A Vital Process of Growth:
Quakerism in the U.S. Section of WILPF, 1950-1969

By

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Abstract

Although a secular organization, the Quaker religion is embedded in the structure of the US section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The mission and work of the organization during the 1950-60s show how the subtle religious environment of the organization translated outward. By looking at organizational records, correspondence, Congress meeting minutes, oral testimonies, and rhetoric styles unique to Quakerism a clear trend becomes perceptible in the life of the WILPF. The uncovering the religious affiliation of WILPF is essential to understand the sustained drive for peace from WILPF. Scholars recognize the power religious identity and faith provides social justice movements yet have not pursued the undeniable link between the Religious Society of Friends and WILPF. Their unexplored connection offers novel context to the women who worked for peace during this time and Quakerism’s integral role in social justice movement histories.
### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFSC</td>
<td>American Friends Service Committee</td>
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<td>ASPL</td>
<td>American School Peace League</td>
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<td>AUAM</td>
<td>American Union Against Militarism</td>
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<td>FCNL</td>
<td>Friends Committee on National Legislation</td>
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<td>FOR</td>
<td>Fellowship of Reconciliation</td>
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<td>IWSA</td>
<td>International Woman Suffrage Alliance</td>
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<td>SANE</td>
<td>The Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy</td>
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<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom</td>
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<td>WPP</td>
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Introduction

Jane Addams dedicated her life to working for others. She cofounded Hull House in Chicago in 1889, one of the earliest forms of a community-based non-profit. She worked to end child labor, increase labor rights, and achieve women’s suffrage. At her core, Addams worked for peace. In her conversations with President Theodore Roosevelt whom she campaigned to be reelected, they jokingly argued about their clashing ideas of peace. Roosevelt loved to remind Addams that he held a Nobel Peace Prize while she did not. However twenty years later in 1931 Addams age 71 received the prize for her work with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She had been a consistent nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize for decades and had at last won it.

Addams cofounded WILPF in 1915 with other peace activists Emily Greene Balch and Alice Paul. “Throughout its history, [WILPF’s] purpose has been to work for the achievement by peaceful means of those political, economic, social, and psychological conditions throughout the world which can assure peace and freedom.”

The mission of WILPF combined the causes of feminism and pacifism into an organization that gained access to the United Nations in order to fight for the rights of the oppressed around the world. WILPF exists today, responsible for 100 years of service in the pursuit of peace.

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2 Theodore Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for helping negotiate peace between Russia and Japan.
3 Knight, 255.
Alongside these feminist roots, Quakerism had a strong presence and influence upon WILPF from its founding. Addams was raised by a Quaker father and Balch converted to Quakerism during her tenure with the organization. The religion had a natural correlation with WILPF because peace and pacifism were central tenants. The founders of WILPF started the trend of Quaker participation; a process which profoundly shaped the organization throughout its history. More specifically, elements of Quakerism lent themselves to the ethos of WILPF during this time, producing a religiously grounded organization that was outwardly proclaimed to be secular.

Quakerism as a religion started in the 1650s and centers the individual as a conduit to the divine. The founder, a man named George Fox, believed one did not need a church official to mediate messages from god; a person could do that for themselves. Therefore, the religion utilizes a flat leadership hierarchy and relies on the community to make decisions. Because the individual is centered in Quaker belief, specific codes developed from the idea anyone can commune with god. Themes of equality, community, and peace ground the religion where everyone is sacred through their connection to the divine, or the inner light.

The intersection of Quakerism and WILPF in the 1950s and 1960s demonstrated the relationship between religious identity and social movement organizing. Peace activism grew tremendously during this era of American history, with the threat of nuclear war and conflict with foreign powers bearing down on the consciousness of pacifists. During this time the renowned Quaker women who had aided in the origins and running of WILPF had left or died. Yet Quaker influence persisted in the U.S. Section of WILPF, a subdivision of the larger international organization, during the 1950s and 60s.
which intervenes in the Quaker historical scholarship landscape. This study which sets out to consider the importance of Quakerism in WILPF intervenes in three areas of scholarship: Quaker history, WILPF history, and the broader history of religious-based social justice activism.

The pursuit of this query requires a review of the present body of scholarship on the mentioned topics. The scholarship concerning Quakers, their actions, and their history, often begins with the documented origins of the faith. The nature of The Religious Society of Friends is document and writing dependent. The religion came into existence during a time when the printing press and regular mailing systems were in place. Certain practices of the religion used this modern technology and as a result documentation embedded itself in the culture of the religion. Quakers wrote epistles, treatises, opinions and kept detailed minutes of their business decisions. A constant impulse for Quakers to document their lives runs through the history of Quakerism.

Histories of Quakerism attempted to capture the full scope of the religion’s history by covering the birth of the religion and its transformation through the years. These early chroniclers condensed decades of Quaker history into chapters and paragraphs but devoted little time to intricate relationships within Quaker faith.

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communities. Many of the writers were Quaker themselves, like E. Braithwaite Emmott, and attempted to synthesize the history of their community for the consumption of others within the religion.\(^8\) Emmott, an early Quaker historian, argued that the largest concern for Quakerism in the 20th century was to retain free ministry and expand fellowship in America.\(^9\) Similarly, Thomas Hamm a modern Quaker and Quaker historian, was concerned with the trajectory of the Quaker community rather than specific Quaker groups or individuals. Hamm tracked changes in the cohesiveness of the American Quaker landscape through the well documented schisms that took place in the 19th century. The scholarship tracked the movements of the three main sects of Quakerism in the early 20th century: Wilburite, Hicksite, Gurneyite.\(^10\) Emmott, Hamm, and others capture the breadth of the transformative history of Quaker while highlighting key figures but did little to articulate the complexities of the people and motivations operating in and around the religious community.

Many of these complete histories were also written in the first half of the twentieth century establishing definitive timelines of Quaker religious events. After mid-20\(^{th}\) century, the scope of writing on Quakerism narrowed and the kinds of people writing on the topic diversified. In particular, with professionalization of history, academics

\(^8\) The renowned professor and Quaker Rufus Jones with two other Quakers wrote a two-volume history of Quakerism in the US. Rufus M. Jones, Amelia M. Gummere, and Isaac Sharpless, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (London: Macmillan, 1911).

\(^9\) E. Braithwaite. Emmott, *The Story of Quakerism* (Jubbulpore: Christian Mission Press, 1918), 254. Free ministry meaning the practice in Quakerism where ministry during Sunday worship isn’t given by the priest/pastor or prepared beforehand; rather ministry is freely given during silent worship.

\(^10\) Hamm, 54-63. The history and aftermath of Quaker schisms is a well-studied topic in Quaker history.
outside of the religious community begin to write about Quakerism.\textsuperscript{11} In response, the smaller moments of history were studied with more depth and from different perspectives.\textsuperscript{12}

My argument centers in the 1960s, a decade of heightened social activism, which Quakers were stereotypically well known for. However, the scholarship does not reflect generalized knowledge of Quaker participation during the 60s era of political and social upheaval. When scholars did write on Quakers during this time, they focused on internal debates about peace rather Quakers’ relationship to outward peace action.\textsuperscript{13} Faith and practice, what a Quaker believes and how they live that belief, are in constant tension throughout the history of Quaker religion.\textsuperscript{14} One of these moments of discord happened during the 1960s over the peace testimony and the definition of nonviolent action. The

\textsuperscript{11} Several academic disciplines write about Quakerism including history, religion, anthropology, and sociology focusing on different aspects of the religion and the religious community, however the trend of Quaker historians being Quaker themselves persists to this day. This thesis and myself are included in this phenomenon. Isaac Barnes in “When History Substitutes for Theology: The Impact of Quaker Scholars’ Religious Affiliations on the Study of Nineteenth Century American Quakerism.” Religions 9, no. 12 (December 2018): 395. doi:10.3390/rel9120395, argues that Quaker historians who write on Quaker history use the platform to further debate theological interpretations of Quakerism which alienates non-Quaker historians of Quakerism.


central disagreement was between younger Quakers (the Renewalists) and older Quakers who lived through the world wars. The Renewalists felt participation in social justice movement (i.e. the Civil Rights Movement, Disarmament, and opposing the Vietnam War) called for a reexamination of how the Quaker community lived into the value of peace, not agreeing with Quakers who perceived nonviolence as subjective and that use of force for peace could be necessary. Historian Allen Smith argued that the nonviolent methods used during this time for peace work -- vigils, demonstrations, and civil disobedience-- supported the Renewalists’ insistence that true nonviolence excluded the use of any kind of force, and eventually ended the theological disagreement. At the international level, WILPF also struggled with the meaning of nonviolent peace work.

