled to the Quarterly Meetings at Salem and Rhode Island and visited "eastward parts of this government" (now Maine). The longest and most important of Davis's religious visits was in the early 1770's, when he traveled to Meetings in Philadelphia; New Jersey; Flushing, Long Island; North and South Carolina; and Virginia.⁵

When the fighting between the colonies and England broke out in the spring of 1775, Timothy Davis was forty-five years old and had twenty years of experience as a minister and in administrative positions at all levels within the Society. He had recently returned from an extensive religious tour which had given him a chance to view conditions in many other colonies. He had served in posts which allowed him first-hand contact with the machinery and officials of civil government. He was unquestionably the most cosmopolitan member of the Rochester Preparative Meeting, and probably no one within the Sandwich Monthly Meeting was so well traveled or politically experienced as he. Those who knew Timothy Davis respected him and looked to

⁵Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 2/9/1774; 4/8/1775. Davis's certificate to make his long visit was granted by the Monthly Meeting on 1/2/1771; the Meeting acknowledged his return on 3/7/1772. On 5/2/1773 the Meeting recorded the subsequent receipt of certificates from some of the Meetings Davis had visited.

him for inspiration and guidance.

The Impact of Davis's Letter

Shortly after the publication in 1776 of the anonymous Letter, investigations begun by the Friends easily determined that Timothy Davis was its author. Both the contents and the method of publication caused questions: not only was the subject matter controversial to Friends, but in addition Davis had violated an important procedure by publishing without getting the prior permission of the Friends.⁶ Inquiries by the Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings culminated in 1778 in the disownment of Davis,⁷ whose friends and supporters continued to attend Worship Meetings with him. Because they continued to worship at separate Meetings organized by Davis, more than fifty Friends, most from the Rochester Preparative Meeting, were disowned by the Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Many of these

⁶Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, 1:34-35, 11/3/1776; 1:35-36, 13/4/1776; 1:46, 12/8/1776, letter to Sandwich Monthly Meeting; other discussions of the matter are cited in 1:40-41, 13/5/1776; 1:43, 12/6/1776; 1:46, 18/6/1776; 1:48, 10/7/1776; 9/9/1776 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 5), hereafter cited as NEMS.

⁷Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 2/8/1776; 6/9/1776; 3/10/1776; 1/11/1776; 6/12/1776; 3/1/1777; 7/2/1777; 7/3/1777; 28/3/1777; 2/5/1777; 6/6/1777; 7/11/1778; 4/12/1778; NEMS, 1:64-65, 12/4/1777, letter to Sand. Mo. Mtg.; NEYM, "Minutes," 1:326, 2/10/1777, letter to Sand. Mo. Mtg.; 1:329-330, 1778.

Friends then joined together to create a formal Meeting structure outside the organization which had excluded them.⁸

Rochester Friends were understandably perplexed by the necessity to choose between the Society of Friends and the man who had long interpreted the Society's teachings to them. Such a decision was a difficult one, not to be taken lightly. Disownment proceedings against those who worshipped with Davis progressed slowly and deliberately as many of Davis's followers sought to reconcile their conflicting loyalties to Davis and the Society of Friends.

Thirty-seven men and thirty-five women were affiliated with the Dissident Friends' group in 1782, according to a list compiled then. Their names are listed in Table 15, in the Appendix. These people were residents of several towns, including Rochester, Wareham, and Dartmouth. They were, for the most part, drawn from the rank and file of

⁸Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 30/9/1779; 5/11/1779; 24/3/1780; 5/5/1780; 30/6/1780; 4/8/1780; 1/11/1780; 5/1/1781; Sand. Mo. Mtg., "Minutes of Women Friends" (1776-1794), 4/2/1780; 3/3/1780; 24/3/1780; 5/5/1780; 2/6/1780; 30/6/1780; NEMS 1:54, 9/9/1776. Records are also extant for the dissident group beginning 28/4/1781. These records are in the possession of Ruth Martocci of Mattapoisett, Mass., a descendant of the Hiller family of Rochester.

For secondary accounts of the trouble at Rochester see James, A People Among Peoples, pp. 250-251, and Arthur J. Mekeel, "The Society of Friends and the American Revolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1940), pp. 163-164.

the Rochester Preparative Meeting--neither the most prominent leaders (except for Davis) nor the casual attenders. Their surnames are those of long-established Quaker families; ties of kinship were an important factor, although not the only one, influencing these people to surrender their membership in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting and to join instead with Timothy Davis.

Not all Rochester Friends were willing to sacrifice the membership they had so scrupulously maintained. Table 16, in the Appendix, a compilation of the names of men who served as representatives from Rochester to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting between 1755 and 1779 allows analysis of the individuals' decisions. While service as a representative is by no means the only measure of leadership within the Preparative Meeting, it reveals something about the role of individual leaders at Rochester.

During this twenty-five year period, forty-three men held this leadership post. Fifteen of those men had died or left Rochester before the compilation of the dissidents' membership list. Although only seven of the remaining twenty-eight representatives actually joined Davis's group, eight others were disciplined for association with Davis's Worship Meetings.⁹ Thus, more than half (fifteen of

⁹The seven who joined the dissidents were Benjamin Bumpus, Nicholas Davis [II], Timothy Davis, Isaac Hiller, Seth Hiller, Bartholomew Taber, and Barnabas Wing. Three

twenty-eight) of Rochester's leaders had some affiliation with the dissident body.

Most Friends who served as representatives did so fairly infrequently, however. Only twelve men served sixteen or more times, and of the ten still living by 1780, two recanted early support for Davis and five remained affiliated with Davis in some way.¹⁰ Those who had served forty or more times were more apt to stay within the Society, possibly because they had more invested in the stability of the organizational structure. In this group, only Nathan Davis did not remain steadfast; he was disowned for attending his brother's Meetings, but did not actually join the Dissident

others were disowned for supporting Timothy Davis, but did not become members of the dissidents: Nathan Davis, Abraham Devol (who left the area in 1779), and William Estis. Five other Friends were visited by disciplinary committees. Four recanted their support of Davis to avoid disownment: Ignatius Dillingham, John Dillingham, Samuel Tripp and Daniel Wing. For the fifth, John Shearman, no further action was recorded. Barnabas Wing was, according to the record, allowed to remain in the Society, but since his name appears on the dissidents' list he must have been disowned subsequently.

¹⁰Seventeen men served 1-5 times, ten men served 6-10 times, four men served 11-15 times, twelve served more than 15 times. Nathan Davis served 86 times; Daniel Wing, 83 times; John Russell, 68 times; John Mendall, 55 times; Samuel Tripp, 44 times; Jeremiah Austin, 41 times; Seth Hiller, 30 times; Butler Wing, 27 times; Barnabas Wing, 25 times; Timothy Davis, 22 times; Thomas Hathaway, 22 times; Benjamin Bumpus, 16 times. Daniel Wing and Tripp recanted early support for Davis. Russell, Austin, and Hathaway also remained within the Society. Nathan and Timothy Davis, Hiller, Barnabas Wing, and Bumpus were disciplined. Mendall and Butler Wing were dead.

Meeting.

Even among those who remained in the Society, there was indication of strong feelings about Timothy Davis's plight. When the Yearly Meeting interceded and requested that the Monthly Meeting disown Davis, the official action was delayed because John Russell, one of the most important leaders, was unwilling to read aloud the document of denial against Davis. It is significant that the reading was finally accomplished by Jeremiah Austin,¹¹ who had settled in Rochester in 1766. Austin, with a shorter involvement in the Rochester Meeting, may have been able to see things from a more detached perspective than those who had grown up with Timothy Davis and had always known him as a friend and leader.

The intensity of the breach is surprising, yet a deeper investigation reveals two factors which, in addition to Davis's local stature, combine with each other to explain the crisis at Rochester. The relationships between Meetings at various levels of the Friends' organization suggest causes for the turmoil. The preeminence of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting within colonial Quakerism and the parallel preeminence of Rhode Islanders within the New England Yearly Meeting suggest partial explanations for the Rochester Friends' situation.

¹¹Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 7/11/1778, 4/12/1778.

Such relationships are especially significant because of the Quakers' slow and deliberate manner of establishing policies. True consensus could not be forced or hurried, but neither was the Revolution a situation which would stand still waiting for the Friends to arrive at unanimity. Friends were aware of the limitations of their system for responding to crises. Early in the revolution the New England Yearly Meeting sent delegates to a meeting in Philadelphia where Friends from many colonies discussed uniform responses to situations which the conflict posed or threatened to pose for Quakers.¹²

The location of that meeting is one indication of the importance of the Philadelphians' influence on colonial Quakerism; in addition, at least one historian believes the Philadelphians' support for England discouraged other Friends from expressing sympathy for the revolutionary cause.¹³ But

¹²NEMS, 1:54, 9/9/1776.

¹³Mekeel, pp. 51, 80, 112-124. Mekeel points out that during the 1760's prominent Friends on both sides of the Atlantic expressed indignation at the way the colonies were being treated by the mother country. Philadelphia's Quaker merchants participated in the economic boycotts which followed the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts. Following the repeal of the Townshend Acts, however, Philadelphia merchants were apparently reluctant to support further protests against the British in spite of the fact that John Fothergill and David Barclay, prominent English Friends, continued to lobby in Parliament for a more enlightened colonial policy. Mekeel categorizes the Philadelphia merchants as "benevolent aristocrats with a democratic religious profession" and suggests that during the 1770's they feared the revolution would be taken over by "democratic and radical elements" who would threaten the liberties of the merchant class.

the clearest evidence of the Philadelphia Meeting's impact on New England Friends is its role in the creation, in 1775, of the New England Meeting for Sufferings. The long-range purposes of that new Meeting were to provide continuity between Yearly Meetings during a period when immediate decisions were frequently necessary.

The Meeting for Sufferings could draw on the treasury of the Yearly Meeting and was designed to handle any problems which arose because of the Society's opposition to war and the members' refusal to participate. This involved interpreting laws, negotiating with the civil government for redress of Friends' grievances and generally serving as a liaison with the civil government--the types of duties Timothy Davis had frequently performed during the 1750's and 1760's. Other duties of the Meeting for Sufferings were to correspond with Philadelphia and other Meetings for Sufferings about specific problems and general policies, to sponsor the reprinting of advice pertinent to the war situation from "ancient" Friends' writings or current epistles, and to control new publications by censoring manuscripts which individual Friends might want to publish.

These were unquestionably important long-range needs, but a more specific immediate impetus for the establishment of the New England Meeting for Sufferings is obvious in the records. At the outbreak of the revolution, Philadelphia's Friends envisioned a large relief project to aid innocent

victims of the battles in the Boston area. In order to implement this generous effort, Philadelphia needed a strong organization in New England capable of handling both the distribution of aid and the necessary record-keeping. They suggested a New England Meeting for Sufferings modeled on a similar group formed in Philadelphia during the crisis times of the 1750's. Early minutes of the New England Meeting for Sufferings show the important role of Philadelphia in urging creation of the Meeting for Sufferings and in advising the new group during its early days.¹⁴

This relief project was an auspicious beginning for the New England Meeting for Sufferings. The effort demonstrated during the war emergency that Friends could respond quickly and creatively to the challenges they faced. The venture was an enormous undertaking, administered with efficiency and compassion. New England Friends administered the distribution of nearly two thousand pounds.¹⁵ Yet the need for frequent meetings and swift decisions heightened the influence within New England of Rhode Island Friends and decreased the impact of those who lived farthest away from Providence.

Rhode Island's preeminence in the New England Yearly

¹⁴NEMS, 1:5-6, 27/7/1775, letter from Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings.

¹⁵Ibid., 1:37-38, 13/4/1776; 24/4/1776, letter to Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings.

Meeting was not new. Of the three Quarterly Meetings--Salem, Sandwich, and Rhode Island--the Rhode Islanders had most individual members, most Monthly Meetings, and consequently most influence on policy decisions. In addition, because of their numbers and the wealth of urban members, the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting was able to contribute most money to the treasury of the Yearly Meeting.¹⁶

The creation of the Meeting for Sufferings exaggerated the influence of Rhode Island still further. The new body met at least monthly and could be called into special session to respond to sudden emergency developments. Although the location of the Meetings rotated, more than half the Meetings held between 1775 and 1780 took place in Providence. During those years only one Meeting was held outside the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting.¹⁷

¹⁶NEYM, "Minutes," 1:292, 1771; 1:307, 1774. In 1771 the Yearly Meeting decided to raise fifty pounds to contribute to the treasury of the London Yearly Meeting. The amount was apportioned in this way: Rhode Island Quarter, thirty-five pounds; Salem, seven pounds; Sandwich, eight pounds. Again in 1774 when the Yearly Meeting set out to raise fifty dollars, Rhode Island was assessed thirty dollars, while Sandwich was to give eight dollars, and Salem, twelve dollars.

¹⁷During the period 1775-1780 locations were recorded for seventy-one meetings. Of those, forty Meetings were held in Providence, nine in Smithfield, six in Dartmouth, five in East Greenwich, four each in Portsmouth and Swansea, two in Newport, and one in Lynn. Only Lynn was not part of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting.

The Meeting for Sufferings consisted of twenty-five members, three of whom, including Nathan Davis, were from the Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Twelve members constituted a quorum and could act for the group. Average attendance between 1775 and 1780 was fourteen, and attendance records reveal that Sandwich's representatives rarely attended.¹⁸ When the weather or conditions of war made travel difficult, those who lived closest were most likely to be able to attend. Although the Meeting considered problems faced by Friends in Massachusetts as well as Rhode Island, it seems inevitable that understanding of Rhode Island problems was greater.

This then, was the milieu in which Timothy Davis published his views on taxation. As the most influential member of a remote rural Meeting, he made a conscious decision to disregard the prescribed procedures for getting approval of his pamphlet before publishing it. One of his supporters later acknowledged that Davis knew the Meeting for Sufferings would deny him the permission to publish.¹⁹ But

¹⁸Sixty-six Meetings had attendance recorded totaling 943, an average of 14.287 per Meeting. A chart of attendance for the year ending in the Eighth Month 1777 shows that of Sandwich's representatives, Nathan Davis attended once, Ebenezer Allen five times, and David Bowerman three times. NEMS, 1:73, 8/9/1777.

¹⁹Joseph Taber et al., An Address to the People Called Quakers (Boston: Fleets, 1784), p. 21. This pamphlet was written in defense of Davis and his supporters by a committee delegated by the Meeting established by the dissidents.

while Davis knowingly violated the rules of the Society, he cannot have anticipated the intense furor and lasting schism his actions would cause. The treatment of Davis and his followers seems incongruous in the context of the Friends' traditions of careful handling of disciplinary cases, their willingness to forgive offenders, and their emphasis on individuals' rights to hold and express opinions.

Davis was not the first Quaker to discuss the taxation issue; rather, he was responding to discussions around him within the Society. But it was the publication of his work which made the taxation question a symbol for heated disagreements on the larger issue of Friends' attitudes toward the revolution. On the surface, traditional Friends' teachings offered contradictory advice. In the first place, Friends believed that they should obey and cooperate with civil government; whatever government was in power was surely the government God wished to have rule them. Their obedience included paying taxes to the civil authorities, all taxes except those which supported a state religion.

As a result of that attitude toward civil government, Friends were expected to remain neutral during revolutions and never to participate in actions against any government. But a question which remained unanswered and unanswerable during the American Revolution was at what point Quakers should recognize a revolution which had been successful. When should they switch their allegiance from a defeated

government to its successor? For Timothy Davis, that point came early in the Revolutionary conflict, but other Quakers were less certain. Paying taxes which any government might use for military expenses challenged still another traditional Quaker precept, the pacifist heritage. Although Davis pointed out that seventeenth century Friends apparently paid taxes which supported the English Civil War, other Friends were troubled by the potential military use for their tax money.²⁰

When such apparently contradictory teachings came into collision with each other, the Friends' only recourse was time. Prayer, deliberation, study, and debate over the course of time would enable the group to arrive at a solution acceptable to all. Because of the nature of the revolutionary crisis, colonial Quakers, under the leadership of the Philadelphia group, had decided that no public statements would be made until and unless a unified position had been achieved. The problem for Friends like Timothy Davis was that onrushing events would not stand still while the Quakers caught up.

