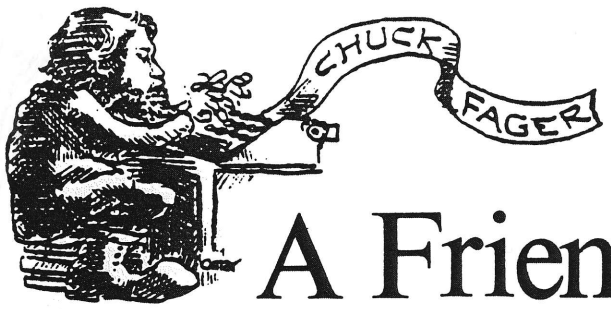

AVE ATQUA VALE, ALMA MATER: This month marks the end of the road for Friends World College, as it merges with Long Island University. Once a pioneering educational experiment and the gateway to Quakerism for many, even the likes of me, its passing closes a unique chapter in Friendly educational experimentation.

A Friendly Letter

ISSUE NUMBER 122 ISSN #0739-5418 SIXTH MONTH, 1991

Dear Friend,

This month brings an annual highlight of American Quakerism: The Gathering of Friends General Conference, again at Boone, North Carolina and Appalachian State University. FGC sources say registration was closed out a few weeks ago at 1900-plus, a capacity crowd.

This year's speakers lineup is strong, with the keynote address to be shared by Asia Bennett of the American Friends Service Committee, and Scott Simon of National Public Radio. Simon may be the closest thing to a national celebrity among living American Friends. The profile of him and his notable reporting career, in AFL #62, was picked up by several larger publications. And my informal surveys among FGC-related Friends disclose a near-universal loyalty to public broadcasting, such that we could as truly be called "NPR Quakers" as Hicksites or liberals.

Thus, Simon's Boone appearance should be a star turn, a tribute to the achievements of one of our own. At the same time, given our strong attachment both to his work and to NPR, it will also be a good time for questioning, for holding him and NPR accountable.

In 1991, there is much for the American news media to account for. Months after the senseless, massive destruction of Desert Storm, its civilian casualty toll is still unknown; but high on the wounded list must be the First Amendment, disabled by the most complete wartime censorship and official manipulation in our history. Even more damaging, in my view, was the craven submission to emasculation by media great and small.

Regrettably, National Public Radio was among those which knuckled--and more regrettably, Scott Simon was NPR's most prominent staffer to accept the muzzle: He joined a captive Gulf press pool that went only where the army took it, talked only to pre-selected, gung-ho GIs, and reported only what the army pre-approved and censored. No wonder his dispatches from the"front" sounded insipid and flat, far below his normal quality; but what else could they be? The pools were "a defining moment" of disgrace to a free professional press.

So after his talk, Simon deserves an ovation for his earlier fine work; but then there should be some searching questions as well. Above all: ***Why?*** Why did he allow his reputation to be defiled by submission to censorship? Why, for that matter, did NPR go along with the program? Was it simply to play in the media's big leagues? Why were NPR's protests so feebly *pro forma?*

And what about covering this bloody government's next war? By now the military has its press control formula down pat; but do NPR and Scott Simon yet have any contingency plans for resisting or evading censorship next time? Or will they again, God forbid, follow the pack, and obediently report what they are told?

The Gulf War press debacle is so serious that one hesitates to turn to lesser matters. But there are more questions to ask Scott Simon, about his other work, above all his respected Weekend Edition program. Among them are: Why does it offer such a narrow band of expertise and perspective? Why, especially, so few of the prophetic religious voices of social criticism and protest? These, more than traditional liberals or leftists, are now the bulwark of opposition to oppression and militarism. Simon has interviewed a few of them; but too often his show's "analysis" simply rehashes the latest tweedledee- and -dum bromides of rightish Washington think-tankers. That's not good enough, Scott; we need you to do better.

And why, indeed, is there such sparse coverage of religious issues generally on NPR? Is it more keeping up with the mostly secularist Joneses of the big media? For that matter, how come, in all the years of listening, have I never heard Simon come out as a Quaker on the air? He talks endlessly of his earlier days in Chicago; why then, amid all the other self-disclosure, is this the affiliation that dare not speak its name?

Any of these items would make for a probing and memorable discussion. All the more reason to think FGC's Gathering will again be a high point of Quaker Americana this summer. I hope to meet thee there.

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

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FILMING THE REPUTATION OF TRUTH: QUAKERS IN THE MOVIES

It is easy to get entirely too highfalutin about the cultural significance of movies. Here, after all, is one consumer business among others, relentlessly probing and pandering to the popular moods and images of the moment, perhaps illuminating them, but perhaps merely exploiting them. Does it really, for instance, signify anything more profound than a youthful appreciation for whimsy that the top cinematic heroes of American children in 1991 are turtles, rather than, say, iguanas? I'm dubious.