Most scholarship in Quaker history explores areas where Quakerism is overt, that is, where the people, organizations, and events identify themselves as Quaker. For instance, in writing about former President Richard Nixon, who was raised in the Religious Society of Friends, historian H. Larry Ingle argued “to understand the man and his church and how it influenced him, as well as his responses to the political system in which he operated, an examination of his religion is in order.” Although Nixon distanced himself from religion throughout his political life. Ingle sought to generate deeper truth between religion and politics by highlighting that religion plays an important role in the public sphere. Similarly, scholarship on WILPF’s public image didn’t take

15 Smith, 1. The term “Renewalist” stems from the concept of renewing the original concept of the Quaker peace testimony laid out by George Fox and another early Quaker theologists.
17 Ingle, 13.
into account the Quaker religious background that shaped the methods and style of WILPF peace work.

Similar to early Quaker writings the earliest published accounts of the WILPF were written by women who worked in the league. The quality of the historic writing was closer to biographic rather than analytic. The voice of scholarship shifted starting in the early 1980s as the field of women’s history rose in American academia. Historians outside of WILPF sought to understand how this large international organization negotiated its survival.

Historians’ analyses of WILPF have transformed over time as their perspectives dug further into the inner workings of the organization. For her dissertation in 1988, Historian Anne Marie Pois asserted that “U.S. WILPF’s transnational vision provided them not only with a cogent critique of political and economic conditions, but also with a model of women’s internationalism for their own organization. Thus, the U.S. WILPF’s vision and the community which embodied it sustained them during a period of increasing international conflict and violence.” Pois’s thesis, focused on the 1950s, echoed the arguments of her contemporaries, maintaining the success of WILPF during

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18 Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Hamilton published *Women at The Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Results.* (New York: the Macmillan Company, 1915); and Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims put out *Pioneers for Peace: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1965.* (WILPF British Section, 1980). Balch and others such as Olstom and Boulding were also Quaker so they also come from a deep writing tradition.

the organization’s first 50 years. Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tim’s *Pioneers for Peace* first compiled a history of WILPF for the 50th anniversary, and twenty years later Catherine Foster wrote *Women for All Seasons* in response.\(^{20}\) Foster maintains that the lessons of WILPF are made even more valuable because the organization has lasted so long.\(^ {21}\) The women of WILPF participated in open dialogue and pursued ideals of feminism and cooperation toward peaceful settlements of arguments; such practices characterized the inner culture of the organization. There is a feeling of exaltation in Foster’s writing about the WILPF women and their positive impact on peace. While this work doesn’t overly laud WILPF, it does explore why the organization retained its success over the decades.

In contrast, Historian Carrie Foster moved away from hagiographic interpretations of WILPF’s perseverance to tell “a story of pacifism, Progressivism, feminism, and in a very real sense, of failure.”\(^ {22}\) *The Women and the Warriors* signaled a tonal switch in historical scholarship on WILPF. The focus was no longer on a sweet depiction of organizational success. Instead, there is further examination and interrogation into the ways WILPF failed and struggled in its 100-year history. Moving into the 1990s,


\(^{21}\) Catherine Foster, 6. Anne Marie Pois in “The U.S. Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and American Neutrality, 1935-1939.” (*Peace & Change* 14 no. 3 (1989): 263-284) also lauds WILPF for its consensual and democratic processes which allowed the organization to be successful in times of internal and external political strife.

historians of WILPF complicated the narrative by pulling out and extrapolating on issues such as intellectual heritage, Progressive reform, and McCarthy era difficulties.\footnote{In Reconstructing Women’s Thoughts: The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) Linda K. Schott argues the intellectual processes present in WILPF leadership diverge from the male-oriented history of intellectual thought and it is critical to integrate their contributions rather than force them into the male narrative; Carrie Foster in The Women and the Warriors, 1995, points out the connection between WILPF’s feminism and Progressivism as an indicator for the shift away from suffrage; The tension of the McCarthy era caused conflict and disillusionment which Harriet Hyman addresses in Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993).}

The story of WILPF was further complicated into the 2000s. Historians Melinda Plastas and Joyce Blackwell both analyzed how the influence of race affected the peace movement specifically in WILPF.\footnote{Melinda Plastas. A Band of Noble Women: Racial Politics in the Women's Peace Movement. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 33; Joyce Blackwell. No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom 1915-1975. (Carbondale, IL: South Illinois University Press, 2004), 14.} For Plastas and Blackwell, it was important to look at racial identity and how it operated for the women of color who were members of WILPF. The inclusion of other identities can apply to race and further to religion. Religion shapes people’s perception of world through canonized values and traditions. It only makes sense to examine a religious influence that is notably present in WILPF to better understand the full spectrum of entities that contributed to WILPF’s history.

Scholars in other fields of history have recognized that religious identity played a large role in American social justice movements. This inclination generated work interrogating the intersection of women and religion in history. Susan Lindley, a professor of religion, wrote about the relationship between women and religion in You Have Stepped Out of Your Place. She “tried to span a broad geographic, ethnic, racial, and denominational range of American women’s religious experiences and
contributions.” Lindley points out that the 1990s spurred the search for the “usable past,” meaning histories that are accessible to people through today’s context, which led to a glut of scholarship on women’s religious history.

Within women’s separatist organizations, political and religious life take up more space in ways that are stifled in male-led or secular organizations. Amanda Izzo looked at two religious groups led by women, the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and the Maryknoll Sisters, to reevaluate the way women committed to missions of social activism with religion being the defining factor. In these contexts, the public understood these women as leaders rather than followers, and successful in their own right.

The narrative of WILPF is also a history at the node of religion and social movements. Religious activism stretches back through American history to the abolitionist, suffrage, and temperance movements, yet religion as a contributing factor is often excluded or sidelined. For the WILPF, the Quaker religion underpinned the structure and direction of their work, just as other religions framed the work of other social and political movements.

28 Izzo, 3.
Movements often start because they were motivated by morals propagated from religions. Sidley Tarrow, a professor of political science and social movements, stated social movements are born when shifts in political opportunities generate incentives for people at the sides of society take action. In order to act, the people who lack the resources of the elite, seek each other through common cultural and social networks to create sustained opposition. Tarrow identified these networks were best organized and produce sustaining movements when they tap into shared identities, specifically nationality, ethnicity, and religion. As a political scientist, Tarrow meant to theorize social movements throughout history rather than focus on a specific movement in history. However, he recognized that organizations affiliated with religious congregations in the 1960s were the strongest source for sustained social activists. By drawing connections to Quakerism, WILPF must be included in this framework of sustained social movements.

The connection between religious life and social leadership exists if historians explore the full background of their research subjects. Betty Collier-Thomas attested to the prevalence of African American women being social and religious leaders. Networks created through Black women’s religious life lead to indispensable contributions to

31 Tarrow, 11.
32 Tarrow, 131.
movements fighting against racism, sexism, and poverty in American society. Collier-Thomas chronicled three eras featuring religiously faithful Black women and noted that “their organizations were the foundation for a significant portion of what has been defined as nonreligious or secular in nature.” She identified the connections between Black women’s history, religion and activism. Collier-Thomas’s analysis covered larger sections of time, followed several women lead organizations, and included women from multiple religious denominations.

Sometimes it takes a particular perspective to notice details that paint the context movement in history differently. Many women’s historians have quickly noted the religious backgrounds of members of WILPF or relegated the information to footnotes. Gathering the crumbs left by other scholars and tapping deeper into the archival record proves that there is a tangible connection between practices and ethos in Quakerism and structures of WILPF. Collier-Thomas noted that for many activist groups in the 1800s, religious leadership was a requirement to join. That tradition surely extended and transformed so that an ingrained link existed between people involved in religious leadership and people participating in social justice movements. Quaker history also hints at the proliferation of Quaker women working in social movements but doesn’t expand


34 Collier-Thomas, xxii.

35 There is overlap; Collier-Thomas does address African American women in interracial and international framed organizations including WILPF.