²⁰ Timothy Davis, Letter, pp. 3-4. The taxation controversy which flared took the form of a debate over "mixed taxes," a term used by the Friends to describe general taxes not levied for any specific purpose, but used for various government expenses. Since such taxes might be used for military needs, some Quakers hesitated to pay. Davis maintained those whose consciences balked at paying mixed taxes were pro-British if they refused to support colonial governments by paying taxes to them.

The immediate impact of Davis's pamphlet was to cause turmoil at all levels of the New England Friends' organization. The confusion was so great that Friends could neither define Davis's offense nor decide how to react. Davis was first called to account for his failure to gain approval before publishing. He readily repented that error, and was then asked to repudiate the content of the pamphlet. That Davis would not do.²¹ Only obliquely, however, did the Yearly Meeting express its true concern about Davis's pamphlet. It was not the content itself which troubled the leaders, but the fact that Davis had spoken out publicly before the Friends had reached consensus on a controversial issue. His remarks served to "produce unhappy Divisions, and sufferings amongst us"; Davis was guilty of "introducing Discord and Division amongst Friends."²² Furthermore, he had made accusations against the sincerity of those who disagreed with him on the taxation question. Some Friends were offended because Davis implied that those who did not share his views were taking advantage of the wartime situation to avoid paying taxes or were sympathetic to the British.²³

²¹ Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 6/9/1776; 7/3/1777; Taber et al., Address, p. 31; Timothy Davis to Moses Brown, 22/4/1776 (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, Austin Collection, v. 12).

²² NEMS, 1:46, 12/8/1776; NEYM, "Minutes," 1:329-330, 1778.

²³ [Davis], Letter on Paying Taxes, p. 7; Taber et al., Address, p. 22.

Davis was not unusual in having strong opinions; rather it was because his opponents felt equally strongly that the publication of Davis's views caused a crisis. Job Scott, a converted or "convinced" Quaker from the Smithfield Monthly Meeting who taught Friends' children in Providence, believed that support of the revolution was a violation of Quaker precepts. He refused to accept paper money issued by the colonies to finance the war and he disagreed strongly with Timothy Davis on the taxation question.²⁴ Scott applied in 1781 for permission to publish a pamphlet arguing against the payment of "mixed taxes." After consultation with the Friends in Philadelphia, the New England Meeting for Sufferings denied Scott their permission because consensus had still not been achieved.²⁵

In addition to their confusion about the nature of Davis's offense, Friends were perplexed about the disciplinary process. Davis's own Monthly Meeting was divided about the severity of his transgression; after much deliberation the group decided that Davis should not be punished.²⁶ But a true consensus had not been reached; some

²⁴ Job Scott, Journal of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of that Faithful Seryant and Minister of Christ, Job Scott (New York: 1797), pp. 53-55, Rhode Island Historical Society, Austin Collection, v. 9; NEMS, 1:21, 13/1/1776.

²⁵ NEMS, 1:153-154, 14/5/1781.

²⁶ Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 2/8/1776; 6/9/1776; 3/10/1776; 1/11/1776; 6/12/1776; 3/1/1777; 7/2/1777; 7/3/1777; 28/3/1777; 2/5/1777; 6/6/1777.

people within the Monthly Meeting were uneasy about the decision and the disagreeing factions could not be quickly reconciled. Consequently, the New England Yearly Meeting intervened and itself ordered the disownment, circumventing the Society's usual disciplinary procedures. The irregularity of the procedures against Davis was a point later emphasized by Davis's supporters as they claimed he had been treated unfairly.²⁷

Among the leading Rhode Island Friends who urged Davis to repudiate his pamphlet was Moses Brown, a prominent Providence businessman and manufacturer. Brown, who had become a Quaker in 1773, expressed sympathy for the colonial cause in his private correspondence. Prior to his conversion, Brown had served as a member of the Committee of Correspondence in Rhode Island. Unlike Davis, both Moses Brown and Job Scott refrained from making public statements which would compromise the Society's position.

Brown, writing to Davis in 1780, after Davis's disownment, expressed "sincere goodwill" but urged Davis to return to the Society of Friends:

if thou could but be resigned to drop thy meetings and endeavored to bear the burden which thou mayest expect to attend thee in silence[,] way will be made for thy restoration to the unity of friends.

²⁷Taber et al., Address, p. 4; Records of Dissident Friends, pp. 1-3 (owned by Ruth Martocci, Mattapoisett, Mass.), hereafter cited as Diss. Rec.

The entire tone of Brown's letter, while it implored Davis to give in and bow to the Friends' discipline, was sympathetic to the fact that Davis was a proud man genuinely hurt by the Friends' treatment of him. Brown asserted that his frank approach had been adopted at the suggestion of Davis's own wife "with whom I feel a sympathy." She had advised Brown "that the way to be useful to you was not to be shy as some Friends was, but to be free."²⁸

Davis's letters to Moses Brown reveal a sense of isolation. He felt himself an outsider, powerless against the forces at the top level of the Friends' organization. Informing Brown in 1776 that he would decline an invitation to appear before the Meeting for Sufferings, Davis expressed reservations about that group's objectivity:

I cannot see my way clear to make any such confessions as the committee will be likely to accept of, as some of them stand disposed towards me at present, who I am well informed seem [sic] determined to pursue this matter with uncommon severity.²⁹

Brown, well aware of Davis's belief that he had been treated unfairly, urged Davis to "blot out of thy remembrance

²⁸Moses Brown to Timothy Davis, 12/10/1780, Rhode Island Historical Society, Moses Brown Papers, 3:38, no. 716.

²⁹Timothy Davis to Moses Brown, 22/4/1776, Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, Austin Collection, v. 12. Davis went on to express his belief that the appearance for the Meeting for Sufferings would not be helpful since the jurisdiction to discipline him lay not with that body but with the Sandwich Monthly Meeting.

whatever thou mayest suppose or have suggested in thy mind to be done to thee in a wrong spirit or manner."³⁰

By the time Davis received that letter from Brown in 1780, the Sandwich Monthly Meeting had been literally torn apart by the disownment of those who attended Worship Meetings held by Davis, the Meetings which Brown hoped Davis would discontinue. But for Davis the matter was not so simple. His reply to Brown contained these words:

The temper of mind in which thy letter appe[a]rs to be wrote was very agre[e]able: I hope thou'l[l] not be offended at me if I say there are some things exceptionable in it as well as some others that are very cordial and highly worthy of notice. Thou will think then, I suppose, that I ought to pointe [sic] them out but that I must leave for a more favourable oppertunity [sic] as all around me have been a sleep for some houres [sic].³¹

Thus Davis firmly but kindly rejected Brown's attempts at reconciliation.

Davis's actions speak louder than any explanation he might have voiced or written. What Davis rejected was Brown's notion that his disownment marked a separation from God. Brown admonished Davis:

The good remaining with thee will as it were be imprisoned if not still more clouded so long as thou continues in a state of separation from the Body of

³⁰MB to TD, 12/10/1780.

³¹TD to MB, 14/10/1780.

Friends; for there is no people besides with whom thou canst unite that the spirit with which thou hast been favoured can be satisfied with and thou wilt remain as out of thy proper place intended by our great & good master for thee.³²

Davis voiced this objection: "This word of God is not bound nor confined to the scanty limmits [sic] of human invention, which I fear is but to[o] much mingled with every Christian division that I am acquainted with."³³

Members of the dissident group were deeply troubled by their expulsion from the Society of Friends. Nevertheless, they believed that their religious experiences and services were as valid and authentic as those conducted by the regular Friends. Emphasizing that proceedings against them had been irregular and unjust, the dissidents explained the establishment of their Meeting this way:

And we who are now met in consequence of this sorrowful and afflicting occasion being denied Membership in the Society for joining Timothy Davis and Benjamin Bumpus who was also denied [sic] for joining Timothy Davis in like manner, we are well assured without just cause: We therefore think we have a just right and not only a right but from a real sense of duty we feel our Selves constrained to resume the exercise of that Discipline we have been denied [sic] the use of. . . . for the building up each other in the Faith and spirit of the Gospel . . . which we

³²MB to TD, 12/10/1780.

³³TD to MB, 14/10/1780.

hope continually to have in view above
all other considerations.³⁴

This group furthermore reiterated strongly and explicitly their contention that Davis's opponents were motivated by political considerations.³⁵

The group founded by Davis and his followers borrowed the organizational model for their new Meeting from the Friends' structure. They held Monthly Meetings, rotating the location between Rochester, Acushnet, and Long Plain. They held "General Meetings" which were analogous to Yearly Meetings. With a similar group of disowned Friends in Philadelphia they exchanged correspondence and visitors.³⁶ Furthermore, the Meeting issued certificates to its members when they relocated to other regions of the new nation, including Kentucky, Vermont, and New York State. Apparently,

³⁴Diss. Rec., p. 1.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 1-3.

³⁶Diss. Rec., p. 6, 11/9/1781; p. 9, 8/10/1781, 12/11/1781; p. 18, 11/10/1784; p. 19, 8/11/1784, 14/3/1785; p. 22, 11/9/1786, 13/11/1786; p. 24, 14/5/1787, 10/9/1787; p. 28, 15/4/1789; p. 30, 9/9/1788 (General Meeting); p. 45, 10/8/1795; p. 50, 9/7/1802. The records of the Philadelphia group also contain references to these interchanges with the New Englanders: Society of Friends, Free, Free Quaker Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. The major difference between the two groups was the Philadelphians' approval of "defensive war," a position not shared by the Rochester group. In spite of this difference, the two groups maintained a cordial relationship, perhaps because their unfortunate experiences with disownment brought them together.

the migrants expected these certificates to be honored in their new home communities just as though they had been issued by a regular Friends' Meeting.³⁷

Because some people in Rochester, Acushnet, and Long Plain remained loyal to the Society of Friends, there were in these communities two groups claiming the right to worship in the Friends' meeting houses. Throughout the 1780's and 1790's there occurred "disturbances" or "interruptions" in the regular Meetings, particularly at Acushnet.³⁸ The dissidents suggested that whichever group in each community was larger should have first choice about the times for its Meetings. The two rival organizations failed in attempts to negotiate a cooperative arrangement to share the facilities, and the dissidents then petitioned the Massachusetts General Court to award them possession of the property. They claimed that their contributions toward the building of the meeting houses should give them rights in spite of their secession from the Society of Friends.³⁹

³⁷Diss. Rec., p. 28, 11/5/1789; p. 29, 10/8/1789; p. 41, 10/8/1793.

³⁸NEYM, "Minutes," 1:363, 1782; 1:370, 1783; NEMS, 1:282-283, 14/9/1789; 1:286, 6/1/1790; 1:320, 10/9/1793; 9/10/1793; 2:1, 10/12/1793; 2:2, 8/1/1794.

³⁹Taber et al., Address, pp. 53-60; Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 3/8/1781; Moses Brown to Jeremiah Austin, 10/8/1783, Rhode Island Historical Society, Moses Brown Papers; TD to MB, 10/9/1783, Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, Austin Collection, v. 12. The dispute and the dissidents' appeal to the General Court sparked in the

Both groups apparently continued to use the meeting houses. In 1794, the dissidents again adopted a cooperative tone when they discussed selling some wood on the Rochester Meeting House lot. They agreed not to act until they had obtained the consent of "our old friends who are equally interested with ourselves."⁴⁰ Just two years later, however, the group found it necessary to vote that Rochester Friends should "defend their publick property (viz.) their meeting house & land appertaining ther[e]to against all invaders as they think proper."⁴¹ It seems then, that use of the meeting houses continued to be a point of contention between the groups.

The incident at Rochester deeply troubled both the New England Yearly Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings, for neither group could find a way to bring reconciliation. Yet the many visitors and letters sent to Rochester proposed not compromise but capitulation by the dissidents. Despite genuine concern, the leaders in Rhode Island did not comprehend the needs of the local group for autonomy and the right to self-expression. When they could not solve the

Friends a new attention to the security of titles to their properties: Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 1/2/1782; NEMS, 1:175, 12/7/1782, 12/5/1783.

⁴⁰Diss. Rec., p. 42, 1st Mo./13/1794; 2nd Mo./10/1794 (Friends here reversed the day and month in their date citations).

⁴¹Ibid., p. 46, 14/11/1796.

problem by bringing reconciliation, the Yearly Meeting leaders tried a more pragmatic approach, a realignment of Meeting affiliations. Nantucket Monthly Meeting was assigned to the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting to bring an element of strength and stability into the chaos at Sandwich. The Quarterly Meeting would function in spite of the difficulties within the Rochester area.⁴²

Like the early Quaker leaders, historians studying New England Quakerism have looked from the vantage point of the Yearly Meeting. From that perspective, they have pronounced the events at Rochester to be curious but not very significant, a minor footnote to the history of Quakerism in New England. Viewed from the local perspective, however, the events at Rochester yield insights into New England's religious and secular history. First, and most obviously, the situation brought great pain and disruption to the lives of the individuals who were Quakers in the Rochester area-- both the dissidents and those who remained within the traditional Friends' organization. These people had a difficult decision to make in choosing between the rival factions. Either choice involved pain and separation. It

⁴²NEYM, "Minutes," 1:340, 1780; Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 4/7/1783. In 1783, the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting was assessed thirty-seven pounds by the Yearly Meeting. Of that sum, Nantucket contributed twenty-five pounds; Sandwich, nine; and Pembroke, three. This is a clear indication of the wealth and strength of the Nantucket group.

was not easy to give up the religious affiliation of a lifetime, but neither was abandoning a respected local leader an easy alternative.

Secondly, the Davis incident gives insight into the organizational and decision-making aspects of the Friends' organization in New England. On one hand, the situation illustrates the complexity of the Revolution's impact on the Friends. Even more important, perhaps, it shows the role of local variations within the Society of Friends during the colonial era. It is clear that Friends within the Rochester Preparative Meeting had a very different definition of the meaning of Quaker discipline than did the Rhode Islanders who held powerful positions at the top of the New England organization. Further study of small rural Meetings is necessary before general statements can be made, but it is likely that such factors as the population and economic base of communities, the percentage of Friends in the population, and the character of relationships between Friends and their neighbors all influenced the workings of local Meetings. These factors have been too often ignored by historians writing of Quakerism in New England.

For Timothy Davis and his supporters in the Rochester area, the American Revolution clearly had a different significance than for others, particularly the leaders in Rhode Island. No documentation delineates specific factors which influenced Davis in the formation of his opinion about

the taxation question. Local opinion among non-Quakers in both Rochester and neighboring Dartmouth overwhelmingly favored the colonists. The relationship between Quakers and others in Rochester was one of mutual respect, because of Friends' long residence in the community and their willing service to the town without the expectation of power in return. Davis had traveled widely, and had experience dealing with civil authorities in Boston. The combination of his experiences at home and in other communities and colonies led him to favor the revolution so strongly that he was willing to jeopardize his position in the Society of Friends.

Yet although the revolution was the immediate cause of the split in Rochester, the separatist movement soon gathered a momentum of its own. By the time the American Revolution had ended, the Quaker dissidents, like the colonists, cherished their independence. Ironically, the outcome of the war vindicated the position of Davis's followers; yet neither they nor the Society of Friends saw the end of the hostilities with England as an impetus for reuniting. The specific incident which sparked the schism gave way to a larger cause: local needs were not being met and local opinions not heard within the Friends' organization. Many Rochester Quakers found that the meaning of their religious experience was determined at local and individual levels; larger affiliation with a regional or national organization was secondary and not essential.