On the other hand, the persistence of certain images and themes in many successful films, as well as the occasional success of movies with countering images, might be able to tell us something about the culture which produces them, as well as the place of these films' persisting elements in the culture.

THE HERO AND THE CANON

In this hermeneutic effort, the weight of mythic meaning has been loaded particularly heavily onto that indigenous American film genre, the western. At least, the Western is a favorite with male critics. Bosley Crowther, formerly film critic for the **New York Times,** pointed out in **The Great Films** that Westerns above all are about a hero *"...this man with the gun and the impulse to use it rightly is the crux of the genre. Set against some form of evil, he is the central figure in the vast mythology built up and perpetuated in almost all western films. And it is a mythology, as powerful and indigenous as that which the Greeks clarified in dramatic poetry 2500 years ago."*

Maybe so; we shall see. And we'll examine this heroic notion by means of a consideration of Quakers in the movies, beginning with one of the most revered of all Westerns, **High Noon.**

Starring Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly, **High Noon** has attained an almost legendary status in the American cinema. An unexpected hit in 1952, it raked in four Academy Awards and loads of critical acclaim; and ever since, as Larry Swindell notes in his biography of Gary Cooper, **The Last Hero,** *"its reputation has followed a similar curve...and is building still."* Last year, in fact, **High Noon** was granted something like canonical status, when the Library of Congress included it among the first twenty-five films to be officially designated as national landmarks, or some such thing.

Why all the fanfare? Besides the undeniable facts that it is well made, and Cooper is in top form as Will Kane, the retiring marshal of Hadleyville, film pundits have found in **High Noon** all sorts of American archetypes: above all, Cooper, the world-weary, solitary hero who stands up to the bad guys when no one else in Hadleyville will--when all the locals chicken out, and even his new young wife, Amy(Kelly), threatens to leave him over it.

SEEKING A QUAKER HEROINE

It is with Amy that Friends come into this perhaps seminal American myth-drama, because the fresh-faced Amy is a Quaker. Moreover, she is a Quaker who is determined, in the beginning, to stick to her pacifist principles even at the cost of her marriage. But Kelly eventually, you should pardon the expression, sees the light, in a confrontation with the worldly, foreign Helen Ramirez, a former lover of both the marshal and one of the outlaws, who tells her that it is her duty to stand by her man.

Thus persuaded, Kelly proves her born-again priorities by picking up a pistol and shooting one of the outlaws in the back; so much for Quakerism. When the requisite bloodshed is all over, she rides off with Cooper in a wagon for their only slightly delayed honeymoon--but not before he, in a gesture controversial among many viewers, contemptuously throws his marshal's badge into the dirt of Hadleyville's main street.

Undeniably, many still find this tableau inspiring. Donald Spoto, in his biography of the film's director, Stanley Kramer, says "**High Noon** *has lost little of its power to intrigue the viewer, to suggest directly the spiritual issues which in fact the Western genre has always had at its root...: Love, implies the script, does not in fact conquer all."* Or, as he also puts it, *"The issue is...no citizen is worthy of liberty who is not willing to fight to preserve it."*

But with this comment we can also bring into focus two--no, three --Quakerly quarrels with this film, among which the straw-woman treatment of the Peace Testimony only merits second place. First up should be unease at the depiction of femininity, particularly Quaker femininity. That's because as portrayed in High Noon, Amy the Quaker is a first-class, simpering dweeb, about the sorriest, phoniest caricature of a Friend I ever hope to see. A feminist film scholar, Joan Mellen, whose book **Big Bad Wolves,** tracks and analyzes male values and images in American films, describes Amy with accurate scorn as *"passive and cloying," "a weak and stupid woman...prissy, colorless Grace Kelly, the 'good' woman, unassertive and slightly cowardly."*

BUT THEY MEANT US NO HARM

Is this too harsh? I think not. Even Kelly, then a rookie actress, was embarrassed by her performance. As Mellen points out, *"She is the kind of woman* **High Noon** *proposes to the masculine male, for she has no connection to the outside world other than through her man."* Such *"retrograde images of women"* were, Mellen asserts, standard filmic fare in the fifties; and as one who grew up watching such movies, I think she's right. This is not a model Margaret Fell would have recognized; the film does not deal fairly with Amy as a Quaker or a woman.