37 Collier-Thomas, xvi.
on how far-reaching practices unique to Quakerism were introduced and adopted into organizations like WILPF. By examining the visible ways Quakerism exists through WILPF’s records, missions, and actions, the significance of Quakerism to WILPF emerges clearly. Historians dismissed Quakerism and Quaker women to the sidelines of history or reduced them in significance when their participation was essential to the operation and methods of countless movements that are iconically recognized through history. My thesis will address this imbalance by highlighting where Quaker women and Quakerism made lasting impacts on WILPF.

The primary sources used in this work are the Massachusetts Branch Records 1915-1977 from Schlesinger Library, WILPF Triennial Congress reports from Swarthmore Digital Collections, and the WILPF collection at Stanford University. The Massachusetts Branch Records consists of two cartons and features correspondence, newsletters, meeting minutes, literature, flyers, memos, and other administrative paperwork specific to the Massachusetts branch from 1915-1977. The correspondence includes internal correspondence from the Massachusetts branch to the national office as well as correspondence to affiliates and members. The Triennial Congress reports are scanned copies of the full books given to members at the congresses. Swarthmore Special Collections digitized the books and made them freely

available online. The books feature the speeches and addresses given during the congresses, reports from executive and national committees, and descriptions of the workshops put on. Lastly, the WILPF collection at Stanford University Libraries consists of 232 audiocassette tapes that have also been digitized. The oral interviews were created between 1979-1989 as a part of the Women’s Peace Oral History project.

I used the primary sources to read for traces of Quaker presence through language, mentioned affiliates, and known relationships to Quaker institutions. In this thesis the term Quaker is used in reference to someone who belongs to (i.e. is a member of a Quaker meeting) the Religious Society of Friends. Quakerism refers to the religion practiced by the Religious Society of Friends. There are obvious indications of Quaker affiliation such as self-identification or reference to Quaker organizations. I also read for Quaker rhetoric and coded phrases unique to the Quaker community. I interrogated those subtle hints to pinpoint a Quaker origin in order to support the larger argument.

This thesis is organized into three chapters, narrowing in fashion by first looking at Quakerism in WILPF internationally, then in the US, and finally within two city branches. The first chapter examines WILPF through a Quaker lens to determine if the organization had enough religious authority in its origins to be considered a “Quaker-adjacent” organization. The second chapter examines the ways Quaker people and networks carried WILPF through its history. Finally, in the third chapter I investigate the activities of local city branches to see if Quaker influences were present and as significant at that level.

There are limitations based on the scope of the print material that was aggregated in the archival collection as well by the scope of the interviews. The records in the
Massachusetts Branch records have holes at certain time periods. Consistent records of newsletters and updates from the national branch appeared in short series over the 60-year period the collection covered. Member turnover and inconsistency in assigned roles in a volunteer-based organization surely produced this erratic print record. The print materials also create distance between the reader and the real person who generated those records. It is harder to find concrete details about the events and people if not enough information is given in the records. Comparatively the oral histories often provide too much information that the speaker obscures the timeline of events. Some interviews circled back on each other and the interviewee repeated the same details. Audio quality also created problems. Patches of the recordings were drowned out by ambient noise. Oral interviews from someone else’s project also come with the inherent issue of not necessarily expanding on the issues the listener is interested in. The interviewers who conducted these interviews had their own agendas and questions that did not always meet the interest of this thesis.

Although a secular organization, the Quaker religion is embedded in the structure of the US Section of WILPF. The mission and work of the organization during the 1950-60s showed how the subtle religious environment of the organization translated outward. By looking at organizational records, correspondence, Congress meeting minutes, and oral testimonies, and rhetoric styles unique to Quakerism a trend of Quakerism became perceptible in WILPF. Uncovering the religious affiliation of WILPF is essential to understanding the sustained drive for peace within WILPF. I will argue that Quakerism was at the heart of WILPF and set it apart from other feminist and/or peace institutions. Scholars recognized the power religious identity and faith provides social justice
movements yet have not pursued the undeniable link between the Religious Society of
Friends and WILPF. Their unexplored connection offers novel context to the women who
worked for peace during this time and Quakerism’s integral role in social justice
movement histories.
Chapter 1. WILPF and Quaker Identity

Emily Greene Balch, one of the founders of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and a native Bostonian said, “peace must be a state of dynamic harmony, not rigid and hidebound, unable to change only by the explosive method of revolution, but as living organisms alter -- by vital processes of growth.”\(^1\) Like many other women in 1919, she felt that peace was a women’s issue and that the absence of peace besieged the conscience of women. As a Quaker woman Greene was particularly knowledgeable in the ways non-violence informed peace work.

Although WILPF is not a specifically religious organization, the Quaker influence throughout its history imbued Quaker attributes to qualify WILPF as a religious-adjacent organization and should be included in this conversation. Reevaluating WILPF’s position in history as a religious-affiliated organization opens up WILPF’s structure and practices to be considered through different lenses. Izzo asserted that women who were religious, or who worked for organizations that were religiously based, had an ingredient that made them stable and less susceptible to the tribulations that led to the downfall of other feminist groups.\(^2\) Therefore it is necessary to look at the history of Quaker people from WILPF’s conception in 1915 to the 1960s and their religious context. Quakerism also existed in the organizational networks WILPF took part in. WILPF exchanged and

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worked closely with Quaker organizations during the first half of the 20th century. Lastly, this chapter will examine how WILPF can claim a Quaker identity.

Identity is dynamic and can transform despite outward appearance. WILPF stated that it was a secular organization yet the people, networks, and language of the group suggests otherwise. In fact, it suggests that the organization is a pooling place for the Quaker ideals of peace and the people who believe in them. Thus, deep analysis of the people and networks that sustained WILPF through 100 years of peace work complicates the identity of this long-standing organization.

Before WILPF, a network of organizations existed in the realm of peace advocacy. American School Peace League (ASPL), started by Fannie Fern Andrews a suffragist from Boston; Quakers and other religious leaders established the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR); and the American Union Against Militarism (AUAM) all opened within months of each other in 1915. Several of these organizations either started as suffrage groups or broke off from a suffrage group. ASPL and The International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), founded by women such as Carrie Chapman Catt and Susan B. Anthony, came from their larger mission of women’s suffrage. IWSA’s presence in the United States led to the creation of another group, the National Woman's Peace Party (WPP) in 1915.

Before 1914, activists often folded peace into broader issues, including women’s suffrage, but the First World War shook the moral consciences of women who were

4 Catherine Foster, 10
already involved in social activism. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a British WILPF founding member wrote in her memoir:

The principles that had inspired our great struggle for women’s emancipation came back to remembrance. Had we not spoken and written of the solidarity of women whose main vocation in every nation was one and the same -- the guardianship and nurture of the human race? Could the women of the world remain silent while men in the bloom of their youth were being offered up by many nations for sacrifice?⁶

The turn in focus to peace during wartime caused friction as activists struggled to decide where to place support during the conflict. For IWSA the conflict of beliefs precipitated a break amongst the group. Leaders of IWSA planned an international gathering in Berlin that they postponed due to the war. Members who sided with the pursuit of war were more than willing to stop an international meeting on peace. But some plans are too important to stop, so a renegade group from Amsterdam went through with the international meeting anyway.⁷

Heading the U.S. delegation was Jane Addams. By 1919, Addams was already a known activist and social worker. She started Hull House which was a settlement house and part of a social reformist movement which aimed to raise communities out of poverty.⁸ Addams headed the Women’s Peace Party when the International Congress of Women met at the Hague in 1919. The culmination of the meeting induced the creation of the Women’s International League (WIL), later expanded to the name Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

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⁶ Catherine Foster, 10.
⁷ Catherine Foster, 10.
⁸ The settlement house movement started in the 1880s in England and migrated
WILPF’s relationship with Quakerism started early in the organization’s history just after WWI. Addams and Emily Greene Balch were two founders of WILPF. Both had ties to Quakerism, became presidents of the U.S. Section and of the International Committee, and later won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with WILPF. Their leadership and beliefs deeply impacted the scope and direction of WILPF’s work.