Epilogue

In 1795, Timothy Davis sent a letter to the Sandwich Monthly Meeting confessing error. He defined his offenses in these words:

whereas for want of watchfulness some years past in the dispute between Great Britain and the American Colonies[,] I unhappily and unwarily suffered my mind to be imprudently agitated and influenced by the political disturbances of that time, in which situation of mind I wrote and published a Piece on Taxation which gave great uneasiness to friends as well as was the cause of a painful split

. . .

On the basis of this apology, Timothy Davis was received back into the Sandwich Monthly Meeting.⁴³ He died three years later, at the age of sixty-eight.

If the loss of Davis's membership was a blow to the dissidents, they did not acknowledge it officially. Their records do not mention his "defection" although they had previously disowned from their group others who had reaffiliated with the mainstream Society of Friends.⁴⁴ Their Meetings continued for at least twenty years without Davis's

⁴³Sand. Mo. Mtg., v. 41, 29/6/1795, letter dated 23/3/1795.

⁴⁴Diss. Rec., p. 32, 7/2/1790; p. 46, 14/11/1796 notes a disownment following Davis's defection.

leadership. Although some evidence of decline can be found in their records, the group continued to receive new members. At the same time Davis rejoined the Friends' main body, Long Plain was dropped from the rotation of dissidents' Meeting sites, and Business Meetings began to be held quarterly rather than monthly. In 1813, Acushnet or "Fairhaven" was also dropped and all Meetings for Business were to be held in Rochester. The separatist movement, with its roots in the experiences of the old Rochester Preparative Meeting, had now come full circle. The minutes of the dissidents end abruptly in 1815 without explanation and no further documentation of their activities has been found.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The Historiographical Context

Rochester was an atypical town in eighteenth century Massachusetts--a town where a small Quaker congregation lived in harmony and cooperation with neighbors who practiced the established religion. Members of Rochester's Friends Meeting formed a unique group as they balanced local standards with the ideals of the Society of Friends. Rochester's history thus presents an opportunity for historians both to learn about new dimensions of religious toleration in Massachusetts and to add to the growing knowledge about specific local communities.

Within the body of literature about Quakers in colonial America there is much more emphasis upon Pennsylvania than on New England. Among general works which provide useful background information for a study of New England Friends are Kenneth L. Carroll, "A Look at the Quaker Revival of 1756," Jerry W. Frost, "The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Social History of the Society of Friends," Frederick B. Tolles, Quakers and the Atlantic Culture, and, most important for the overall picture of colonial Quakerism, Rufus M. Jones, The Quakers in the

American Colonies.¹

Two studies of Quakerism which are more specifically relevant to the Rochester Friends are Sydney V. James, A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth Century America, and Arthur J. Worrall's fine dissertation, "New England Quakerism, 1656-1830," a very useful overview.² Both James and Worrall emphasize the increasing significance to eighteenth century New England Quakerism of the influence of urban Rhode Island Friends. Centralization and the establishment of policies designed to create uniform responses to the American Revolution represented a narrowing trend for New England Quakerism.

But although both Worrall and James have documented an inherent inconsistency between the Quakers' traditional respect for the "inner light" and attempts--born of a desire to present a united front to the outside world--to enforce conformity, neither author has explored the implications of

¹Kenneth L. Carroll, "A Look at the Quaker Revival of 1756," Quaker History 65 (Autumn 1976):63-80; Jerry W. Frost, "The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Social History of the Society of Friends" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968); Rufus M. Jones assisted by Isaac Sharpless and Amelia M. Gummere, The Quakers in the American Colonies (n.p., 1911; reprint ed., New York: Russell & Russell, 1962); Frederick B. Tolles, Quakers and the Atlantic Culture (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960).

²Sydney V. James, A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth Century America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Arthur J. Worrall, "New England Quakerism, 1656-1830" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1969).

this incongruity at the local level. Both James and Worrall view the Society of Friends from the perspective of the upper levels of the New England Friends organization, but they have not undertaken an evaluation of local responses to official policies evolved by the Yearly Meeting. In addition, these authors have relied solely on Quaker records and theological writings as sources, without consulting secular records. Although both James and Worrall occasionally consider the impact of colony laws in Massachusetts and Rhode Island on the Friends, local policies--formal and informal--receive little attention.

The most significant single local event for eighteenth century Rochester Quakers, the disownment of Timothy Davis, occurred during the American Revolution. Sydney V. James, "The Impact of the American Revolution on Quakers' Ideas About Their Sect" provides useful insight into the revolutionary conflict's effect on the Friends. More comprehensive is Arthur J. Mekeel's thorough dissertation, "The Society of Friends and the American Revolution."³

Both Mekeel and Worrall include brief mention of the disruption in Rochester following the appearance of Timothy Davis's controversial pamphlet, but their discussions

³Sydney V. James, "The Impact of the American Revolution on Quakers' Ideas About Their Sect," William and Mary Quarterly 19 (1962):360-382; Arthur J. Mekeel, "The Society of Friends and the American Revolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1940).

illustrate the unexamined aspects of local Quakerism. The Friends' practice of keeping records at the Monthly Meeting level obscures the fact that the defection of Davis's followers was a local phenomenon. Neither Worrall nor Mekeel used local secular sources and consequently neither identified Davis's followers as a group isolated within the Rochester Preparative Meeting. As a result, there is nowhere a discussion of the events and attitudes which led to the Rochester Friend's painful rejection of seventy years of Quaker heritage.

The unique experience of Rochester's Quakers grew out of their lives in a town founded during the waning years of Plymouth Colony's separate existence. The history of Rochester was characterized from the town's founding in 1686 by an uneven but persistent attitude of toleration and mutual respect between those of differing religious views. George D. Langdon, Jr.'s Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth, 1620-1691 provides useful background information for understanding Rochester's heritage. Even more relevant is John Bumsted's "An Ecclesiastical History of Plymouth Colony."⁴ Bumsted discusses the origins and implications of toleration as an integral and lasting part of the Plymouth

⁴George D. Langdon, Jr., Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth, 1620-1691 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966); John M. Bumstead, "The Pilgrims' Progress: The Ecclesiastical History of the Old Colony, 1620-1775" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1965).

Colony heritage. In addition to providing insights into the relationships of Friends to the total Rochester community, Bumsted gives contextual information by describing conditions in neighboring towns during the eighteenth century.

No recently published scholarly work has analyzed Rochester's history, but David Olausen, a Rochester resident, studied political patterns in the early eighteenth century for a college seminar paper.⁵ Other than Olausen's work, the most recent studies of Rochester were written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mary Hall Leonard, the foremost historian of that era for the town, published frequently consulted studies.⁶ Nevertheless, Leonard's perspective is limited by her primary interest in the Mattapoissett section which became a separate town in 1857.

Early nineteenth century articles on the "topography" of Rochester published by the Massachusetts Historical Society are also interesting as background for a study of the

⁵David Olausen, "A Colonial New England Town, Pluralist Democracy, Puritan Majority: Rochester, Massachusetts, 1680-1736" (undergraduate seminar paper, Lawrence University, 1976).

⁶Mary Hall Leonard et al., Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, Massachusetts: Being a History of These Towns and Also in Part of Marion and a Portion of Wareham (New York: Grafton Press, 1907); Mary Hall Leonard, "Old Rochester and Her Daughter Towns," New England Magazine, n.s., 20 (July 1899):613-635; Idem, "Revolutionary Records of a Country Town," New England Magazine, n.s., 19 (Nov. 1898):289-299.

community. One such article was written by Abraham Holmes, whose memoirs are themselves an important primary source. Two similar articles, one on Rochester and the other on Wareham, were written by Samuel Davis.⁷

Family histories and other works written by and for people primarily interested in genealogy comprise another important category of secondary source material. Such works, frequently overlooked by historians, have been useful for this study, for they have permitted identification of the individuals and family networks in Rochester. Information from genealogical works must be used cautiously, but when consulted in combination with primary sources--particularly vital records, wills, and deeds, can provide important short cuts for the historian studying community and family relationships.

Some important general works are: David Hamblen, "First Settlers of Rochester and Their Families"; Frank L. Holmes, Directory of the Ancestral Heads of New England Families; "Record of Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1687-1718" from the Genealogical Advertiser of 1901;

⁷ [Abraham Holmes], "Topographical Description of the Town of Rochester," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, ser. 2, 10 (1823):29-39; [Samuel Davis], "Topography and History of Rochester," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, ser. 2, 4 (1816):250-267, 302-303; [Idem], "Topography and History of Wareham," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, ser. 2, 4 (1816):285-296.

"Researches Among Funeral Sermons" from the New England Historical and Genealogical Register; and Henry B. Worth's "The First Settlers of Dartmouth and Where They Located."⁸ Other genealogical works help to fill in information about specific non-Quaker families in Rochester. Especially useful are works on the Morton, Hammond, Bradford, Briggs, Winslow, Lothrop, Prince, Sprague, and Dexter families.⁹

⁸ David Hamblen, "First Settlers of Rochester and Their Families," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 5 (Jan. 1851):85-88; Frank L. Holmes, comp., Directory of the Ancestral Heads of New England Families, 1620-1700 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1964); "Record of Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1687-1718," Genealogical Advertiser, 4 (Sept. 1901):9; "Researches Among Funeral Sermons," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 7 (1853):307; Henry B. Worth, "The First Settlers of Dartmouth and Where They Located," Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, no. 39 (1913), pp. 10-14.

⁹ John K. Allen, George Morton of Plymouth Colony and Some of His Descendants (Chicago: By the Author, 1908); Philip Battell, "Descendants of Benjamin Hammond," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 30 (1876):28-32; Ruth G. Hall, comp., Descendants of Governor William Bradford (n.p., 1951); Roland Hammond, History and Genealogy of the Descendants of William Hammond of London England and His Wife Elizabeth Penn Through Their Son Benjamin of Sandwich and Rochester Massachusetts (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1894); Edna A. Hannibal, comp., John Briggs of Sandwich Massachusetts and His Descendants (Worcester: Clark University, 1962); David P. Holton and Frances K. Holton, Winslow Memorial (New York: By the Authors, 1877); E.B. Huntington, Genealogical Memoir of the La-Lothrop Family (Ridgefield, Conn.: n.p., 1884); Lucius R. Paige, "The Winslow Family," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 25 (1871):355-358; "Some Memoirs of Rev. Thomas Prince," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 5 (1851):375-384; Warren V. Sprague, Sprague Families in America (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Co., 1913); William A. Warden and Robert L. Dexter, comps., Genealogy of the Dexter Family in America: Descendants of Thomas Dexter Together with the Records of Other Allied Families (Worcester: n.p., 1905).

Most important, of course, have been genealogical works which tell about members of Rochester's many Quaker families. One general work which proved useful is Mary R. Austin, "Courtship and Marriage of Ye Old Time Quakers."¹⁰ Among the genealogical studies of specific Quaker families in Rochester, these are the most important: Fred H. Benson, The Benson Family Records; Almon E. Daniels, "Some Descendants of William Gifford of Sandwich Massachusetts"; Willis L. Irish, Descendants of John Irish, 1629-1963; Frank A. Randall, Randall and Allied Families; George L. Randall, Braley Genealogy, "Davis Families," and Hiller Genealogy; David Sherman, "Plymouth Shermans"; Roy V. Sherman, Some of the Descendants of Philip Sherman; Elizabeth S. Versailles, Hathaways of America; and Conrad P. Wing, A Historical and Genealogical Register of John Wing.¹¹

¹⁰Mary E. Austin, "Courtship and Marriage of Ye Old Time Quakers," Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, no. 34 (1912), pp. 7-10.

¹¹Fred H. Benson, The Benson Family Records (Syracuse: Craftsman Press, 1920); Almon E. Daniels, comp., "Some Descendants of William Gifford of Sandwich, Massachusetts," n.p., 1958 (mimeographed); Willis L. Irish, Descendants of John Irish, 1629-1963 (Freeport, Maine: Dingley Press, 1964); Frank A. Randall, Randall and Allied Families: William Randall (1609-1693) of Scituate and His Descendants with Ancestral Families (Chicago: n.p., 1943); George L. Randall, comp., Braley Genealogy: Descendants of Roger Braley, 1696-1912 (New Bedford: n.p., 1913); Idem, comp., "Davis Families," (n.p., n.d., typescript); Idem, comp., Hiller Genealogy: Descendants of Hugh Hiller (New Bedford: n.p., 1920); David Sherman, "Plymouth Shermans," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 27 (1873):73-76; Roy V. Sherman, Some of the Descendants of

Migration away from Rochester was a factor which began to be significant in the late 1730's. Two works which enable the researcher to trace the activities of former Rochester residents in new communities are, therefore, useful. A study of migration to Hardwick, Massachusetts (a community in which Rochester minister Timothy Ruggles owned a proprietary share) is an unpublished study by George P. Howard, "Emigrants from Rochester to Hardwick, 1735-1780." William H. Wilson, Quaker Hill, contains similarly valuable information about Quaker migrations to the New York State area known to eighteenth century Friends as "Oblong."¹²

Primary Sources

While the above secondary materials provide background information, the most important data for this dissertation are found in many secular and religious primary source materials. Quaker records comprise the most important single category of record used, but local records for Rochester have also been vital. A variety of types of

Philip Sherman (n.p.: By the Author, 1968); Elizabeth S. Versailles, comp. and ed., Hathaways of America, 1970 ed. (Northampton, Ma.: Gazette Printing Co., 1970); Conrad P. Wing, A Historical and Genealogical Register of John Wing of Sandwich, Massachusetts and His Descendants, 1632-1888, 2nd ed. (New York: DeVinne Press, 1888).

¹²George P. Howard, "Emigrants From Rochester to Hardwick, 1735-1780," 1971 (Xerox), American Antiquarian Society, Worcester; Warren H. Wilson, Quaker Hill (New York: Columbia University, 1907).

records gives much information about the lives of all Rochester residents, particularly its Quakers.

New England Quaker records from the seventeenth century to modern times are deposited at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library in Providence. Many of those records have been microfilmed. While records from all levels of the Friends' organization contain some relevant material, the Monthly Meeting records have been most useful, for these come closest to showing local concerns. The Monthly Meeting, the basic record-keeping unit within the Society of Friends, was usually comprised of more than one local Meeting. Information about a single community's Quakers must therefore be culled from these more inclusive records. Among the important types of information contained in Monthly Meeting records are: vital records, including marriage certificates listing wedding guests; disciplinary actions, including both disownments and also repentances, known as "acknowledgments"; certificates giving permission to marry, to move to another community, or to travel; charity activities of the meeting to individual Friends who were the victims of disaster or financial hardship; and "sufferings"--civil penalties incurred by Friends who refused to obey civil laws. In addition, the records show the responsibilities assumed by individual Quakers within the Society of Friends.

As is evident, many details about the lives of Quakers can be found in Monthly Meeting records. During the

eighteenth century, Rochester Preparative Meeting was affiliated first with the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting¹³ and later with the Sandwich Monthly Meeting.¹⁴ Records from these two Monthly Meetings have thus been the most useful single source of information about Rochester Quakers. They provide information about individual Friends and about the functioning of the local group.

Quarterly Meeting records are less useful. During its affiliation with the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, Rochester was under the aegis of the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting,¹⁵ but this level of the organization was just being formed at that time. Later Rochester became part of the Sandwich Quarterly Meeting by virtue of association with the Sandwich Monthly Meeting; this Quarterly Meeting differed from the Monthly Meeting only by the addition of the small Pembroke Monthly Meeting. Record keeping was apparently sporadic, or perhaps the records have not survived. Occasionally records

¹³Society of Friends, Dartmouth Monthly Meeting, "Births, Deaths, Marriages" (Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection, reel 51, hereafter cited as RIHS); "Minutes, Men Friends," 1699-1729 (RIHS, reel 51); "Minutes, Men Friends," 1727-1762 (RIHS, reel 52).

¹⁴Sandwich Monthly Meeting, "Births, Deaths, and Marriages," 1646-1761 (RIHS, reel 44); "Minutes, Men Friends," v. 40, 1672-1754 (RIHS, reel 45); "Minutes, Men Friends," v. 41, 1755-1850 (RIHS, reel 44); "Minutes, Women Friends," 1776-1794 (RIHS, reel 47).

¹⁵Society of Friends, Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, "Minutes," 1681-1746 (RIHS, Friends Collection, manuscript volume). The back of this volume contains notations of Friends' Sufferings, 1688-1720.

for Sandwich Quarterly Meeting appear interspersed with Monthly Meeting records. The only separate record book contains womens' minutes.¹⁶ In any case, since record keeping was not a major function of the Quarterly Meeting level in the organization, the content of existing record is repetitious and less detailed than Monthly Meeting records.

More valuable are records of the New England Yearly Meeting. Here policies were devised and communication with England and other colonies occurred.¹⁷ During the American Revolution, the formation of the New England Meeting for Sufferings added an important new record-keeping body. Formed to maintain day-to-day activities in the interim between Yearly Meetings, the Meeting for Sufferings was capable of making policy decisions during this important era.¹⁸ The Friends' official attitude toward the defections in Rochester is contained in the records of this body. Although the issue appears as a peripheral one in the overall work of the Meeting for Sufferings, there was obviously an urgency in their efforts to compel the Rochester group to

¹⁶Society of Friends, Sandwich Quarterly Meeting, "Minutes, Women Friends," v. 42, 1701-1899 (RIHS, reel 42).

¹⁷Society of Friends, Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, [New England Yearly Meeting], "Minutes of Men Friends," v. 1, 1683-1787 (RIHS, reel 1).

¹⁸Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, "Minutes," v. 1, 1775-1793 (RIHS, reel 5).

conform to standards set by the Meeting for Sufferings and ratified by the Yearly Meeting.

Several miscellaneous Friends' records also contain important information, useful in understanding Rochester's Quaker congregation. A special volume which records sufferings throughout New England contains information about Rochester Friends who suffered during the 1720's.¹⁹ Quakers' regulations and policies are delineated in a Book of Discipline published by New England Friends in 1785. The Discipline is particularly valuable because it is a cumulative record tracing the formation and modification of Friends' policies throughout the eighteenth century.²⁰

In addition to such general Quaker records are several sources which are specifically related to Rochester's schism during the revolutionary years. Probably most important is a book of minutes kept by Timothy Davis's followers after they founded their Meeting outside the Friends' jurisdiction. These records remained unknown until recently when Ruth Martocci, a descendant of the Quaker Hiller family, discovered the book in her family home in Mattapoissett. The use of these records here represents the

¹⁹Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, "Account of Earliest Sufferings," 1720-1762 (RIHS, reel 4).

²⁰Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting, The Book of Discipline (Providence: John Carter, 1785), Rhode Island Historical Society, Friends Collection.

first scholarly examination of them. The records clarify the dissidents' position and give details about the organizational structure and membership of the dissidents.²¹

A comparable group of disowned Friends in Pennsylvania left a much larger body of records which contains references to the exchange of visitors and correspondence by the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania groups. Philosophical differences divided the two groups--the Pennsylvanians were more accepting of the military conflict than were the dissidents in Rochester--but their mutual status as "disowned" Friends bound them together.²²

Timothy Davis's controversial pamphlet is of course a critically important source, as is another pamphlet subsequently published by his defenders.²³ Davis's pamphlet tells simply and briefly about the author's reasons for his support of the cause of independence. His followers' pamphlet, written after the group had been expelled from the

²¹Dissident Friends Records [Rochester, Mass.], 1781-1815, in the possession of Ruth Martocci, Mattapoisett, Mass.

²²Society of Friends, Free Quaker Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

²³[Timothy Davis], A Letter from a Friend to Some of His Intimate Friends on the Subject of Paying Taxes (Watertown: B. Edes, 1776); Joseph Taber et al., An Address to the People Called Quakers (Boston: Fleets, 1784). Further explication of Davis's views is contained in a second pamphlet: Timothy Davis, Thoughts on Taxation (New York: Webster & McLean, 1784).

Society of Friends, tells the background of Davis's beliefs and the context in which he expressed his views. Not surprisingly, these authors felt that their group and Davis in particular had been treated unfairly by the Society of Friends. These former Quakers pinpoint some of the difficulties already outlined here: the Society of Friends' organization was topheavy so that the Yearly Meeting was out of touch with the needs of members in some local communities; the emphasis on conformity during the revolution violated older traditions of individual freedom and local self-determination.

The most important source of personal information about Timothy Davis is his correspondence with Moses Brown, a prominent Providence Quaker himself sympathetic to the goals of the revolution.²⁴ In their exchange of letters, both Davis and Brown reveal the depth of their feelings. Brown urged Davis to admit his error and return to the Friends' Meeting, while Davis felt that he had been treated unfairly and that it was the Meeting itself which should repent. There was mutual respect between the correspondents, but neither would give in.

Governmental records at the levels of town, county

²⁴ Moses Brown to Timothy Davis, 12/10/1780, Davis to Brown, 14/10/1780, RIHS, Moses Brown Papers, v. 13; Davis to Brown, 22/4/1776, 9/10/1783, RIHS, Friends Collection, Austin Collection.

and colony provide the context in which to view the lives of Rochester's Friends. In addition, however, such records occasionally deal with the Quakers either as individuals or as a group. Thus, it is essential to study such records in order to get a more complete perspective on the lives of these Friends. At the local level, two types of political records are important, the Rochester town records and the records of Rochester's proprietors.

Town records²⁵ contain two major categories of useful information about the Quakers. First they show participation by Quakers in town politics and other activities of the town meeting; second, they reveal the extent to which the Quakers themselves were an issue in town politics. Such records show that geographic fragmentation rather than religious diversity was the major theme in Rochester's history. Nevertheless, the presence of the Friends from the time of the town's first settlement made it imperative that the people deal with the question of toleration in practical if not philosophical ways. Town records from the neighboring community of Dartmouth have also been consulted to provide a comparison with a town where Quakers comprised a larger portion of their town's population.²⁶

²⁵ Rochester, Massachusetts, Town Records, v. 1-3, Rochester Town Hall.

²⁶ Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Town Records, "Town Meetings," 1674-1787, microfilm, New Bedford Public Library.

The Rochester Proprietors' Records²⁷ show that in the early years after settlement there was an orderly transfer of political power from the proprietary body to the town meeting. Subsequent entries record mainly land transactions; these records are valuable because they show the presence of Quakers as landowners from the early years of the community. In the absence of tax records for Rochester, the proprietors' records show that the Quakers held an important place in the economic structure of the community and that they were well-established, long-time residents.

The town of Wareham and the Mattapoissett precinct, created during the period of fragmentation in the 1730's and 1740's, left records which also add to our knowledge about Rochester's Quaker residents.²⁸ In the case of these records, however, much of the evidence is negative. In Wareham, for example Quakers did not fulfill the same active role they did in Rochester. In Mattapoissett, because the precinct was the political organization of a religious congregation, Quakers were excluded from participation in precinct politics.

²⁷Rochester, Massachusetts, Town Records, v. 1A, "Proprietors" (a copy of these records is at the Plymouth County Court House, Plymouth, Mass.).

²⁸Wareham, Massachusetts, Town Records, v. 1, Wareham Town Hall; Mattapoissett, Massachusetts, Precinct Records, in the possession of the clerk of the Mattapoissett Congregational Church.

County level records consulted include land transactions and wills.²⁹ These records, in the Plymouth County Court House in Plymouth, tell much about families and family relationships among the Rochester Friends. In addition, they give further information about the place of the Friends within the economic structure of the community. Again, because Rochester tax records have not survived, information from such records is especially important. Wills and land records also document relationships between Quakers and their neighbors. For example, non-Quakers frequently served as witnesses to wills or deeds, or in some other supportive capacity.

At the colony level, important information about the early years of Rochester comes from the Plymouth Colony records.³⁰ After Plymouth Colony was merged with Massachusetts Bay, the Massachusetts General Court records covered Rochester.³¹ Petitions submitted to the General Court by residents who felt their interests were not adequately represented by the town are the most common cause for action by the General Court in town affairs. Thus during

²⁹Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Land Records and Probate Records, Plymouth County Court House, Plymouth.

³⁰Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, Nathaniel Shurtleff and Daniel Pulsifer, eds. (12 vols., Boston, 1856-1861).

³¹Massachusetts Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

the period of subdivision of the town, such petitions became common. When the North Rochester Precinct was created, Quakers themselves were sometimes mentioned in the documents: the presence of Quakers in the precinct lowered the potential tax revenues of the area, and made it more difficult for the precinct to support its minister.

Church records for three congregations of the established church have been checked in an effort to determine how much crossover existed between members of the two religions. Records of the Rochester First Church, the Mattapoissett Church and the Wareham Church³² reveal that virtually no transfers of affiliation occurred. Conversion of Quakers, even those disowned by the Society of Friends, did not occur.

Two memoirs written by Rochester residents supplement the government and church records by giving a more personal observation about the Friends in Rochester.³³ Although each presents a limited point of view, in conjunction with other sources they add important details to our knowledge of the way the Quakers were perceived by the community. The memoirs

³²Rochester Congregational Church, Records, v. 1 (in the possession of the Marion Congregational Church, Marion, Mass.); Mattapoissett Congregational Church, Records; Wareham Congregational Church, Records, y. 1, Wareham Town Hall.

³³Samuel West, "Memoirs" (1807), American Antiquarian Society, Worcester; Abraham Holmes, "Memoirs" (1836), typescript copy, Rochester Historical Society.

of Samuel West and Abraham Holmes differ from each other, thus emphasizing that individuals' unique perspectives led them to view the Quakers differently.

The importance of considering a variety of sources is emphasized by the divergent points of view expressed by Holmes and West. No one source can give a complete picture of the Quakers' lives in Rochester, but together a variety of sources can give a balanced view. Records of the Society of Friends combine with secular records of the Rochester community, records of other religious groups, and personal memoirs to show many aspects of the lives of this unique group of Friends.

TABLE 7

QUAKERS ELECTED TO TOWN OFFICES IN ROCHESTER, 1697-1784

Spec. Elec. = special election, held separate from the usual March elections
 Disowned = disowned by Rochester Monthly Meeting but appears on Quaker list
 Town Reconsidered = entry wording; probably asked town to elect someone else, which was done
 Replaced = entry wording; probably asked to be replaced, which was done
 Refused = refused to serve in office; consequence noted

refused serv. = refused to serve; no further information
 exempted = exempted from service

"hired" sub. = entry wording; hired substitute
 fined = paid fine in lieu of service
 "got" sub. = entry wording; got substitute

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office
						Town Re- placed sidered (and con- sequence)
1697		Constable	Aaron Barlow		✓	
		"Clerk of market for sealing weights & measures"	John Wing		✓	
		Fenceviewer	John Wing		✓	
		Howard	John Wing		✓	
		Grandjuror	Savory Clifton		✓	

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* Selectmen usually assessed taxes; occasionally separate assessors chosen. The names "Clerk of the Market" and "Sealer of Measures" appear equivalent, as do "Fenceviewer" and "Surveyor of Fences." "Hog Reeve," "Howard," "Field Driver," and "Hog Constable" seem equivalent, as do "Yardkeeper" and "Yardkeeper of Sheep," and "Inspector of Herring" and "Inspector of Alewives."

(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office		
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1702		Selectman Constable Fenceviewer	John Wing Joseph Benson Aaron Barlow		✓ ✓ ✓			
1703		Selectman Selectman Treasurer Constable Fenceviewer Fenceviewer	Elisha Wing John Wing Aaron Barlow Jabez Hiller Jabez Hiller John Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1704		Selectman Tithingman Fenceviewer	John Wing John Somers [Summers] Aaron Barlow		✓ ✓ ✓			
1705		Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer	Aaron Barlow Jabez Hiller		✓ ✓			
1706		Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer	John Wing Jabez Hiller		✓ ✓			
1707		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer	John Somers [Summers] John Wing Jabez Hiller		✓ ✓ ✓			
1708		Sealer of Measures Tithingman Tithingman Fenceviewer Fenceviewer	John Wing John Somers [Summers] Elisha Wing Jabez Hiller Stephen Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1708/9	Feb.	"Jury of trials"	John Mendall		✓			

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis-owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office	Refused (and con- sequence)
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed
1709		Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Tithingman Fenceviewer Fenceviewer	John Somers [Summers] John Wing Benony Youen Jabez Hiller Stephen Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1710		Constable Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer	John Mendall Jabez Hiller Elisha Wing John Wing Stephen Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1711		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer	Elisha Wing John Wing John Wing Stephen Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1712		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer Field Driver	John Sum[m]ers Elisha Wing John Wing John Wing Jabez Hiller Gideon [Gideon] Gifford		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1713		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer Fenceviewer Field Driver	Jabez Hiller Stephen Wing John Wing Joseph Benson Joseph Wing Elisha Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis-owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office Town Reconsidered	Refused (and con- sequence)
1714		Constable Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Measures Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing Gideon Gifford John Wing Joseph Wing		✓ ✓ ✓		"hired" sub.
1715		Constable Fenceviewer	Joseph Benson Joseph Wing		✓ ✓		
1716		information missing from records					
1717		Constable Fenceviewer Howard	Jeremiah Griffeth Stephen Wing Benjamin Hiller		✓ ✓ ✓		
1718		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer	Shubal Barlow Elisha Wing Jabez Hiller		✓ ✓ ✓		
1719		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways	Elisha Wing Stephen Wing		✓ ✓		
1720		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Constable	Jabez Hiller Elisha Wing Stephen Wing John Summers, Jr.		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1721		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Hog Reeve	Jeremiah Griffith Elisha Wing John Wing Nathan Barlow Shubal Barlow		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office	
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed (and con- sequence)
1722		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve	Jabez Hillard Elisha Wing Stephen Wing Shubal Barlow		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1723		Selectman Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Sealer of Leather	Elisha Wing Elisha Wing John Wing Jabez Hillard Shubal Barlow John Summers		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1724	May	Selectman Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Leather	Elisha Wing Jabez Hillard Elisha Wing John Summers		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1725		Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Sealer of Leather	Jabez Hillard Stephen Wing John Sum[m]ers		✓ ✓ ✓		
1726		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Hog Reeve Hog Reeve Juror	Jabez Hillard Elisha Wing Stephen Wing Joseph Benson, Jr. Benjamin Hillard John Mendall, Jr. Joseph Benson		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
1727		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓		

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office		
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1728		Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Sealer of Leather	Jabez Hillard Stephen Wing Benjamin Hillard John Summers		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1729		Town Clerk Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Sealer of Leather	Samuel Wing Nathan Jenne Stephen Wing Benjamin Hillard John Summers	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1730		"[town] clerk" Constable Fenceviewer Fenceviewer Hog Reeve	Samuel Wing John Wing Shubal Barlow Joseph Benson Jeremiah Griffeth	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			refused
1731		Selectman Clerk/Treasurer Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Shingles	Samuel Wing Samuel Wing Joseph Benson Stephen Wing Jabez Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1732		Treasurer Constable Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve Sealer of Shingles	Samuel Wing Jedidiah Wing Seth Hiller Nathan Jenne John Wing Shubal Barlow Jabez Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			finned