Addams, head of WPP turned WILPF, was raised in Cedarville, Illinois, and attended the local Presbyterian church. Sarah Weber, Addams’ mother, died when Addams was two years old after suffering internal bleeding from a fall during late pregnancy. That left Addams’s father in charge of the children’s upbringing for a time before remarrying. John Huy Addams was an Illinois state senator from 1854 to 1970 more significantly, was Quaker. John Addams followed the writings of Elias Hicks, the Quaker man responsible for the largest schism in the history of American Quakerism. Although Jane Addams never converted to Quakerism, her father imparted ideas of inner truth and morality borne from Quaker practice.⁹

Emily Greene Balch also encountered Quakerism during her formative years. Joseph Wright Taylor opened a college for women to pursue rigorous academic study. Taylor, a Philadelphian Quaker, founded the college with the ideals of Quakerism. The tract of land Taylor purchased for the college had the benefit of being close to Philadelphia as well as Haverford College, a Quaker men’s college. Bryn Mawr opened in 1885 and Balch graduated in 1889 as a member of the college’s first graduating class.

⁹Some texts identify Addams as Quaker. See for example, Louise W. Knight, Jane Addams: Spirit in Action (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 9-11.
The board eventually voted to make the college non-denominational in 1893, several years after Balch graduated.\textsuperscript{10} Surely Taylor’s idealism permeated Balch’s view of the world because she later converted to Quakerism in her adulthood.

Both Addams and Balch headed the U.S. Section of WILPF: Addams in 1915 and Balch ten years later. Between the founding of the U.S. Section and the end of the 1960s, seventeen women served as president (one person twice non-consecutively). Nine of the seventeen were Quaker or had some connection to the Quaker community through their childhood or education.\textsuperscript{11} Those nine women served as president for a collective 39 years out of the first 66 years of the organization. Quakers weren’t the only religious group concerned about issues of peace, as seen in the religious backgrounds of the eight other women who were president. Religions ranged from Methodist and Presbyterian to Jewish and Buddhist. Yet, a significant portion of the leadership was Quaker or had experiences with other Quaker organizations before WILPF.

Although the distribution at the member level could be just as significant, examining the leaders’ religious identities is especially important because they are the people that most influence the course and the direction of the all the branch and members. The fact that Quaker women dominated that role points to an undeniable link which transgressed the notion that WILPF is strictly secular. Even after the founding years of

\textsuperscript{10} Kristen E. Gwinn, \textit{Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism.} (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 19.

\textsuperscript{11} Jane Addams was raised by a Quaker father; Lucy Biddle Lewis was Philadelphian Quaker, Quaker from Wynnewood, PA; Emily Greene Balch converted to Quakerism; Ruth Freeman was a Quaker and once worked for ACSF; Orlie Pell attended Bryn Mawr which has Quaker roots; Dorothy H. Hutchinson was a member of Abington Friends Meeting; Elizabeth “Betty Polster was co-clerk of Canadian Friends Yearly Meeting; and Katherine “Kay” Camp was Quaker and attended Swarthmore College.
WILPF, Quaker participation in the WILPF persisted. Quaker women joined the ranks at multiple levels. Even at the international level Quakers were present. Beyond Addams who served as the first international chairperson, Margaret Scott Olmstead, Katherine “Kay” Camp, and Elise Boulding were Quaker women who held high ranking positions in WILPF.¹²

Mildred Scott Olmsted, a member of Providence Meeting, started at WILPF as an executive secretary in 1922. She steadily rose through the ranks of WILPF, serving a national organizational secretary from 1934-1946, then national administrative secretary from 1946-1963, and executive secretary from 1963 until her retirement in 1966. Before joining WILPF Olmsted had volunteered with AFSC and other Quakers in Germany and France to distribute food in 1919. In these positions, she created coalitions with many organizations most prominently AFSC, FOR, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Olmsted was known for her role as a structural organizer. The networks of branches in the U.S. Section of WILPF were fully realized by Olmsted who based the network system from AFSC.¹³ Olmsted’s identity and work as a Quaker brought tangible changes to executive decisions on the organization of WILPF.

WILPF’s relationships with Quaker organizations throughout its history is also apparent. Members of WILPF have worked for other Quaker institutions and WILPF branches have closely partnered with Quaker institutions such as AFSC and FCNL.

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¹² Camp served as president from 1969-1973 and Boulding served as international chairperson from 1967-70.

¹³ Margaret Hope Bacon, One Woman’s Passion for Peace and Freedom: The Life of Mildred Scott Olmsted. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993) 92, 136.
Together they worked to put on programming, coordinate demonstrations, and lead lobbying visits.

WILPF and AFSC were born within years of each other and founded by some overlapping members. WILPF first started in January 1915 and four months later the delegation left for The Hague.\textsuperscript{14} It consisted of several Quaker women: Grace Abbott, Lucy Biddle Lewis, and Emily Greene Balch. Two years later the three major groups of American Quakers each sent representatives to build AFSC with the mission to provide “a service of love in wartime.”\textsuperscript{15} Among the founders were Anna G. Walton, Arabella Carter, and Lucy Biddle Lewis. Throughout AFSC’s history numerous WILPF members participated in relief trips. Because the organizations were founded by the same people or like-minded people, Margaret Hope Bacon contextualizes the two organizations together like they are different manifestations of the same core idea.\textsuperscript{16} Quakers were at the core founding and planning of both organizations, evidencing a bond based on fellowship and religion.\textsuperscript{17}

As Quaker members joined WILPF, they brought touchstones of their religious identity with them, namely the way they address one another. The rhetoric used by the people in the organization proves that Quakerliness operated in the organization. The codes of language people use to communicate signal common or in-language of communities. Therefore, language-use marks identity and for the language of a secular

\textsuperscript{14} WILPF was still the WPP in 1915.
\textsuperscript{16} Bacon, 203-211.
\textsuperscript{17} Bacon, 210-14.
organization to feature Quaker rhetoric means that the Quaker identity informed the WILPF identity. Quaker rhetoric is present in the documentation from WILPF such as in letters, reports, and pamphlets.¹⁸

Organizations can communicate their identity and beliefs in the few words that comprise the greeting and signature in correspondence. In other feminists’ organizations in the 1960s, consciousness raising and activism pivoted around the concept of sisterhood, the idea that women belonged to a family awakened to the oppression of their gender. The National Organization for Women, used the language of sisterhood, such as “Dear Sisters” and “Yours in sisterhood,” to signal dedication to the ideals of feminism and to invite women to join them. This made the position of the organization clear and offered their language as an option for future communications. Receivers of those letters were able to turn around and use the same language to show that they too are a part of the in-group that used coded greetings.¹⁹

Quakerism, like every community, has its own specific, unique linguistic patterns. The word “friend” is deeply significant to the Quaker community. The religion’s formal title is the Religious Society of Friends, a name created from George Fox’s writings. Fox, the founder of Quakerism, gained a following around 1647. Fox experienced ‘openings’


or revelations of spirit which became the bedrock for the Quaker movement. These experiences were grounded in what he called the Light of Christ:

Every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ; and I saw it shine through all, and they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came to the light of life, and became the children of it, but they that hated it, and did not believe in it, were condemned by it, though they made a profession of Christ.20

“The divine light of Christ,” heavily referenced in Quaker writing, is also called the Light of Christ or Inward/Inner Light. At the beginning of what became the Quaker movement, before Quakers had a name, Fox was flexible about the label applied to him and the ever-growing group who preached his theology. He favored the title “Children of Light” from his writings, but other terms were used such as “People of God,” “Royal Seed of God,” and “Friends of Truth.” The latter came from a means of address Fox used and it ultimately resulted in the official name, “Religious Society of Friends.”21

The term Quaker came from derisive comments made about the community during their worship. In Quaker worship there is no minister or priest to act as a conduit to God. Instead the community gathers in silence and speaks into the silence when one feels lead.22 One British justice said to Fox “quake, thou Quaker, before the majesty of the law,” citing the commonly used insult as he sentenced Fox to jail under the charge of blasphemy.23 It was said that “many of them, sometimes men, but more frequently

21 Hamm, 17.
22 By the 20th century different forms of Meeting for Worship evolved. Communities that continued to practice a completely silent also known as an unprogrammed meeting, belonged to the Liberal branch of Quakerism. Conservative and Evangelical branches of the religion began in the 19th century that incorporated planned sermons by a minister.
23 Hamm, 17.
women and children, [fell] into quaking fits,” when they left their worshipful silence to share out a message. Eventually the community adopted the term “Quaker” and it became synonymous with the original in-term “friend.” Therefore “friend” is a signal of inclusion for Quakers, a term used to greet another as an equal.

WILPF members and leaders used “Friend” as a term of address in their correspondence. It appeared in correspondence sent by and to WILPF members at multiple levels in the organization from international to interpersonal. Margaret “Peggy” Douglas McCarter, President of the Massachusetts Branch of WILPF from 1968-1973, began her official correspondence with “Dear Friend.” McCarter started her professional mailings with this greeting consistently during her tenure as president. Other WILPF officials used the greeting in internal and external correspondence. For example, Joel Prybutok from the National Literature Department applied the same salutation when writing official correspondence about supplying literature materials. People also responded using the “dear friend” opening when writing back to members of WILPF. Janet Freeman, a librarian from Salem State College, began her letter this way, as did Muriel Shapiro who was interested in joining WILPF. This greeting was paired with the signature of “in peace and freedom” or “Pax” most commonly. Both valedictions refer to WILPF, playing with the name of the organization

24 Hall, 19; Stuard, 41-42.
and therefore reiterated WILPF’s identity.\textsuperscript{28} The greeting and signature were paired which indicated a purposeful pattern in the letter writing scheme, a coded suffusion of organization character. Because “Friend” and “Pax” appeared frequently and by people at differing levels in the organization, the language and the attached meaning lived in the cultural understanding of those who worked for and with WILPF.

It is possible that “friend” is a neutral term chosen to be a broad friendly and non-threatening greeting that wasn’t isolating to anyone group of people. Many people might use “friend” because it seems like a kindly way to greet a friend, however that argument rings false when put in context with WILPF’s relationship with Quakerism. Quaker women dominated WILPF leadership for an extensive period of time. Therefore, the presence of the greeting “friend” with the paired farewell of “in peace and freedom” or “Pax” is significant to the linguistic patterns of WILPF and thus Quakerism. The use of “dear friend” is an outward expression of WILPF’s Quaker roots and continuous relatedness.

Altogether the linguistic patterns point to Quakerliness yet historically, Quaker identity has been hard to pin down. Unlike other religions, the membership can be blurry. Membership to a specific Quaker Meeting assures concrete evidence that someone is Quaker.\textsuperscript{29} However the Religious Society of Friends allows full participation in community life by those who are not members, so termed attenders. Attenders do not hold official membership to any one Meeting yet will identify as Quaker. Further a central theology does not exist in Quakerism. Within the Religious Society of Friends,

\textsuperscript{28}“Pax” meaning freedom is also the name of WILPF’s magazine.
\textsuperscript{29} Members of a Meeting are cleared by a committee that oversees membership.
the scope of belief and practice is varied and constantly developing, meaning those who identify as Quaker have varying definitions of the religion as well. Quaker scholar Peter Collin’s said “Quakerism is a subtle and complex process, one that cannot be determined either by individual or social agency.” He went on to argue “there can be no single overarching interpretation by which we can come to understand Quaker identity.” In relation to WILPF, this means the organization’s Quaker identity is an equally complex process and there is no definitive prescription for Quakerism.

Collins offered a model for attributing Quakerliness by looking at what he calls Meeting narrative, habitus, and hexis. Meetings, or communities of Quakers, form an identity through fundamental narratives grounded in the faith and practice of the religion. For example, discourse about pacifism and how it operates in the community is a Meeting narrative that pins down a subscription to Quakerism through the practice of peace. Additionally habitus and hexis, repetitive reifying behaviors, regenerated Quakerism through community time building narratives.

Using this framework to examine WILPF shows Quakerism existed in WILPF’s identity. WILPF’s organizational structure centered on the meeting of the corporate body which reflects the habitus of Quaker culture. At every level of WILPF, from local city branches to the international offices, there were regular and expected meetings where the purpose of the organization was discussed. This echoed Quaker organizational structure.


* Collins, 216.

* Collins, 208.

* Collins, 219. Habitus and hexis come from Pierre Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice*. 
Local Quaker Meetings met one a month for business, then a larger collection of Meetings gathered once a quarter for business, and the largest body met once a year.\textsuperscript{34}

WILPF meetings discussions generated ideas of freedom, pacifism, non-violence, and justice. Leadership disseminated these organizational tenants through meetings, conversations, and correspondence with each other to create a unifying narrative. Organizational hexis, in this case linguistic postures, were also communicated during WILPF gathered time together. As a result, language like “dear friend” become encoded in organizational behavior. Quaker members, organizational structures, and linguistic modes demonstrate the clear Quaker identity of WILPF.

\textsuperscript{34} Thus, the Quaker gatherings are called Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, and Yearly Meetings respectively.
Chapter 2. Quakerism in Practice

In the peace movement world, many organizations fell apart due to in-fighting, lack of interest, and loss of collective direction. Other issues became more important or other factions of their lives took over. ¹Either way it’s impressive that WILPF remains an operating peace organization to this day. Non-profit organizations needed continuous member buy-in and financial stability to sustain themselves for an extended period of time. Passionate members who were committed to the cause of peace and felt that WILPF facilitated that work continued to work for the organization. Therefore, something in the way, the WILPF conducted their peace activism drew people in and retained them. Because the structure, operation and ethos of WILPF drew so much from Quakerism and other Quaker organizations, the correlation means that the Quaker impact which spread through WILPF also made the organization vital and long standing.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, Quakers understood peace through the global conflict of World War II. Practitioners of Quaker faith accepted justified violence as a viable pathway to peace. In the 1960s, with the rise of nuclear warfare, aggression towards communist powers, and American interference abroad, younger Quakers began to reevaluate the community’s view of violence and peace.² Committee groups formed in Quaker Meetings to discuss and formalize how Quakers should live the ideals of peace. Like many revolutions of thought in response to outward social changes, these Quakers returned to early Quaker writings. The first Quakers, people like George Fox and John Woolman, wrote about the testimonies that grounded

Quakerism, including peace. For them peace was not defined by an absence of war and strife, but as an opposition to violence. Opposition to violence eventually became the dominant understanding of peace in the liberal Quaker communities by the mid 1960s and transformed the tactics of peace work.

This praxis of Quaker peace is seen in the understanding of WILPF officials in their peace work. On a warm Sunday evening surrounded by the beautiful views of July in Asilomar, California, the international women of WILPF convened as they did every three years to conduct business, declare resolutions, and strategize with the upper leadership of the organization. During this time the International Chairman addressed the present body and articulated the congress goal. In 1962, Zeuthen called for “total and universal disarmament-NOW.” Zeuthen said:

We are working for peace. That should not call for much comment, I should however, like to stress that the peace we are working for is not just a state of non-war based on the balance of power between two power blocs. No, as a long-time objective we see a world in which power does not play a part, a world disarmed based on the active cooperation of the different states and groups for the common good of mankind.

Zeuthen spoke these words as a part of her report during the International Congress that met in Asilomar, California. The congress gathered women of WILPF from all over to meet together every three years. For six days committees met; people heard speakers on global issues, reports were given, and goals were identified for future concentrated work. That year in 1962, Zeuthen talked about peace not just being about an absence of war between world powers, but a balance of power where violence is not threatened but disarmed. Her sentiment echoed the Renewalist


3 Smith, 7.
4 Smith, 17.
5 15th International Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 4.
Quakers who also demanded that the definition of peace go beyond any presence of war between nations.

In her earlier remarks for the 1962 International Congress, Zeuthen talked about her relationship with Emily Greene Balch. Balch received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946 for her lifelong work for peace, including the founding of WILPF. Zeuthen’s contact with Balch and other Quakers who held high ranking positions in WILPF showed in the language of Zeuthen’s position of peace and war, and also in other idiosyncratic ways in the proceedings the International Congresses. For example, Zeuthen asked the congress to remember the recently passed on leaders of WILPF saying: “Friends, these women have by their outstanding ability and devotion rendered great very service to our League. Let us honor their memory among us by standing a moment.” The use of the term “friends” and asking for a pause to stand in silence for a moment are Quaker practices. The natural use of these Quaker patterns points to organizational adoption and acceptance of those practices. Zeuthen’s speech shows how Quakerism was embedded in the modes by which WILPF members addressed and remembered each other.

WILPF demonstrated the internal thrumming of Quakerism through its programming. International Congresses, national conferences, and local events were built around thematic goals that trickled down to on-the-ground actions. The goal or focus of the organization was set at the International Triennial Congresses.