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1733		Selectman Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Hog Reeve Sealer of Shingles	Samuel Wing Nathan Barlow Seth Hiller Joseph Benson, Jr. Jabez Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1734		Selectman Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Hog Reeve	Samuel Wing Nathan Barlow Stephen Wing Hananiah Gifford	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1735		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Hog Reeve Sealer of Shingles	Jabez Hiller Jedidiah Wing Nathan Barlow Jabez Hiller		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1736		Selectman Constable Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Shingles	Samuel Wing Nathan Barlow Jabez Hiller Elisha Wing Jabez Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1737	July July July July July	Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Sealer of Shingles Selectman Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Sealer of Shingles	John Wing [H]Ananiah Gifford Jabez Hiller Samuel Wing Butler Wing John Wing Hananiah Gifford Jabez Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office	
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed (and con- sequence)
1738		Selectman	Samuel Wing	✓	✓		
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓		
		Surveyor of Highways	Stephen Wing		✓		
		Hog Reeve	Phillip Griffeth		✓		
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓		
1739		Selectman	Samuel Wing	✓	✓		
		Constable	John Mendal, Jr.				exempted
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓		
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓		
		Sealer of Shingles	Jabez Hiller		✓		
1740		Selectman	Samuel Wing	✓	✓		
		Constable	John Mendall		✓		
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓		
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓		
1741		Constable	Gideon [Gideon] Gifford				exempted
		Constable	Hananah Gifford				
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓		
	Oct.	Surveyor of Highways	Nathan Jenne		✓		
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓		
		Sealer of Shingles	Jabez Hiller		✓		
	1742		Constable	Jeremiah Devol			
		Constable	Seth Hiller		✓		
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓		
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓		
		Sealer of Lumber	Samuel Wing	✓	✓		

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of Approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office		
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1743		Selectman	Samuel Wing		✓			
		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓			
		Constable	Nathan Jenne					"got" sub.
		Constable [served for Jenne]	Samuel Wing		✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓			
1744		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Steven Wing		✓			
		Sealer of Measures	Samuel Wing		✓			
		Hog Reeve	William Wing		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓			
		Inspector of Deer	Shubal Barlow		✓			
1745		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓			
		Selectman	Seth Hiller					refused
	May	Selectman	Samuel Wing		✓			
		Constable	Shubal Barlow					exempted
		Constable	William Irish					refused
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Stephen Wing		✓			
1746		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓			
		Selectman	Samuel Wing		✓			
		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	Stephen Wing		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Shubal Barlow		✓			
		Hog Reeve	Aaron Griffeth		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓			
	Inspector of Herring	Roger Braley		✓				

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis-owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office
						Town Reconsidered Replaced Refused (and con- sequence)
1747		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓	
		Constable	Samuel Shearman		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Shubal Barlow		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Inspector of Herring	John Mendall		✓	
1748		Assessor	Samuel Wing	✓	✓	
		Constable	Roger Braley		✓	refused
		Surveyor of Highways	Roger Braley		✓	
		Surveyor of Highways	Benjamin Wing		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Inspector of Herring	Jabez Hiller		✓	
1749		Selectman	Samuel Wing		✓	
		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓	
		Constable	Benjamin Wing		✓	"got" sub.
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Inspector of Herring (for Sippican and Wewantit)	Nathan Jenne		✓	
1750		Town Clerk	Samuel Wing	✓	✓	
		Constable	John Shearman, 2nd		✓	refused
		Surveyor of Highways	John Mendall		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne		✓	
		Inspector of Alewives	Timothy Clifton, Jr.		✓	
1751		Constable	Roger Braley		✓	exempted
		Surveyor of Highways	Nathan Jenne		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Benjamin Wing		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Inspector of Alewives	John Mendol [Mendall]		✓	

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis-owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office
					Town Reconsidered	Re-placed (and consequence)
1752		Constable	Jabez Wing		✓	
		Surveyor of Highways	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Hog Reeve	Hananiah Gifford		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
		Inspector of Alewives	John Mendall		✓	
1753		Constable	Jabez Wing			"got" sub.
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
1754		Surveyor of Highways	Seth Hiller [?]		✓	
		Intentative; page difficult to read				
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Edmond Shearman		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Jabez Hiller		✓	
1755		Selectman	Samuel Wing	✓		
		Constable	Edmond Shearman			refused
		Surveyor of Highways	Seth Hiller		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Roger Braley		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne		✓	
		Hog Reeve	John Shearman, 3rd		✓	
		Hog Reeve	Benjamin Wing		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓	
1756		Constable	Philip Turner		✓	
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓	
		Surveyor of Highways	Roger Braley		✓	
		Fenceviewer	Samuel Tripp		✓	
		Hog Reeve	Daniel Wing		✓	
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓	

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office	Refused (and con- sequence)
					Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	
1757		Constable	Samuel Tripp		✓		"got" sub.
		Surveyor of Highways	Shubal Barlow		✓		
		Surveyor of Highways	Roger Braley		✓		
		Fenceviewer	William Ellis		✓		
		Fenceviewer	John Mendall [?]		✓		
			[blurred]				
		Hog Reeve	Daniel Wing		✓		
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓		
1758		Surveyor of Highways	Philip Turner	✓	✓		
		Hog Reeve	Aaron Griffeth		✓		
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓		
1759		Surveyor of Highways	Aaron Griffith		✓		
		Fenceviewer	John Mendall		✓		
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓		
		Inspector of Alewives	Shubal Barlow		✓		
1760		Selectman	Samuel Wing	✓	✓		
		Constable	Clifton Wing				
		Surveyor of Highways	Aaron Griffith				
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne	✓			
		Hog Reeve	Caleb Mendall	✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller	✓			
		Inspector of Alewives	Shubal Barlow	✓			
1761		Constable	Abram Davis		✓		"hired" sub.
		Constable	Clifton Wing				
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne	✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Benjamin Clifton	✓			
		Inspector of Alewives	Shubal Barlow	✓			

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1762		Constable	Timothy Clifton		✓			
		Constable	Caleb Mendall	✓		✓		
		Fenceviewer	Samuel Trip[p]		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓			
		Inspector of Alewives	Shubal Barlow		✓			
1763		Surveyor of Highways	Caleb Mendall	✓				
		Warden	Aaron Griffith		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Nathan Jenne	✓	✓			
		Hog Reeve	Aaron Griffith		✓			
		Inspector of Alewives	Shubal Barlow		✓			
1764		Constable	Abram Davis					"hired" sub.
		Surveyor of Highways	Caleb Mendall	✓	✓			
		Hog Reeve	Benjamin Clifton		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓			
1765		Surveyor of Highways	Aaron Griffith		✓			
		Tithingman	William Ellis		✓			
		Fenceviewer	Samuel Trip[p]		✓			
		Hog Reeve	Shubal Wing	✓	✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓			
1766		Surveyor of Highways	Simon Hathaway		✓			
		Hog Reeve	Mark Jenne		✓			
1767		Surveyor of Highways	Samuel Tripp		✓			
		Warden	Levi Hiller		✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Seth Hiller		✓			
1768		Constable	Caleb Mendall	✓				"hired" sub.
		Hog Reeve	Joseph Wing	✓	✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Benjamin Clifton		✓			

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office Town Re- con- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1769		Constable Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Sealer of Lumber	Benjamin Hiller Aaron Griffith Caleb Mendall Benjamin Clifton		✓ ✓ ✓			"hired" sub.
1770		Warden Hog Reeve Sealer of Lumber [record hard to read; some names illegible]	Seth Hiller Shubal Wing Benjamin Clifton		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1771		Surveyor of Highways Sealer of Lumber	John Wing Seth Hiller	?	✓ ✓			
1772		Constable	Russell Braley					refused
1773		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Hog Reeve Sealer of Lumber	Samuel Jenne Philip Turner Mark Jenne Seth Hiller	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1774		Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways Warden Hog Reeve Sealer of Lumber Inspector of Alewives	Jeremiah Austin Simon Hathaway Samuel Jenne Paul Green Seth Hiller Sylvanos Mendall		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			
1775		Constable Surveyor of Highways Surveyor of Highways [replaced B. Hiller] Surveyor of Highways Hog Reeve Sealer of Lumber Inspector of Alewives	Isaac Hiller Benjamin Hiller Benjamin Clifton William Shearman, 2nd Samuel Jenne Seth Hiller John Wing		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓		

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office
						Town Re- sidered Re- placed Refused (and con- sequence)
1776		Hog Reeve Sealer of Lumber	Paul Green Seth Hiller		✓ ✓	
1777		Surveyor of Highways Fenceviewer Fenceviewer Sealer of Lumber	Simon Hathaway Seth Hiller Sylvanos Mendall Benjamin Cliffton [Cliffton]		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
1777/8	Jan.	Constable	Theophilus Pease, Jr.			finned
1778		Constable Constable Constable Constable Surveyor of Highways Inspector of Alewives Inspector of Alewives Sealer of Lumber	George Braley Abraham Devoll Moses Hiller [hired] Samuel Mendol Simon Hathaway Silvenos Mendall John Shearman, 2nd Benjamin Cliffton [Cliffton]		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	finned finned refused
1779		Surveyor of Highways Yardkeeper of Sheep Yardkeeper of Sheep Sealer of Lumber Inspector of Alewives	Philip Turner Seth Hiller Philip Turner Seth Hiller John Wing	✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
1780		Surveyor of Highways Hog Reeve Yardkeeper Yardkeeper Sealer of Lumber	Caleb Mendall Philip Wing Seth Hiller Philip Turner Benjamin Cliffton		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	

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(Appendix I, Table 7, con.)

Year	Spec. Elec.	Town Office (listed in order of approx. significance)	Quaker Elected	Dis- owned	Served in Office	Did Not Serve in Office		
						Town Recon- sidered	Re- placed	Refused (and con- sequence)
1781		Selectman	Philip Turner	✓				refused
		Constable	Paul Green [hired]		✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	John Wing	?	✓			
		Sealer of Lumber	Benjamin Clifton [Clifton]		✓			
1782		Inspector of Alewives	Caleb Mendall	✓				
		Surveyor of Highways	Joel Ellis		✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	Moses Hiller		✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	William Shearman, II		✓			
1783		Surveyor of Highways	Philip Turner	✓				
		Inspector of Alewives	Caleb Mendall	✓				
1784		Surveyor of Highways	William Shearman		✓			
		Surveyor of Highways	Nicholas Davis		✓			
		Inspector of Alewives	Joel Ellis, Jr. Caleb Mendall	✓				

TABLE 8

SUFFERINGS OF ROCHESTER FRIENDS, 1717, 1721, 1724, 1729

Name	List of Sufferings			On Town Lists 1732-1736	Notes
	1717	1721	1724 1729		
Nathan Barlow		✓	✓	✓	
Shubal Barlow	✓			✓	
Savory Clifton		✓	✓	✓	
Nicholas Davis	✓		✓	✓	
Joel Ellis		✓	✓	✓	
Gideon Gifford		✓	✓	✓	
Jeremiah Griffeth	✓		✓	✓	
Jabez Hiller	✓		✓	✓	
David Irish			✓	no	
John Summers	✓		✓	no	dead by 1732
Dorothy Wing			✓	no	widow of Joseph Wing, who died in 1715
Elisha Wing	✓	✓	✓	✓	
John Wing [III]	✓		✓	✓	
Stephen Wing	✓		✓	✓	

Compiled from Rhode Island Quarterly Meetings, "Sufferings, 1688-1720," pp. 29-30 (1717) and New England Yearly Meeting, "Earliest Sufferings" (RIHS Reel 4), p. 6, 8 mo., 1727; p. 14, 5/9/1724; p. 23, 1729.

ROCHESTER FRIENDS APPEARING ON TOWN LISTS, 1732-1736, AND MONTHLY MEETING LIST, 1755

Name	Town List				1755		
	1732	1733 addenda ^a	1734	1735	1736	Monthly Meeting List	Dead
Nathan Barlow	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Shubal Barlow	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Joseph Benson, Sr.		✓	✓	✓			✓
Joseph Benson, Jr.		✓	✓	✓			✓
Savory Clifton	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Nicholas Davis	✓					✓	
Jeremiah Devol			✓		✓		✓
Jonathan Devol	✓		✓	✓			?
Theophilus Doty	✓						?
Joel Ellis	✓						✓
Widow Mary Ellis						no	
Benony Ewen/Youen	✓		✓	✓			✓
Thomas Ewen/Youen	✓		✓			no	
Ebenezer Gifford	✓					no	
Gideon Gifford	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Hananiah Gifford	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Jeremiah Griffeth	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Philip Griffeth			✓	✓		no	
Simon Hathaway		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Benjamin Hiller	✓		✓	✓		no	
Jabez Hiller	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Seth Hiller	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nathan Jenne	✓		✓	✓	✓	no	

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Name	Town List				1755		
	1732	1733 addenda ^a	1734	1735		1736	Monthly Meeting List
Samuel Look ^b	✓			✓		no	
John Mendall, Sr.	✓			✓			✓
John Mendall, Jr.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
William Randall				✓		no	
Joseph Savory ^c				✓		no	
Widow Summers	✓			✓		no	
Benjamin Wing			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Butler Wing	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Elisha Wing	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jedidiah Wing			✓	✓	✓	no	
John Wing [II]	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Samuel Wing	✓		✓	✓	✓	no	
Stephen Wing			✓	✓	✓		✓
William Wing	✓				✓		?

^aNo separate list compiled in 1733, but four names were added to the 1732 list; this column shows only those added names.

^bSamuel Look is reputed to have been an Indian from Martha's Vineyard, according to Mrs. Judith Gurney of the Rochester Historical Society. He joined the established church in Mattapoisett in 1741 or 1742, before which he signed a petition supporting Mattapoisett minister Elisha Tupper. Tupper was under attack and was never ordained by the church; he had been a minister to the Indians on Martha's Vineyard and Look may have known him there.

^cWidow Summers was Rest Davis Summers, widow of John Summers, Jr. She later married William Randall, who became a Quaker only after their marriage.

TABLE 10

ROCHESTER FRIENDS LISTED FOR PREPARATIVE MEETING, 1755, AND STATUS IN 1780

Spouse's Name--brackets indicate non-member of Rochester Friends' Meeting
 Reloc. Certif. = Certificates to Relocate
 Diss. List = Dissidents' List of T. Davis's followers
 MO. Mtg. = Monthly Meeting
 Prop. List = Proprietors' List
 remained = remained in Society of Friends

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755				Status in 1780					
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. List	Prop. List	Note
Men										
Shubal Barlow		married	[Bath-sheba]			1770				
Roger Braley, Sr.		married	Margret			1778				
Abraham Davis	20	single							✓	
James Davis	11	single					1768 to			
							Appona-			
							gansett			
							Mo. Mtg.			
Nathan Davis		married	[Anne]							not on diss.
Nathan Davis, Jr.	8	single						✓		
Nicholas Davis		married	Ruth			1755		✓		
Nicholas Davis, Jr.	23	single								
Summers Davis	13	single		no further record;						
				perhaps died						
				young						
Timothy Davis	25	single							✓	

(con. next page)

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755			Status in 1780					
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. Prop. List	Note
Hannaniah [Hananiah] Gifford		married	[Joanna]				1765 to Smithfield,		
							aged 60		
		married	Content				1757 to Dartmouth		
Joseph Gifford									
Simon Hathaway		married	[Hannah]						
Isaac Hiller	24	single							
		married	Dorcas		1756				
Seth Hiller									
		married	Ann Jenney	not listed					
John Jenney				rd. into mem-					
				bership 4/4/55					
Shubal Jones		probably	not listed	but omitted from list					
		widower			1756				1762

(con. next page)

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755				Status in 1780				
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. Prop. List	Note
(Men, con)									
John Mendall, Jr.		married	[Prudence]	born 1688		?			
			dence--						
			maybe						
			dead]						
John Shearman		married	Ruth?						remained
Nehemiah Shearman		married	Exper-				1760 to		
			ence				Smith-		
							field		
Barnabas Wing		prob-			1756				remained;
		ably			2nd				apparently
		single			mar.				moved to Ky.
									after
Benjamin Wing		married	Eliza-						revolution
			beth			1755 or			
Butler Wing		married	Barsheba			1756			
Daniel Wing, Jr.		married	Rebecca			1769			
Elisha Wing		married	[Mehi-			1757			remained
			table]						
Elisha Wing, Jr.		prob-				1762			
		ably							
		single							
Jabez Wing		married	Ann				1758 to		
							Smith-		
							field		
John Wing [III]		married	Hannah						

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755				Status in 1780					
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. List	Prop. List	Note
<u>Women</u>										
Hannah Barlow		widow	Nathan							'no information
Margret Braley		married	Roger, Sr.							'no information
Elizabeth Davis	11	single			1765					'did not live in Rochester after marriage
Ruth Davis		married	Nicholas							'no information
Elizabeth Devol		married	not listed		before 1775					
Hasediah Ewen		widow	Benony		1762					
Content Gifford		married	Joseph			1757 to Dartmouth				
Elizabeth Hammond		widow	Benjamin							'did not live in Rochester after marriage
Dorcas Hiller [Ann Jenney]		married [married]	Seth [John]	[rcd. into membership 4/4/55 but omitted from list]		1778				

(con. next page)

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755				Status in 1780					
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. List	Prop. List	Note
Experience Shearman		married	Nehemiah				1760 to Smith-field			
Hannah Shearman		married	[Edmund]							probably left area; husband died 1785 in Adams, Mass.
Ruth Shearman		married	John?							no information
Mary Tripp		married	[Samuel]							husband
Ann Wing		married	Jabez				1760 to Smith-field			
Barsheba Wing		married	Butler			1777				
Elizabeth Wing		married	Benjamin							no information
Experience Wing		widow	John [II]				1760 to Smith-field			went to Smith-field with daughter and son-in-law, Experience and Nehemiah Shearman

(con. next page)

(Appendix I, Table 10, con.)

Name	Preparative Meeting, 1755				Status in 1780					
	Age	Marital Status	Spouse's Name	Note	Married	Death	Reloc. Certif.	Diss. List	Prop. List	Note
(Women, con.)										
Hannah Wing		married	John						hus-	
			[III]						band	
Rebecca Wing		married	Daniel						hus-	
									band	

Compiled from Sandwich Monthly Meeting Membership List, 1755.

MARITAL AND MEMBERSHIP STATUS OF FRIENDS IN
ROCHESTER, WAREHAM, AND THE FIRST PRECINCT, c. 1780

Record contains illegible names; omission does not mean a person was not a Rochester Quaker at this time.

Name	No Record of Marriage		Marital and Membership Status			Valua- tion
	Single	Married in, Irregular Marriage	Mo. Mtg.	Not Disowned	Disownment	
<u>Rochester</u>						
Rose Barlow	✓					a
Benjamin Clifton		✓				
Widow Deliverance Clifton				✓		
Abraham Davis		✓				
Nicholas Davis [III]			✓			
Joel Ellis, Jr.			✓			
William Ellis ^b				✓		
Paul Green						
John Hammond		✓				
David Hathaway				✓		
Simon Hathaway ^c						
father			✓			
son				✓		
William Irish						
Nathan Jenney				✓		
Caleb Mendall				✓		
Samuel Mendall						
Sylvanus Mendall ^d				✓		
Peter Pinkham						
William Randall ^e						

(con. next page)

(Appendix I, Table 11, con.)

Name	No Record of Marriage		Marital and Membership Status			Valuation
	Single	Married in, Irregular Marriage	Mo. Mtg.	Not Disowned	Disownment	
(Rochester, con.)						
Jessee Tripp	✓	-	-	-	-	
Philip Turner	-	✓	-	-	✓	
[illegible] Wing's heirs	-	-	-	-	-	
Daniel Wing	-	✓	-	-	-	
John Wing	-	-	-	-	-	
Shubal Wing	-	-	-	✓	-	
Wareham						
Benjamin Bumpus	✓	-	-	-	-	£38/00
William Estes	-	✓	-	-	-	34/00 f
Henry Hadley	-	✓	-	-	-	14/00 f
Savery Hathaway	-	-	-	✓	-	6/00
Simon Hathaway	-	-	-	-	-	28/00 f
Seth Hiller	-	✓	-	-	-	12/10
Jeremiah Kelley	✓	-	-	-	-	24/00 f
Samuel Tripp	-	✓	-	-	-	10/00 f
Widow Bathsheba Wing ^g	-	✓	-	-	-	34/00
First Precinct						
Joel Ellis	-	-	-	-	-	£17/00
Mary Gifford	-	-	-	-	-	
Rebecca Hiller	-	-	-	-	-	13/00

(con. next page)

Name	No Record of Marriage	Marital and Membership Status			Valua- tion
		Single	Married in, Irregular Marriage	Non-Marital 'Not Disowned 'Disownment	
(First Precinct, con.)					
David Wing					£30/00
Samuel Wing estate					31/00
Stephen Wing					30/00

^aRochester: Valuations illegible in this section.

^bPaul Green, John Wing: Identity not verified.

^cSimon Hathaway: Two men with the same name, father and son.

^dSylvanus Mendall: Marriage record in Congregational Church records.

^eWilliam Randall: Admitted to Rochester Monthly Meeting after marriage; never disowned but omitted from 1755 membership list.

^fHenry Hadley, Seth Hiller, Samuel Tripp: Valuation for meadows.

^gWidow Bathsheba Wing: Died 1777.

Compiled from "Quakers in Rochester" and "Quakers in Wareham" in "A List of the Names & Real Estate of the Inhabitants of Old Rochester (so called) as born[e] on the State Bills, to which the Ministree [sic] belonging to said Rochester proprietary was divided by, among the several Parishes in said Rochester," c. 1778; and, for the First Precinct, from the names of former Quakers or descendants of Quakers appearing on regular town lists.

DISCIPLINE CASES BROUGHT BEFORE ROCHESTER FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING, 1714-1780^a

- 1 = disorderly marriage 2 = irregular marriage 3 = marriage of kin or relatives
 4 = marriage to non-Quaker 5 = "fornication" 6 = illegitimate child
 7 = child born too soon after marriage 8 = paid money for military activities
 9 = military participation 10 = unspecified 11 = other

Year	Name	Infraction											Action	Later Applied, Readmitted		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				
1714	Benjamin Hilliard	✓												✓		
	Hannah Davis	✓												✓		✓
	Hilliard															
1715	Patience Clifton				✓									✓		
1716	John Summers			✓							b			✓		
1717	Benjamin Clifton	✓												✓		
	Sarah Davis	✓												✓		
	Clifton															
1720	Sarah Wing				✓									✓		
1728	Samuel Wing			✓										✓		
1731	Sarah Davis			✓										✓		
	Clifton Rose															
1732	Rest Davis			✓										✓		✓
	Summers Randall															
1734	Ellen Taber			✓										✓		
	(Acushnet)															
1735	Thomas Hathaway										c			✓		
	(Acushnet)															

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(Appendix I, Table 12, con.)

Year	Name	Infraction											Action		Later Applied, Readmitted			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Dis-owned	Unre-corded		Repen- ted		
1738	Patience Ellis Wing Wood (widow of Edward Wing						✓								no		✓	
1739	Aaron Griffeth his wife Simon Hathaway Hannah Gifford Wing								✓	✓	✓				no		✓	
	John Wing [III]		✓												✓			✓
1742	Priscilla Hiller	✓													no		✓	
1743	Timothy Clifton Experience Gifford	✓							✓						no		✓	
	David Irish William Irish John Wing										d				no		✓	
	John Wing										e				no		✓	
1748	Moses Hiller Elizabeth Summers							f							✓			
	Elizabeth Summers							f							✓			
1751	Savory Clifton										g				no		✓	
1755	Deborah Braley Roger Braley Daniel Wing, Jr.						✓								no		✓	
							✓								no		✓	
															no		✓	

(con. next page)

(Appendix I, Table 12, con.)

Year	Name	Infraction											Action		Later Applied, Readmitted						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Dis- bwned	Unre- corden- ted		Repen- ted					
1757	Deliverance				✓																
	Randall Bowles				✓																
	Priscilla Benson				✓																
	Dexter																				
	William Ellis								✓												
	Seth Hiller							✓													
	Nathan Jenney							✓													
	Caleb Mendall							✓													
	Philip Turner							✓													
1758	Edmond Shearman							✓													
	Thankful Randall				✓																
	Winslow																				
1759	Hannah Hiller				✓																
	Brownell																				
	Rose Hiller																				
	Joseph Wing								✓												
	Shubal Wing																				
1760	Solomon Braley																				
	John Hammet																				
1761	Roger Braley																				
	Zebulon Swift																				
1767	Moses Hiller																				
	his wife																				
1768	Elijah Braley																				
	Job Shearman																				
	Thomas Taber																				
	Butler Wing																				

(con. next page)

Year	Name	Infraction											Action		Later Applied, Readmitted			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Dis-owned	Unre-corded		Repen-ted		
1780	Elisha Allen				✓													
	Nathaniel Delino, Jr.							✓										✓
	Batchelder Wing												n	✓				

^a Excludes Disciplinary Action against Timothy Davis and his followers.

^b John Summers: Married too soon after wife's death.

^c Thomas Hathaway: "keeping company with woman of disgraceful character."

^d David Irish: Consented to son's disorderly marriage.

^e John Wing: Daughter married non-Quaker.

^f Moses Hiller, Elizabeth Summers: Marriage of cousins.

^g Savory Clifton: Asked "hireling priest" to pray for his daughter's family.

^h Roger Braley: Accepted wages of son killed in war.

ⁱ Zebulon Swift: Intemperance

^j Butler Wing: Brought lawsuit in civil court instead of using Friends' arbitration.

^k George Allen: Military offense--allowed apprentice to go on privateer.

^l John Shearman: Intemperance, "unguarded conduct & conversation."

^m Abraham Davis: Spreading scandal.

ⁿ Batchelder Wing: "disorderly person in life and conversation."

MARRIAGES OF ROCHESTER FRIENDS, 1710-1780

Residence--listed if not Rochester
 Marr. Cert.--certificate of "clearness" for marriage issued to another Meeting
 D = Dartmouth O = Oblong P = Pembroke S = Swansea

Year	Husband			Wife		
	Name	Residence	Marr. No.	Name	Residence	Marr. No.
1710	Joseph Wing			Dorothy Butler	Sandwich	
1715	Benjamin Bowerman	Falmouth		Hannah Wing		
1718	Benony Youin [Ewen]		2	Hasediah Landers	Sandwich	
1719	Nathan Barlow			Hannah Bowerman	Falmouth	
	Phineas Chase	Tiverton		Desire Wing		
	John Summers			Rest Davis		
1720	John Walker	Marshfield		Sarah Summers		
	Samuel Wing	Sandwich		Dorothy Clifton		
1724	Nicholas Davis		2	Hannah Wood	Dartmouth	
	David Irish	Little Compton		Jeneverah Summers		
	Nathan Jenne			Priscilla Taber	Dartmouth	
	Jedidiah Wood	Dartmouth		Keziah Summers		
1726	Archipas Hart	Dartmouth		Sarah Clifton		
	Seth Killey	Yarmouth		Mehitable Wing		
1728	Edward Wing	Dartmouth		Patience Ellis		
1729	Nicholas Davis		3	Ruth Tucker	Dartmouth	
1730	Gideon Gifford	not known		Elizabeth Allen	not known	
	Butler Wing			Barshua Clifton		
	Stephen Wing			Margaret Clifton		
1731	Seth Hiller			Dorcas Davis		

(con. next page)

Year	Husband			Wife		
	Name	Residence	Marr. No.	Name	Residence	Marr. No.
1732	Thomas Youin [Ewen]			Abigail Wood	Dartmouth	
1733	Joseph Benson, Jr.			Experience Barlow		
1734	Benjamin Wing			Mary Hiller		
	Jedidah Wing			not listed		✓
1737	Benjamin Wing		2	Experience Barlow Benson		2
1738	John Rogers	Marshfield		Sarah Wing ^a	Sandwich	
1739	Joseph Smith	Dartmouth		Elizabeth Davis		
1740	Nathan Davis			Hannah Swift	Falmouth	
	Daniel Wing			Mary Clifton		
1743	William Ellis			Patience Mendall		
	Hananiah Gifford			Joanna Mendall		
1744	Phillip Griffeth			Rebecca Allen	not known	
1745	Hattel Kelley	not known		Hannah Wing	not known	
	Edmond Shearman			Hannah Kelley		
	Nehemiah Shearman			Experience Wing		
1746	Benjamin Wing		3	Elizabeth Wing		
	Jabez Wing			Ann Wing		
1749	Abraham Devol	Dartmouth		Elizabeth Jones		
1750	Roger Braley, Jr.			Deborah Wing	Sandwich	
	Mark Jenne			Lydia Mendall		
	Philip Turner			Rebecca Jenne		
1751	Thomas Hicks	Portsmouth		Elizabeth Hammond		2
1752	Samuel Trip	Dartmouth		Mary Wing		
1753	Nathan Davis	Dartmouth	2	Anne Allen		
	Caleb Mendall ^b			Remember Dillingham	Sandwich	
	Barnabas Wing	Sandwich		Anne Gifford	Falmouth	

(con. next page)

Year	Husband			Wife		
	Name	Residence	Marr. No.	Name	Residence	Marr. No.
1754	Roger Braley, Jr.		2	Deborah Wing Claghorn		2
	Mark Jenne		2	Ann Holway		
1755	Isaac Hiller			Sarah Summers		
1756	Shubal Jones		2	Rebecca Hatch		
	Barnabas Wing		2	Hannah Allen		
1758	Clifton Wing			Ruth Griffeth		
1759	Timothy Davis			not listed		D
1761	Nicholas Davis, Jr.			not listed		D
1764	Stephen Hathaway			not listed		D
	Silvenus Swift	not known		Elizabeth Trip ^C	not known	
1765	Richard Delino ^C			Mary Taber		
	John Williams			Mary Davis		
1766	Zacheus Gifford			Lydia Dillingham		
	Henry Hedley	Dartmouth?		Elizabeth Wing		
	Prince Hiller			not listed		O
1767	Russell Braley			not listed		S
	Barnabas Hammet	Dartmouth		Hannah Braley		
	Elisha Kelley			Lydia Braley		
1768	David Braley			Anne Kiley	Yarmouth	
	William Estes	Pembroke		Bathsheba Wing	Wareham	
1769	Zacheus Gifford		2	not listed		S
	Bartholomew Taber			not listed		D
	William Taber, Jr.			not listed		D
	Barnabas Wing, Jr.			not listed		D
1771	George Allen	not known		Susannah Shearman	not known	
	Thomas Wing	not known		Bulah Delino	not known	

(con. next page)

Year	Husband			Wife			Marr. Cert.
	Name	Residence	Marr. No.	Name	Residence	Marr. No.	
1772	John Allen	Dartmouth		Mary Allen	not known		
	Nathaniel Delino	not known		Dinah Allen	not known		
	Cornelius Hoxie	not known		Martha Hiller			
	Silas Swift	not known		Elizabeth Bumpus	not known		
1773	John Taber, Jr.			not listed			D
1775	Nathan Davis, Jr.			Rose Allen			
	Abraham Devol			Abigail Ball	not known		
	Abraham Swift			not listed			D
	Thomas Wing			not listed			O
1776	Ezekiel Braley			Mary Tripp			
1777	Zacheus Braley			Jane Bowerman			
	Thomas Taber			Hannah Davis			
1778	Ebenezer Allen, Jr.			Elizabeth Howland			
	Joseph Wing, Jr.			not listed			S
1779	Isaac Howland			not listed			P
	Daniel Shepherd	Dartmouth		Anis [Avis?] Jones			
1780	William Coleman	not known		Hepzibah Wing	not known		
	Abner Devol			Abigail Tripp			
	Luke Killey	not known		Hanna Wing	not known		
	Presberry Wing	not known		Hannah Swift	not known		

^a Sarah Wing: Daughter of Elisha Wing of Rochester.