7 15th International Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Asilomar, California, 8th-13th July 1962, 9.
The focus of the 1962 triennial congress was on total global disarmament in order to prevent nuclear war and other forms of violence spurred by the Cold War.\(^{10}\) July 1962 was a time of mounting tension in the United States and around the world. The threat of nuclear war beckoned as the U.S.’s relationships with Cuba and the Soviet Union continued to degrade. The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and the recent embargo of Cuban goods exposed the U.S.’s poor judgement and disjointed leadership.\(^{11}\) The Soviet Union built a web of connections that encroached on U.S. interests so the U.S. responded with aggression.

The focuses set at the triennial congresses led to published resolutions from which the branches in the U.S. focused their work. WILPF preached pacifism and focused on nonviolence. In the resolutions from 1953-1968 the first listed resolution called for end to violence through the elimination of nuclear weapons, alternatives to political settlements, the ratification of peace agreements, and other methods.\(^{12}\) Non-violent activism is a trait of Quaker-based activism that runs through the methods the U.S. Section of WILPF. The U.S. Section of WILPF branches conducted vigils, wrote to their congressional representatives, wrote letters to the editors of local papers to advocate, and supported education programs.\(^{13}\)

These methods echo the strategies of Quaker groups. For example, FCNL was established by members of the Religious Society of Friends in 1943 to have a dedicated staff to continuously engage with Congress. Based in Washington D.C., FCNL had direct access to Capitol Hill in

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\(^{10}\) In 1968 the topic was human rights and responsibility and in 1972 the declared theme was economic and social justice as a prerequisite for peace and freedom.


\(^{12}\) “Resolutions from WILPF’s Triennial Congresses,” WILPF, July 9, 2019, https://www.wilpf.org/resolutions-from-wilpf-2019-

order to lobby for concerns based on the Quaker peace testimony.\textsuperscript{14} FCNL also promoted letter writing and lobbying visits to advocate for disarmament and to end American intervention in Vietnam during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{15} In fact during the 1962 Triennial proceedings, E. Raymond Wilson, founder and the first executive secretary of FCNL, gave a session on the political aspects of disarmament.\textsuperscript{16} Wilson proclaimed:

\begin{quote}
We have the task of developing the will to disarm on the part of governments we can influence, of raising the questions which have to answered even it may be unpopular, of working with our governments when we can support them and ahead of them which will be much of the time. Particularly, we must link hands more effectively with people of good will in every country so that the movement for universal disarmament is truly universal.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

In July of 1962, Wilson had recently retired from FCNL in January but continued to volunteer and work towards the goal of disarmament. His presence and message of advocacy draws a direct line to his Quaker based work.

Another place where Quaker practice can be observed is in the creation of the Peace Center. Alice Cox in her oral testimony talked about working in the Peace Center in San Jose, where Quakers were on the board with members of WILPF and shared resources starting in 1962. This is significant because it means that members of WILPF were in conversation with a Quaker peace organization. They shared resources meaning that they’re their missions and actions were in ideological alignment. Since AFSC actions were based from a place of faith and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{15} Hall, 275.
\textsuperscript{16} 15th International Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 67-73.
\textsuperscript{17} 15th International Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 73.
\end{flushleft}
that they matched with WILPF, means that at the core the two organizations hold a belief from their shared religious beginnings.

Social justice-oriented organizations with widespread membership had stocks of print materials to send to members and potential supporters. A notable indicator of WILPF being deeply embedded in the Quaker peace network is their print materials, which utilized the resources of explicitly Quaker organizations including the American Friends Service Committee. The WILPF kept a printed record of its information and literature sources. They had an indexed list of institutions, their addresses, and the material they provided. The listed institutions detail their available materials which included pamphlets, films, curricula, books, and more. On the Boston branch resource list was the New England regional office of the AFSC:

Can provide program resources of books, films, speakers. *After the First* film - An absorbing story of a 12-year-old boy’s first hunting trip. Raises questions of social expectation, manliness, and violence … *Hiroshima-Nagasaki August 1945* - Condensation of footage taken by Japanese cameramen during the days immediately following the dropping of the atomic bombs. Discusses inhumanity of war, nuclear weapons, and war crimes.

Also noted was the American Friends Service Committee’s (AFSC) published newsletter, *Peace Work*. This list clearly indicates that WILPF relied on many institutions to support their programming. The presence of AFSC and WILPF’s use their resources testifies to the importance of the Quaker network in supporting WILPF’s aims of peace and education. The AFSC’s resources also directly support programming around nuclear weapons and social expectations of violence. Those themes are echoed in WILPF’s focus on non-proliferation, human rights, and social justice.

18 Addresses for Information and Literature. 83-M23.
20 Addresses for Information and Literature. 83-M23.
WILPF also pointed to the AFSC for resources on ecocide for programming for Earth Day in April 1972. In a March bulletin from the Chairman of the National Science Committee, Virginia Jones outlined options for programming advocating to join groups, fairs, lectures, or celebrations that will be occurring on April 22. By creating a display with pictures, charts, and leaflets from AFSC resources, WILPF members were encouraged to highlight the devastating use of herbicides and defoliants as weapons of warfare in the Vietnamese War.\textsuperscript{21}

Therefore, Quakerism played a dual role in shaping the ways WILPF was successful. The Quaker affiliated women who were integral to founding and later leading WILPF came to the organization flush with concepts unique to the structure of Quakerism; practices such as advocacy through lobbying and non-violent activism. They also established connections with other Quaker organizations which continued to support WILPF’s mission. Those methods created an organization where women felt heard, productive, and active in their pursuit of peace and freedom.\textsuperscript{22} WILPF is a peace organization for the needs of women and further a separatist peace organization for Quaker women.

\textsuperscript{21} Ecology and War, 1972, 83-M23, Box 1.
\textsuperscript{22} Of course, this narrative isn’t universal to every woman who was a member of WILPF. White men from rural England created Quakerism and thus imbued the religion and its practices with patriarchal and white-race codes. Where the testimonies preach equality and integrity the social conditioning of Quakers have directly interfered with living those values.
**Chapter 3. A Tale of Two Cities: Boston and San Jose, 1950-1969**

Inez Jackson moved to San Jose, California with her husband and six children in 1944 expecting the coastal city to be an improvement from her Oklahoma origins. Sadly, she was mistaken and as a Black woman she was immediately confronted with the rampant discrimination. Unable to become a teacher, the profession she held for many years back home, Jackson worked as a harvester and canner until after Truman desegregated the civil services.\(^1\) Jackson started work at the local Post Office which had the unfortunate position of being the only federal building in San Jose. This meant when Jackson decided to start working with the San Jose branch of WILPF, she ended up picketing in front of her work place. But she paid no mind because she was there to fight.\(^2\)

Jackson worked with one of WILPF’s local city branches. The structure of the U.S. Section of WILPF was unique compared to the other national sections. There was a main national branch in Philadelphia that housed the national executive committee. From there a network of branches extended around the country. Members from the national branch went to interested cities and towns to assess the community and assist local women who were interested in starting a local branch. The influence of Quakerism looked different from branch to branch of the U.S. Section of WILPF. Because of the autonomy allowed to the branches, the structure and activities of the groups were open ended and they could choose to pursue their goals using different methods. This also meant that branches operated differently based on the ways they interacted with Quakerism Yet, through looking at the branches of San Jose and Boston, it

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becomes evident that even when separated by space and organizational leadership, the effects of Quakerism on WILPF were still prevalent and significant to the success of the branches at this time.

The Boston branch was one of the oldest branches of WILPF. It was founded in 1921 and functioned at the main state branch in those early years. The branch was created under the influence of Mildred Scott Olmsted, whose job it was during the 1920s to travel to cities and encourage the formation of new branches as National Organizational Secretary. Olmsted grew the membership of WILPF by engaging like-minded women who thought they were alone in their views of peace. In the hierarchy of WILPF, the national branch in Philadelphia headed the U.S. Section and reported to the international body. In the tier below were offices at the state level spread all over the U.S. In some states, the state branch was the only WILPF presence in that area. For other states with heightened energy concentrated in several geographic areas, usually cities, smaller local branches formed. Thus, the Massachusetts's state branch was located in Boston. Later in 1977, the national office suggested was adopted that the branch be split into several local branches on the eastern side of Massachusetts.