^b Barnabas Wing, Anne Gifford: Settled in Rochester.

^c Elizabeth Tripp, Richard Delino: New member.

Before 1740: Compiled from applications in Monthly Meeting minutes and from marriage certificates in another record book; the applications do not always identify the partners' residences but the certificates do. See Dart. Mo. Mtg., "Births, Deaths, Marriages" (1699-1880), pp. 190ff. After 1740: marriage certificates have not been located; this is the period of Rochester's affiliation with Sandwich.

APPLICATIONS FOR RELOCATION CERTIFICATES BY ROCHESTER FRIENDS AND
ACTION BY SANDWICH MONTHLY MEETING, 1742-1780

Year	Name	Destination	Purpose	Retro- active	Tempo- rary	Action
						None Granted
1742	Jedidiah Wing	"westward" [Oblong]				✓
1750	John Wing [III]	Oblong				✓
1757	Roger Braley & wife, Deborah Braley	Smithfield?				✓
	Joseph Gifford & wife, Content Irish Gifford	Dartmouth				✓
1758	John Jenney & wife, Ann Jabez Wing & wife, Ann	Smithfield Smithfield				✓ ✓
1760	Nehemiah Shearman & wife, Experience Wing Shearman	Smithfield				✓
	Experience Wing, mother- in-law & mother	Smithfield				✓
1765	Ananias [Hananiah] Gifford	Smithfield				✓
	Rebecca Jones	Dartmouth				✓
	John Williams & wife, Mary Davis Williams	Dartmouth				✓
1768	Wesson Briggs	Ponigansett [Dartmouth]				✓
	James Davis	Ponigansett [Dartmouth]				✓
	Daniel Hathaway	Dartmouth		✓		✓
	Prince Hiller	Oblong				✓
	Daniel Wing	Oblong				✓

(con. next page)

Year	Name	Destination	Purpose	Retro- active	Tempo- rary	Action
						None Granted
1770	David Braley & wife, Anna Kiley Braley Abraham Devol & wife, Elizabeth Jones Devol	Smithfield Ninepartners [Oblong]				✓ ✓
1771	John Walker & family John Williams & wife, Mary Davis Williams	Smithfield Dartmouth				✓ ✓
1772	Walter Walker	Smithfield				✓
1773	Edmond Shearman	East Hoosick [Oblong]				✓
1774	Abraham Macey Stephen Russell Dinah Wing Thomas Wing	Oblong Dartmouth Smithfield Oblong	visitor returning			✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
1775	Ebenezer Allen	Oblong			✓	✓
1776	Richard Delino John Walker & family John Williams Barnabas Wing	New York ? Dartmouth Versies			✓ ✓	✓ ✓
1777	Caleb Braley Job Shearman	Smithfield Smithfield	business trip		✓	✓ ✓
1779	Daniel Allen Walter Allen Jeremiah Austin, Jr. Joseph Bowrman Zacheus Braley John Davis Jonathan Delino Abraham Devol	Smithfield Smithfield Saratoga Oblong Oblong Ninepartners [Oblong] Oblong Ninepartners [Oblong]	summer work work summer summer "to look for labour" summer		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

(con. next page)

(Appendix I, Table 14, con.)

Year	Name	Destination	Purpose	Retro- active	Tempo- rary	Action
						None Granted
1779	Isaac Howland	Smithfield	to work			✓
con.	Bartholomew & Rebecca Taber, children of Jacob Taber	Falmouth [Maine]				✓
	Jacob Taber	"eastward" [Maine]	"to look for a settlement"		✓	✓
	John Taber	"eastward" [Maine]	"to look for a settlement"		✓	✓
	John Taber	Falmouth [Maine]				✓
	Jonathan Taber	"eastward" [Maine]	"to look for a settlement"		✓	✓
	Presberry Wing	Smithfield	summer work		✓	✓
1780	Daniel Allen	Oblong				refused
	Peleg Delino & children	"eastward" [Maine]				✓
	Jacob Taber, Jr.	"eastward" [Maine]				✓

DISSIDENT MEMBERSHIP LIST, 1782

<u>Men</u>			37 men
Elisha Allen	David Hart	Savory Landers	Joseph Taber
George Allen	Joseph Haskell	Stephen Merihew	Nicholas Taber
Benjamin Bumpus	Isaac Hiller	David Smith	Peter Taber
Jethro Davis	Moses Hiller	Elishib Smith	Thomas Taber
Nathan Davis, Jr.	Seth Hiller	John Smith	William Taber
Nicholas Davis	Seth Hiller, Jr.	Joseph Smith	William Taber, Jr.
Richard Davis	Summers Hiller	Silas Swift	Barnabas Wing
Seth Davis	Mark Jenne	Bartholomew Taber	Josephus Wing
Timothy Davis	Richard Landers	Edward Taber	William Wing
			Zurviah Wood
<u>Women</u>			
Rebecca Allen	Ruth Davis	Rebecca Landers	Mary Taber, widow
Sarah Allen	Susanna Green	Lidia Randall	Martha Taber
Sarah Allen	Elizabeth Hiller	Rebecca Severence	Sarah Taber
Ruby Brightman	Sarah Hiller	Peace Shearman	Rebecca Turner
Ruth Bumpus	Anne Jenne	Meriah Smith	Jane Wing
Hepzibah Davis	Betty Jenne	Elizabeth Taber	Lidia Wing
Mary Davis	Elizabeth Landers	Hannah Taber	Meribah Wing
Rose Davis	Hannah Landers	Jemima Taber	Sarah Wood
Sarah Davis	Mary Landers	Mary Taber	
Total			72 people

Source: Records of Dissident Friends, [p. 11], 17/3/1782.

TABLE 16

REPRESENTATIVES FROM ROCHESTER PREPARATIVE MEETING TO MONTHLY MEETING,
AND AFFILIATION WITH SOCIETY OF FRIENDS AND DISSIDENT FRIENDS, 1755-1779

Name	First Service	Appear on 1755 Membership List	Number of Terms of Office					Total	Before 1782	Member of 1782 Dissident Group
			1755-1759	1760-1764 ^a	1765-1769	1770-1774	1775-1779			
Jeremiah Austin	1766			8	12	21	41			
Jeremiah Austin, Jr.	1779					2	2			
Shubal Barlow	pre-1755 ^b	✓	5	5	1		11	died		
Roger Braley	1755	✓	8	2	1	1	12	died		
Russell Braley	1765				1		1			
Benjamin Bumpus	1768			3	8	5	16		✓	
Abraham Davis	1776					2	2			
Nathan Davis	pre-1755 ^b	✓	19	20	17	16	86		c	
Nicholas Davis [II]	1763	✓		3	2	2	7		✓	
Timothy Davis	1755	✓	6	6	4	3	22		✓	
Peleg Delino	1772				2	7	9	left		
Richard Delino	1776					8	8			
Abraham Devol	1774				1	1	2	left		
Ignatius Dillingham	1772				3	7	10		c	
John Dillingham	1774				2	2	4		d	
William Ellis	1770								d	
William Estes	1772				1	2	3	died	c	
Hananiah Gifford	1757	✓	3				3	left		
Jethro Hathaway	1764			1	5		6			
Thomas Hathaway	1763			5	8	1	22			

(con. next page)

Name	First Service	Appear on 1755 Membership List	Number of Terms of Office						Total	Before 1782	Member of 1782 Dissident Group
			1755-1759	1760-1764 ^a	1765-1769	1770-1774	1775-1779				
Henry Hedley	1773			3		2		5			
Isaac Hiller	1770			3		7		10		✓	
Seth Hiller	pre-1755 ^b	✓	7	3	7	4		30		✓	
Isaac Howland	1759		1	5				6			
John Jenney	1755	✓	3					3	left		
Shubal Jones	pre-1755 ^b	✓	9	1				10	died		
Jeremiah Killey	1774			1		1		2			
John Mendall	pre-1755 ^b	✓	32	15	8			55	died		
John Russell	1763		7	23	13	25		68			
John Shearman	1755	✓	2	1	1	6		10		e	
Bartholomew Taber	1764		4	4	6	3		13		✓	
Jacob Taber	1769			1		7		8	left		
Jonathan Taber	1779					1		1			
Samuel Tripp	1756	f	3	5	22	2		44		d	
John Walker	1765			7	4			11	left		
Barnabas Wing	1757	✓	6	8	5	5		25		✓	
Benjamin Wing	1755		2					2	died		
Butler Wing	1755	✓	18	8	1			27	died	d	
Daniel Wing [Jr.]	1755	✓	4	17	24	19		83			
Elisha Wing [II]	1756	✓	3	1				4	died		
Jabez Wing	1756	✓	2					2	left		

(con. next page)

Name	First Service	Appear on 1755 Membership List	Number of Terms of Office						Before 1782	Member of 1782 Dissident Group
			1755-1759	1760-1764 ^a	1765-1769	1770-1774	1775-1779	Total		
John Wing [III]	1760	✓		1					1	
William Wood	1768	✓			3	2			5	

Total -- 43 men

Per period:

Number serving	17	19	22	23	24
Average number of terms	7.6	6.2	6.8	5.8	6.3

^aThe 1761 change in Sandwich Monthly Meeting's boundary added members previously affiliated with Dartmouth Monthly Meeting.

^bPre-1755: Shubal Barlow, Nathan Davis, Seth Hiller, Shubal Jones, John Mendall--During several years between late 1740's and 1755, representatives' names unrecorded in Monthly Meeting's minutes; names designated "pre-1755" are recorded but others may have served when no names recorded.

^cNathan Davis, Abraham Devol, William Estes--Disowned for supporting Timothy Davis but did not join dissidents' group.

^dIgnatius Dillingham, John Dillingham, Samuel Tripp, Daniel Wing--Visited by Friends for attending Timothy Davis's Worship Meetings; recanted before being disowned.

^eJohn Shearman--Visited by Friends for attending Timothy Davis's Worship Meetings; no result recorded.

^fSamuel Tripp--Name does not appear on 1755 membership list; this is inexplicable in view of his active leadership role in the following years.

A P P E N D I X I I

TRANSCRIPTION OF

A

LETTER

FROM A

FRIEND

TO SOME OF HIS INTIMATE

FRIENDS

On the Subject of Paying TAXES, &c.

WATERTOWN [Mass.] :

Printed and Sold by B. Edes, near the Bridge

1776

[8 pp.]

[p. 2]

A letter from a Friend to some of his intimate Friends on the subject of paying Taxes, &c.

Dear Friends,

WITH a heart painfully apprehensive of the distressed and calamitous situation of human affairs in the English dominions in general, and in the American Colonies in

particular, I address you. --The experience I have had of your candour and christian [lower case in original] concern for the good of mankind in an especial manner manifested at our last interview, gives me sufficient reason to think that you will excuse my freedom in thus communicating my thoughts on that branch of taxation that at some times raiseth scruples in the minds of some people ; [original spacing] I mean when the charges of war are blended with those that arise in support of the various exigencies of civil government.

Altho' we, as a society [lower case in original], concern not ourselves in setting up or pulling down the kingdoms of the earth ; nor seek to have much share in legislation, or execution of human laws, yet friends to all just laws and administration ; and feel, deeply feel, for our fellow subjects in their various trials and conflicts ; nor are we forgetful of them in their remotest sufferings ; but more especially those occasioned by the unhappy disputes between Great Britain and the colonies ; in which we expect to continue to be sharers with them, until it shall please the Disposer of all events, to bring about a happy and lasting reconciliation, which is the hearty prayer of all true well-wishers to their country.

While my thoughts have been engaged in this afflicting scene, I have entered very closely into that part of it, which nearly concerns us, (viz.) that of Taxation.-- The peaceable profession which we have long made to the

world, (which constitutes a very amiable part of our religious character) will not admit of our taking up arms, it is painful to think it is reduced to that of Brethren's pouring out the blood of each other as water spilt upon the ground.) we [lower case in original] may nevertheless, expect to be taxed in common with other people, to pay the charge of the unhappy war, together with such civil charges as may arise for the support of the government ; which I perceive is like to be [a] matter of scruple with [p. 3] some ; yet many others think they may as safely pay it, as many other taxes which they have had no scruple of paying. They say, and I suppose truly, that "Friends in England have freely paid their taxes when by far the greatest part hath been for the defraying [of] military charges," if it be said, "but not against our own nation."--This upon examination will appear to be a mistake, which will be farther considered before I conclude.--In the colonies it hath frequently been the case, that we have paid our taxes without hesitation, when much the greater part hath been for the charges of war. For instance, there is the province of Massachusetts Bay, when it hath been taxed near an hundred thousand pounds, their currency, for one year, scarce twelve thousand of it went for civil uses, that, eighty thousand pounds or thereabouts went to defrey [sic] the charges of war, but say they, "this tax came to us blending civil and military charges together, which it was hard to separate"--and perhaps

the taxes we expect, will come to us in the same manner, it is beyond a doubt. they will, and be as hard to seperate [sic].--If it be said in the present case,--"we ought to seperate [sic] them"- if we do, we shall show ourselves partial which will justly expose us to the censure of every considerate person, in being so very exact, as to examine into one case, and not the other ; for we might, with as much ease and propriety have examined the votes of the former general court or assembly as of the present.--If it be further objected, that "we cannot consistently join in opposition to the king and parliament, so far as to pay a tax which will strengthen their opposers, who are now almost the whole of the American colonies."--If it be safe to follow the example of our predecessors, I think we may very safely do it.--"Why, what did they do"?--I answer, they have from their very first appearance as a seperate [sic] society, been subject to such who were invested with the authority of the nation, without meddling with the various disputes that have arisen since their time, concerning regal authority, and on whom it ought to devolve. For a farther consideration hereof, you may remember, that Friends made their appearance in the reign of King Charles the First ; who by his too much aspiring after sovereignty or despotism alarmed the people ; who, headed by Oliver Cromwell prevailed against the king, and took the reigns [sic] of government into his own hands, and governed the kingdom himself, under the character of lord

protector [lower case in original].--

Here we do not find but that Friends who had paid their allegiance and their taxes to the king, continued to pay them to Oliver Cromwell during the time he held the reins of government : And what can be said of him, but that he headed the [p. 4] populace and was an opposer of kingly authority, not merely as such, but as it became, through the hands of the king, subversive of the rights and priviledges [sic] of the people : What harder things can be said of those who are at the head of the present opposition, that may render them less worthy of receiving taxes to defray the charges of government. By all that I have been able to discover, our society in England have ever made a point of being careful and exact in paying all taxes that are legally assessed, except the Priests [no apostrophe in original] rates.