Olmsted also implemented her ideals of staffing organization. She believed WILPF branch offices should be staffed by a core of volunteers to provide the maximum amount of

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4 Margaret Hope Bacon, One Woman’s Passion for Peace and Freedom: The Life of Mildred Scott Olmsted. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 136.

5 Records of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, DG 043 Part III Series B, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, accessed November 26, 2019, https://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/DG026-050/dg043wilpf/SeriesB-Branches/AppenA-Branch-histories.htm. I’ll refer to the branch as the Boston branch with the understanding that before 1977, the Boston branch also operated as the headquarters for the state branch.
women with the chance to work for peace. Many women’s organizations relied on volunteers at this time which meant the women volunteering their time were almost universally middle to upper class and white. These women had household help and financial stability that afforded them the time to dedicate full days to out-of-home volunteer work. Other volunteers were professional women whose households did not require intense management and who could determine their own schedules.

WILPF women presented a specific aesthetic. Most women’s organizations projected an aura of sophistication and gentility, utilizing respectability politics. This was made clear during the organization’s efforts to increase diversity in membership:

[W]hen the leading peace activists searched for Black women who would adopt the peace cause, they used themselves as examples of the ideal peace reformer. It never occurred to them that their criteria limited the number of Black women eligible for peace work or for membership in WILPF. White women like Addams, Catt, and Balch wanted only those African Americans who were ‘cultivated, preferably professional’ women.”

With criteria like that, Black membership was consistently low in the 1920s and dipped even further in the 1950s. Media outlets threw charges of communism and anti-American values at WILPF during the McCarthy Era. Being cast as un-American in the racial turbulent 1950s was too risky for most Black peace activists.

6 Bacon, 137.
7 Peace organizations such as Women’s Peace Society, Women’s Committee on World Disarmament, Women’s Peace Union of the Western Hemisphere, War Resisters International, and National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War.
8 Bacon, 137.
10 Blackwell, 40.
12 Blackwell, 41.
For Boston during the 1960s, the local branch operated from St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Cambridge, MA.\textsuperscript{13} Members gathered to plan upcoming events, review literature from the national offices, read reports, and share in fellowship with each other. They would also meet at each other’s houses working for the evening sitting at dining tables and lounging in living rooms. Members’ husbands often accompanied their wives and grew into members themselves. Husbands had participated in WILPF business since the 1940s, but in the 1960s with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement the U.S. Section officially opened membership to men.\textsuperscript{14}

The Boston branch still operated in the 1960s similarly to how Olmsted had initially set up the program to work. The hierarchical structure had an executive committee with a chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, legislative chairman, publicity chairman, membership chairman, and several secretary positions. During the 1960s these roles vacillated in activity as members dropped in and out of the organization. Below the chair people, a series of directors claimed domain over specific operations of the branch. There were directors of Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, Youth and Register Groups, and so on.\textsuperscript{15} Lastly, there was the sustaining body of volunteers who paid dues and worked to staff events and plan educational programming. The count during the middle of the 20th century hovered around 100 members not including the named directors and officers.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Mass Branch, 83-M23, Box 1, Folder 10.
\textsuperscript{14} Some notable men who joined were Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King Jr.
\textsuperscript{15} Mass Branch, 83-M23, Box 1, Folder 10.
\textsuperscript{16} In 1968 the Boston branch ended the year with 133 members, having gained 61 and lost 33. Apparently, the Boston branch membership often fluctuated because they come to Boston for college or graduate school and then leave when they complete their degrees.
The branch directors were women with particular affiliations who operated as liaisons between their branch and other organizations.] In the mid 1960s the three listed affiliations were “Pax,” “Community Churches,” and “Quaker.” Mrs. Elizabeth Knowlton held the position of Director of Quaker affiliations during the 1960s. Records of Knowlton’s particular activities as director are scarce, but the presence of her work as a go-between between the organizations is apparent in the records. From 1950 to 1969, programming and events often featured Quaker speakers or Quaker venues.

On June 9, 1950, the Boston branch hosted a luncheon. On a balmy June afternoon WILPF members and friends gathered to eat a cold salad collation, and later settled in with coffee and ice cream to hear Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin speak. Payne-Gaposchkin was a groundbreaking astronomer who worked at the Harvard Observatory as the Philips Astronomer. However that Friday afternoon, she was not at the Friends Meeting House in Cambridge to lecture about the hydrogenic composition of celestial bodies. As a Quaker woman, she was invited to give a speech titled, “Disarmament, Atomic and Spiritual.”

At the 1949 triennial congress, disarmament had been listed last among the resolutions to bring the United Nations. WILPF declared that it “reaffirm[ed] its opposition to all forms of warfare. Believing that military preparedness tends to lull the nations into a sense of false security, since there is no real defense against modern weapons of war.” Disarmament would

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17 “Pax” was the WILPF serial magazine. Mass Branch, 83-M23, folder 10.
18 She was the first person to complete a doctorate in astronomy from Radcliffe in 1925. Her doctoral thesis “Stellar Atmospheres: A Contribution to the Observational Study of High Temperature in the Reversing Layers of Stars” reevaluated the way astronomers categorize stars using elemental composition and temperature as gauges. Women were barred from becoming full professor at Harvard, and Payne-Gaposchkin was promoted to full professor after working and teaching as a researcher in 1956. She was given the title “Philips Astronomer” until her promotion. See Mass Branch, WILPF, 1954-1970. 83-M23, folder 10.
steadily grow more urgent for WILPF; in 1962 it became the theme of the entire triennial congress.

Back in Cambridge in 1950, WILPF organized a speech by a Quaker at a Quaker Meeting House on the topic of disarmament. A connection between Payne-Gaposchkin, the Friends Meeting at Cambridge, and the Boston branch of WILPF probably existed through the preparations of Knowlton, the director of Quaker affiliation.

The title of Payne-Gaposchkin’s speech also points to intellectual and spiritual resonance with WILPF. “Disarmament, Atomic and Spiritual” refers to her dual identities that influenced her perspective on the issue of nuclear weapons. As an astronomer and Quaker, Payne-Gaposchkin’s understanding of the devastating effects of nuclear war and the role of peace in the conflict was unique to her religious beliefs. The inclusion of her insights into the issue, both scientific and spiritual, means that the organizers thought her words would appeal to a gathered group of WILPF members. WILPF anticipated that the Quaker view would be valued, shared, and in-demand.

Quaker voices were featured in WILPF programming more than once. For the Annual WILPF Autumn Bazar in 1953, Russel Johnson from the New England Region branch of the AFSC gave a speech titled, “America Seen Through European Eyes.”21 His talk was about Europeans attitudes towards Americans and the vitality of the peace work continuing in Europe. Both Russel and Payne-Gaposchkin’s events were ticketed. As speakers, they were chosen specifically to draw a large crowd in order to raise funds for the organization.

The 1960s saw continuing work on disarmament, and a pivot to focusing on civil rights. The Boston branch and nearby local branches, like Blue Hills, Northampton, and Concord, worked on letter writing campaigns, clothing collections, providing peace education literature, and hosting speakers. Literature on peace education came from materials WILPF created themselves as well as literature from other peace organizations, including AFSC and FCNL.

A chief voice touring during this time was Dorothy Hutchinson, the Quaker president of the U.S. Section from 1961-1965. She spoke about dissent saying:

In our WILPF discussions with women of Communist countries, I have found that our main difference of opinion has to do with the question of whether dissent in a source of weakness or of strength in society… It is my firm conviction that dissent is an ingredient of a healthy society.

Hutchinson addressed concerns about speaking truth to power. The political right called WILPFers unpatriotic and un-American when they voiced their concerns and advocated for changes in warfare. The organization just came through a decade of rampant red washing which left members reasonably wary of being called unpatriotic even years later. Hutchinson told people to hold true and keep alignment between their actions, words, and beliefs when working for WILPF. This concept echoed Quaker testimonies which stemmed from the belief do adhere to one’s inner light. William James, an American philosopher who wrote on Quakers, described the religion being fundamentally about integrity. Hutchinson’s voice called people to remember

that their dissent, their integral truth, is essential to building the society with values WILPF idealized.

The Boston branch of WILPF maintained Quakerism in its organizational roots through its networking. In Boston, where several Quaker Meetings are located, there were opportunities to mix and share.26 Through a dedicated leadership role, the branch sought out Quaker voices to inform and call for action for peace issues that resonated with Quaker and non-Quaker groups. This intimate form of interaction, separate from the widespread way Quakerism affected WILPF through many years of national Quaker leadership, was a harmonious blending of the Quaker and WILPF communities. Quaker involvement in Boston contrasted the ways Quakerism manifested in the San Jose branch.

The San Jose branch of WILPF was founded in 1952, a year after Florence R. Bird and her husband moved there from Springfield, California. Bird was raised by her conservative Methodist single mother after her father died when she was a child. Bird’s mother always reminded her children to fulfill their civic duty and to vote at every election. Bird recollected her mother’s words as the beginning of her political awareness. In the 1960s, Bird spent every Thursday on the corner of 1st and Santa Clara exercising her civic duty by passing out literature about the Vietnam War. Bird and other women from the local San Jose branch of WILPF stood as witnesses on that corner for “seven years. It never rains between 12 and 1 o clock”.27

According to WILPF bylaws, an area required 15 members in order to form a branch. Dorothy Aspinwall moved to San Jose in 1969 and joined the thriving WILPF branch there.

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26 Friends Meeting at Cambridge, Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, and Fresh Pond Meeting reside within ten miles of each other.
Aspinwall and her husband Richard joined WILPF back in the 1940s when they were living in Denver, where Dorothy Hutchinson was starting out in WILPF too. The Aspinwalls lived in Carlsbad, New Mexico, for five years before moving to San Jose. Dorothy still wanted to participate in the peace work and the WILPF community she had enjoyed in Denver. With her two children in school and living in an area without enough interest to start a local branch in Carlsbad, Aspinwall became a Jane Addams branch member. This was a special class of membership for those who wanted to remain in the organization but had no local branch to work with. When she moved to San Jose, Aspinwall immediately jumped back into life at a WILPF branch. She started as a WILPF staffer working at the Peace Center.  

The Peace Center was the hub for the San Jose branch. Founded in 1957 by a coalition of peace groups, the Peace Center offered meeting places, offices, and a collection of peace literature. The center was governed by a board made up of members from the organizations that banded together to establish the center. The organizations included The Committee for SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE), AFSC, WILPF, and other local church groups. AFSC specifically arranged for a library of peace literature at the center. People from all these groups pooled their resources, participated in actions, and supported each other’s work.

The 1960s heralded the height of activity for WILPF and the Peace Center. Peace activism and anti-Vietnam War actions were a main focus of the San Jose branch’s energy. WILPF employed five full time draft counselors and between 15 and 20 volunteer staffs came...
every week. Volunteers received training from the Central Committee for Conscious Objectors to support the full-time counselors. Aspinwall worked as a staffer working in-take with men looking for draft counseling. She helped them start thinking about legal options to avoid being drafted. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses also staffed the Peace Center to provide further support to people seeking draft counseling. WILPF and the Peace Center also sponsored buses to take members and students to San Francisco for larger demonstrations and protests.

Compared to the Boston branch, the San Jose branch was more inclusive in terms of race and gender. Although Alice Cox complained that the WILPF board lacked people of color, San Jose had several influential people of color as members. Inez Jackson was a founding member of the Peace Center. She was first introduced to WILPF by a woman named Emma Sterne, who had also helped Dorothy Aspinwall when she first arrived in San Jose. Jackson, a mother of six and former Oklahoman teacher was shocked when she moved to San Jose in 1944 and was unable to find work. No school in San Jose would hire a Black teacher even though the school districts were integrated. She wasn’t able to teach in the same schools her children attended. Baffled and enraged Jackson consulted with the local branch of the NAACP who were well aware of the problem and advised Jackson to take her complaint to the school board. During Jackson’s protests, she encountered WILPF members who were also protesting the discriminatory practices of the San Jose public school system.

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31 Options included establishing a history of conscious objection through a religious institution or alternative domestic. Dorothy Aspinwall, 1984.
33 Alice Cox Interview Part one, 1984.
For Jackson, civil rights was the only issue she cared about. While working to end the Vietnam War was important, it wasn’t as important to Jackson. Only one of her children was eligible for service through the draft and that was towards the end of the war. Black people unable to get jobs was infinitely more pressing. Upon her arrival in San Jose, Jackson was shocked to discover there were no Black teachers:

“Especially all the things you hear about California, what a beautiful place it was, I never dreamed of anyone saying they didn’t have Black teachers, but down in Los Angeles was about the only place they had Black teachers at that time.”

Just seven years after Jackson was barred from teaching so was her daughter. A white-passing woman of colored was fired from her teaching position when the board found out she was Black.

Although the San Jose branch focused on anti-war protesting and draft counseling, anti-racism was an important extension of peace and freedom that WILPF work for. Jackson started volunteering with WILPF because they were trying to eliminate racism through their mission of peace. This approach appealed to Jackson who wasn’t a pure pacifist but believed violence was unproductive. Through letter writing campaigns, meetings, and projects at the Peace Center Jackson dedicated a significant amount of her time to fighting discrimination with WILPF.

The San Jose WILPF ran out of the Peace Center during this busy time in their activist history. The center equipped the San Jose women and men with support by having a home base where members could meet and strategize, research and create literature. Quakers who sat on the governing board and who were founding members through the regional AFSC were intrinsic to

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35 Jackson, 1984.
36 Inez Jackson, 1984.
37 Inez Jackson, 1984.
this effort. Funding for the center itself was possible through donations from all the founding organizations and AFSC continued to maintain a body of literature in the Center. Although less overt than the presence of Quakers in Boston, Quakerism had deep structural roots that lifted up the San Jose branch. Without the contribution of Quakers, the Peace Center would not have been a hive for passionate peaceful work.

WILPF in America was designed to be flexible, to fit the needs of the people in their area. Boston and San Jose branches shared similar goals despite vast geographic separation. Civil rights and war dominated the political platforms both branches pursued. Quaker rhetoric and structures were deeply embedded in the WILPF culture at each level with the influence concentrated at the higher levels of the organization which sustained and strengthened WILPF through time. Studying Quakerism in the smaller, local branches of WILPF illuminates just how deeply the connections between the Religious Society of Friends and WILPF ran. Clearly through examining the Boston and San Jose branches, Quakers were a valued voice to promote WILPF goals and their organizations sustained a core meeting place for WILPF members. Even at the smallest level Quakerism roused the flames of WILPF’s organizational fire.
Conclusion

As a religion, Liberal Quakerism has no central theology. There is no governing body dictating the traditions and scripture of Quakerism. Essentially the religion gives a person a set of beliefs and a way of practicing them. It’s up to the person to decide what Quakerism looks like, and the Quaker community exists as a sounding board to affirm the person’s understanding. A religion like that is adaptable, easily slipped in to other contexts, as is the case for WILPF.

WILPF asserted through their history that they were a secular institution, but by scrutinizing the members of WILPF, one perceives the influential role of religion – and of Quakerism in particular – essential. WILPF is secular in the sense that when they advocate for issues at the United Nations protest, meet with dignitaries, or educate they are not outwardly claiming their actions are motivated through any deity from any religion. However, the flexibility of Quakerism permeated the internal life of the organization. Numerous Quaker women have worked for and with WILPF and it left a mark. In fact, WILPF was already colored by Quakerism with its proximity to AFSC. The two organizations were linked together and arguably extensions of each other.

Connections to Quakers and Quaker peace organizations made WILPF strong – strong enough to weather the storms of the Red Scare and disagreements over pacifism. Internally WILPF faced numerous challenges as it grew, like many other feminists’ organizations, yet the might of its Quaker ethos and allies sustained the organization through decades. Women in leadership created a power structure that bore the weight of conflict and it was based on Quaker principles.

This topic has room for further research. The primary resources this work is based on were limited by temporal and geographic considerations. Swarthmore College and University of
Colorado at Boulder both hold archival collections much bigger than the ones I worked with. Boulder has full records of correspondence from important figures like Mildred Scott Olmsted and Emily Greene Balch. Their correspondence could hold additional evidence about the relationship between WILPF and Quakerism. This topic is also limited to an American perspective and a Liberal Quaker perspective. Quakerism originated in Britain and a thriving community of activism has always lived there. Exploring the relationship between British Quakers and their section of WILPF offers a way to expand my research. The importance of my argument is that Quaker history can and should be extended past its known boundaries because Quaker is there sitting quietly in the corner waiting to be called on.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