After CROMWELL, king Charles the second [lower case in original] came to the throne, and they paid taxes to him also. After which, the crown continued in the family of Stewarts [so the original], until the disturbances in king James the second's reign ; who by his favouring popery, justly alarmed and incens'd the people against him that thinking himself not safe among a justly provoked people, took shelter in France, which made way for the Prince of Orange. Here we find the line of Stewarts inter[r]upted again, which devolved on them according to legal succession,

and the Prince, in conjunction with the people, opposing the then kingly government in James ; much the same as is laid to the charge of those who are at the head of the present opposition ; and Friends who were desirous to live in peace with all men, paid taxes to him likewise ; but they say-- "James favoured popery and endeavoured to introduce popish government and therefore forfeited his right to the crown." Be it so--but is favouring popery the only instance in which the kings of England can forfeit their rights to reign over a free people?" I should think that when the sword is put into the hands of a king, to be directed for the punishment of evil doers, and praise to them that do well, we might have some reason to expect him to act, in some measure, answerable to his exalted station, and the trust the people have reposed in him, (as kingly authority originates from the people)[.]-- But if to the contrary he should act so far below his exalted station as to turn the point of the sword at the vitals of the people, it must be very alarming, especially when they have confer'd all the favours upon him, that were in their power, consistent with the safety of the kingdom, he as fully forfeits his right to reign over them, as in the case of popery, nor can we assure ourselves that the interest of popery is not at the bottom of the present ministerial plan.

Every considerate man, no doubt, would be glad of such a form of government as might be unexceptionable ; but we have no reason to expect it in this imperfect state of

things : Yet we ought to use all just and reasonable means to rectify all disorders in government, that are in the compass of our power, consistent [p. 5] with the peaceable profession we make ; and at the same time to be as careful not to complain without just cause, but be as content as we can, under such a form of government, as it hath pleased Divine Providence to cast our lots : And it must be a very bad one indeed that is not preferable to a state of anarchy. I believe it may be very well allowed that even the present state of government in the Massachusetts Bay is better than none, and if the inhabitants receive any advantage from it, they ought to be willing to bear a proportionable part of the charge that ariseth in support of it ; tho it may not be in such a state as they could wish.--In a word, let a man be under any form of government he can imagine to himself, where he receives any advantage by it and while he remains under it he ought to bear his proportion of the charge of it ; for the thoughts of having our lives and every thing that is near and dear to us, ~~lie~~ wholly at the mercy of every invader, without any possibility of redress from any legal authority, I should think would incline us to be willing to bear our just proportion of the charge of such government as we are under, if it should not in every respect be consisted with the most perfect system. Our Saviour hath set this matter in an indisputable light to me. By the conversation he had with Peter on that subject, at a time when those who received

tribute money came to Peter querying with him whether their Master paid Tribute or not, Peter said he did. Christ willing, it appears to take advantage of this opportunity to leave an example to future ages of his approbation of paying taxes, in a case similar to the present, in every thing essential to the present argument, and as an additional weight to the holy example, introduc'd a conversation with Peter, not waiting for him to introduce it, or propound any questions on the subject, but prevented him; [original spacing] as if with design to remove every hesitation, proceeded thus, What thinkest thou Simon, of whom do the kings of earth take custom or tribute, of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free[.] As much as if he had said, ["illegible word] then have they no just demand on us, we being children, may very well refuse paying of it. ---Nevertheless least [sic] we should offend them, it is best it should be paid, therefore I would have thee do it." which [lower case in original] he was enabled to do by an extraordinary miracle. I cannot see how it is possible for any thing to be express'd more clearly to remove every scruple. It is further observable that there is not one word of objection either from Christ or Peter, that part of this tribute money went to defray military charges, (for it undoubtedly did) [p. 6] which we might expect to find here if anywhere, seeing they were then upon the point of paying

taxes. If it be urged, "that this happened before the abolition of the Mosaical constitution, while war was lawful, and consequently the paying tribute for the support of it," I answer, whether the law was wholly abolished at that time or not, is not necessary to be enquired into in this case, it is sufficient to our purpose, that the words of our Saviour which are commonly urged to disprove the lawfulness of war, were delivered in his sermon [lower case in original] on the Mount sometime before the conversation he had with Peter concerning paying tribute ; and if war was forbid in his sermon on the Mount, and paying taxes ever after that must have affected his followers, in the same manner as it doth at this day, unless it can be made to appear that the lawfulness of war did not cease at the time when we generally supposed he forbid [so the original] it, but that the cessation thereof was reserved to some future period ; which we have little reason to believe.

Thomas Story, in the journal of his life explains this matter very clearly, Pages 124, 269, to which I shall refer you, and only transcribe a few sentences. "Tho' we are " prohibited arms and fighting in person, as inconsistent (we " think) with the rule of the gospel of Christ ; yet we can " and do by his example readily and cheerfully pay unto every " government, in every form, where we happen to be subjects, " such sums and assessments as are required of us by the " respective laws under which we live."

If our rulers pursue measures for the defence and support of civil government, that we think not strictly consistent with the rules of the gospel, even by repell[ing] force by force to the shedding of human blood, it is out of our power to help it, they proceed in the defence of governments as it suits them best ; and if their manner doth not suit us, that may not hinder, but we may receive as much advantage from it as if they pursued such measures as we may think we could point out. However, let them proceed in a hostile manner or not in the defence of our rights and privileges, it is certain if we receive advantage from civil government, we ought to bear our part of the charge of maintaining of it, or else have no recourse to it in any case whatever; for it would be very odd for us to seek protection against the encroachments or abuse of our fellow creatures, from an authority that we refuse to help to support. It may farther be observed that the tribute that Peter paid by our Saviour's direction was at a time when the Jews were under the Romans and C[ae]sar at great expence in supporting his legions for the defence of his empire[,] That [original capital] as Christ by the hand of Peter, paid a tax[,] He [original capital] must consequently pay a proportionable part of such charges.

[p. 7] In one place Christ saith Render to Cesar the things that are his ; but in the instance before us, he sets us an example of paying the requisition of civil authority,

not only when the soldiers received a part of it, but even where not strictly due, rather than give offence ; altho' it helped to uphold a government under which they (i. e. the Jews) were reduced by the dint of sword ; an example of meekness that ought to have place in every considerate mind ; that while we remain steady to our testimony against shedding of human blood, we may preserve our consciences void of offence toward God and man, and by no means, at any time, throw out any unbecoming reflections against those in authority, nor mistake will for tender scruple of conscience in paying taxes, or in any thing else, nor give civil authority any unnecessary trouble.

If it be said that "Christ submitted to the paying of a tax to shew his subjection to kingly authority," I answer, but I believe not to shew that he gave the preference to kingly authority, for there appears to be a clear instance to the contrary in that of Israel's asking for a king at which time it was shewed them what the consequence would be, which they afterwards felt to their sorrow. I Sam. 8 chap. "He shewed them what should be the manner of the king that should reign over them ; He will take your sons and appoint them for himself for his chariots and to be his horsemen and some shall run before his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers, and he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his

servants--and he will take your men-servants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest young men and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep : and ye shall be his servant--and they said nay, but we will have a king, &c. That, from this instance, or any other, we have little reason to prefer a kingly government.--The Evangelical Prophet Isaiah seems to have had a very lively idea of their being formerly governed by judges, before they had any king, and speaks of it in a way and manner that very clearly indicates it to be far preferable to a kingly government, and foretells, very clearly, its return : ch. i. v. 25, 26. I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning. Afterwards, thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.--Before this becomes our condition, I believe I may say, without breach of charity, a very great reformation must take place in the heart of every denomination among us, when Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness: v. 27.

[p. 8] But with respect to kingly government, I hope there are none among us such sticklers for a republic, but that it would be very acceptable to all well wishers to America, if the controversy between Great Britain and the colonies should subside and that things might return to their old channel.

The apostle Paul seems to have had a very great regard for civil government, and discourseth largely upon the subject in his 13 ch. to the Romans, and carrieth the matter so far as to say There is no power but of God ; the powers that be are ordained of God. Without criticising particularly on what he saith, we may safely conclude thus much from it ; that all power capable of serving God and mankind, whether by means of civil authority, or otherwise, is of God, and no other ; and that when this power is exercised by those in authority for the good of mankind, they ought to be encouraged and obeyed in it; but whenever they act from a contrary power and principle, the mischievous effects of it will presently appear, either less or more, to the distressing and corrupting the people, that, when the wicked bear rule the land may very well be said to mourn.

To conclude, I meet with some, who appear to be well disposed persons, who from some disagreeable circumstances they have taken notice of, are led to doubt of the sincerity of the intentions of some, who have some influence in the American counsels ; and that they fear their designs are to enrich and aggrandize themselves at the public cost. How well grounded their suspicions may be, I cannot pretend to say ; but this much I think I may say with safety, that I am fully persuaded it is far from being the case with the most of such whose conduct therein, I have been able to form any judgment about ; but if there be any such, who in this time

of deep distress, act from motives so mercenary and repugnant to every idea of justice and humanity, they ought to be ranked among the worst of enemies, as well as among the most impious of men.----Let us now call to mind, that it is a time that calls aloud for all closely to examine their standings, tradition or education, altho of the best, will not be able to support us in the time that is swiftly approaching ; altho' it may be of excellent use, in regulating our manners, if rightly regarded ; nor will others being firmly established on the immoveable rock of ages, as an everlasting foundation, be any alleviation to us in the day of our distress : We must experience this for ourselves, or sink into perdition ; but I hope we shall, while the door of mercy is open to us, seek earnestly to be redeemed from the earth and earthly mindedness, that our minds may be stayed upon the Lord, that we may be preserved in perfect peace, while the world is in confusion, like the troubled sea, casting up mice and dirt.

With much respect, I am your sincere Friend, &c.

A P P E N D I X I I I

TRANSCRIPTION OF

"A DECLARATION OF THE REASONS THAT PREVAILED WITH THOSE
FRIENDS TO ESTABLISH DISCIPLINE WHO HAVE BEEN OF
LATE DISOWNED BY THEIR BRETHREN FOR JOINING IN
PRAYER WITH TIMOTHY DAVIS"

In consequence of Timothy Davis writing and publishing a Piece concerning Paying Taxes he was unkindly and injudiciously proceeded against, and in an unpresented [sic] manner Disowned altho he offered to make them such satisfaction we think as would have been acceptable to any unprejudiced minds. The Controversy had also been set[t]led in his favour according to the Judgment of a Committee of Seven Friends, which Judgment was overruled and carried into execution against him, not by an appeal to a Superior Meeting, but in a channel, till then, we believe unknown to society, which may appear by their Records and otherwise.

And we who are now met in consequence of this Sorrowful and afflicting occasion being denied Membership in the Society for Joining Timothy Davis and Benjamin Bumpus who was also Denied [sic] for joining Timothy Davis in like manner, we are well assured without just cause: We therefore

think we have a just right and not only a right but from a real Sense of Duty we feel our Selves Constrained to resume the Exercise of that Discipline we have been denied [sic] the use of; Not for any Immorality [sic], nor do we think for any Disorderly walking in the Society, nor from a Desire of Singularity or promoting a party Spirit of Separation, far otherwise; but for the building up each other in the Faith and Spirit of the Gospel of our lord Jesus Christ once delivered to the Saint, which we hope continually to have in view above all other Considerations as long as we continue to inhabit these tabernacles subject to mortality. And seeing also, that by their unjust and unfriendly proceeding they manifest themselves at least in Some measure disqualified for transacting the affairs of the Church, we think we shall at Least appear excusable in the minds of candid people who have been made truly acquainted with the unhappy Controversy, if we reestablish that Discipline among us, that when preserved in its ancient purity and proper Channel, was of general Service, but as it is now conducted by them, we have little reason to expect it will have that general good effect which it hath been known to have when rightly ordered and directed by Divine Wisdom. We hope however not justly to fall under the imputation of being Censorious against them, or partial to ourselves: We nevertheless feel ourSelves [sic] constrained (from motives disinterested and impartially flowing from the love of that God who is the preserver of

men, the repairer of breaches, and the restorer of ways to walk in, who hath drawn some of us to look singly to his Glory and the promotion of the welfare of his Heritage, in an especial manner, in all things that concern our Eternal state) to proceed in the Transacting our Christian Discipline as Divine Wisdom Shall direct and influence, in which if we are preserved Generations to come may know and Children that are unborn may consider that true compassion is a sufficient inducement to our proceeding in this case resulting from an inward conviction and sensibility of our duty herein and what the rectitude of our Cause will very clearly justify. That as we are by our Brethren rejected without any Just cause, and cast out from among them, we should think that there can scarce remain a doubt whither [sic] it is our duty or not to take care of and watch over each other for good for it is a very natural easy and clear Conclusion that as they have refused us their Care we should take care of one another and that we are under all possible obligation to labour for the strengthening, edifying and comforting each other as we are refused that Brotherly and Christian Assistance from such that if they had stood where they ought to do would have been qualified to fill such places in the Church where they might have been enabled to extend a helping hand and to have united their joint labours and endeavours under the influence of divine aid, to help forward the arduous business of promoting that great work of the salvation of the Souls of

each other for which we make our appearance in this probationary State: But they have given so little reason to expect that this was what they had chiefly in view in the present Case: That may we express what we are Sorry we have any reason to Believe? or shall we suppress what we wish them to Consider? (Viz.) We fear the Chief promoters of the present opposition against us, withdrew their Care from us, not so much on any religious account, as for the advantage expected or the disadvantage they feared, from some power foreign to the spirit and temper of the Gospel, and the profession they make: a thing that never by any means kindled so far on our minds as to give us a thought of giveing [sic] the least member in Society any uneasiness Concerning any difference in Politicall matters; far less of Extending its influence to Church Censure: not even under cover of higher Pretension, It is is objected by some, that we have no authority to establish Discipline among us, because we have not received any from the Yearly Meeting. To which we readily acknowledge that we do not pretend to derive our authority from any Church or body of men whatever that is now extant in the common Idea of a Church. Either Immediately or by lineal Succession being well assured, that the right authority or ability to perform any religious Duty either private or publick, is Derived from a much more infallible original[;] this we are taught to Expect from the nature and Spirit of the present dispensation foretold by

ancient Provecy [sic] and is confirmed by the real experience of the followers of Christ ever since the first Publication of the Gospel; and is highly professed by our opposers, however inconsistent any par[t] of their conduct may be with such a profession. They shall all be taught of God--Again they s[h]all all know me from the le[a]st of them to the greatest of them that which may be known of God is manifest within &c[.] Nevertheless we are well assured that we are in full possession of all power and authority that we ever have derived from that which is called the body of Friends or Yearly Meeting by virtue of our being members thereof, for nothing that hath been done by that Body, respecting us, since the matter was settled by the monthly Meeting, by receiving and entering in their Records the report of the above Committee, hath according to Discipline affected our right of membership in the Least; Their proceeding in the case, after that, being altogether carried out of its usual and proper channel, which may abundantly be made to appear by their records, It is an approved Maxim of ancient date, that that which is not rightly or legally done is not done, which is very applicable in the present case. This was a Plea very closely urged in that memorable tryal of William Penn and William Mead at the old Ba[i]ll[e]y, See Swels [Sewall's?] History. We may however say in justice to a number of the aforesd body that we are fully persuaded from good authority, that they are grieved at heart to see the disorderly

proceeding of the ruling part against us, to whom we feel ourselves nearly united in the bonds of Love and Sympathy; while we should rejoice to see our mistaken Brethren awakened to a true sense of the unjustifiable manner in which they have proceeded against us for as the case is now circumstanced it involves us in a deep and painful exercise and probation on their accounts, as well as our own which revives in our minds the Pathetical Language of the Evangelical Prophet Isa[i]ah--Look down from Heaven and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of the Glory[:] Where is thy Zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy Bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained[?] doubtless thou art our Father tho' Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not[;] thou Lord art our Father our redeemer thy name is from everlasting. To the praise of his great Name we may say, his spiritual and inwardly refreshing presence is not restrained but we measurable [sic] experience that encouraging promise fulfilled in and among us (viz) As thy Day is so shall thy strength be . . . --

That they were under Political Party influence is a case we think so clear that they (in general) will hardly pretend to vindicate themselves against such a suspicion. which [lower case in original] if they do we think the Task will be attended with insuperable difficulties.