Then there is the matter of nonviolence. Amy's Quakerism is patently no more than one more cardboard construction in the film's conceptual scenery; there is little serious exposition of it, and about the most profound argument she makes for it to Will is that of denial: *"It's no concern of yours."*

Finally, the film's cavalier, uninformed treatment of Quakerism is all too typical of the ahistorical character of Western films generally. But as James Folsom said in the book **Focus on the Western,** *"...Western history is notable in Westerns primarily because of its absence...."* The elements of the hero defending threatened values against evil with violence serve as convenient carriers for many other sorts of messages. Certainly in **High Noon** the writers and directors are ignorant of Quakerism, and blatantly unfair in their depiction of its convictions. But clearly too, they mean Quakerism *per se* no harm; it is but a rhetorical device in their script. In that case, what other message can it be carrying?

Many critics manage to see in **High Noon** a veiled protest against the cowardly way in which so much of the American establishment was caving in to the hysteria and witchhunts of McCarthyism, then at their peak. This notion seems to be corroborated by the fact that scriptwriter Carl Foreman had been blacklisted for declining to cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee.

GEORGE BUSH AS GARY COOPER?

But As Mellen puts it, if so *"defeat is inherent in its plot."* It sneers at democracy: all the ordinary citizens of Hadleyville are cringing weaklings; only the superman--and who among us is like him?--can overcome the forces of evil, and he must use the tools of evil to do it. In the end, Mellen aptly says, *"personal violence is the only means by which a man can protect what is valuable to him....We are told, unequivocally, that the real man is the one who fights."* She also points out that Cooper arrogates to himself the authority to decide when and how to accord the arriving outlaws any civil rights; such is the privilege of the Western Hero.

Mellen sees in **High Noon** a chilling "crypto-fascist" outlook that emerged more starkly, and with wild success, in the non-western revenge films of the seventies and eighties(and now nineties...) typified by Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry series. She notes a telling, probably intentional parallel, in which Harry, at the conclusion of one of his ultra-violent "thrillers", also tosses away his inspector's badge, into a quarry.

The continuing real-life power of this archetypal American scenario was shown with spectacular success only months ago, in the Gulf War. With almost cinematic skill, and aided by consummate media professionals, George Bush painted the U.S. as the reluctant marshal rallying a disorganized and previously spineless group of Hadleyville-ish governments into a posse that set out to stop the incarnation of pure evil, using violence to tame the wild(Middle Eastern) frontier, to bring it law and (new world)order. Along the way he had to overcome the doubters in his own camp, but that too was easily done: the Democrats were successfully painted as cowards and the peaceniks, like Amy the Quaker, as fools.

REAGAN'S RARE CLEARER VISION

To be sure, the movie did not fade out quite on schedule after the carefully-scripted denouement of the shootout in the Kuwait Corral, and the extemporaneous, bloodier aftermath has had a distinctly un-Western character. Still, the capacity of American media and their consumers to ignore and soon forget data that does not fit such well-worn scripts can hardly be overestimated. In a way, the U.S. marshal is once again tossing his badge in the sand and leaving town.

So perhaps **High Noon** deserves its place in the American filmic pantheon, as a parable of the nineties as much as of the fifties. Certainly it is a landmark in the (mis)treatment of Quakerism for a popular audience. Indeed, by itself it would be enough to make a serious Friend turn Wilburite and swear off (I mean, *affirm* off) movies for good.

But that would be a mistake, not least because then you'd miss out on one of the great ironic twists of cinema history, namely that only four years later, the same Gary Cooper starred in **Friendly Persuasion,** which is undoubtedly the best, fairest depiction of Quakerism on celluloid. But the ironic parallels don't stop there: **Friendly Persuasion** too was both a box office and a critical success; its screenplay was likewise written by a victim of McCarthyism, in this case Michael Wilson, who was not given a screenwriter's credit. And not least, if **High Noon** was the filmic apotheosis of the haunted Fifties, could **Friendly Persuasion** have been a turning point of the crazy eighties? After all, Ronald Reagan gave a copy to Mikhail Gorbachev at the summit which marked the end of the Cold War, along with a speech praising it as the emblem of the search for an alternative to war. And we know how the former president got most of his ideas, and half his facts, from watching movies.

UN-FRIENDLY PERSUASION

Still, **Friendly Persuasion** has its critics, including some Friends. For instance, Thomas Radecki, of Urbana-Champaign Meeting in Illinois, condemned it in a lengthy review in Friends Journal(4/1989) entitled *"Film's Message Esteems Violence."* As far as Radecki is concerned, almost everything about **Friendly Persuasion** is wrong: *"Quakers are portrayed as opposing going to war but are not shown as doing anything active...to nonviolently work against the war. They are accused of letting others do the fighting for them. The values of the Quaker minister are repeatedly mocked. Her younger son participates in gambling...her daughter falls in love with a dashing Union lieutenant...[and] goes dancing with him...[her] husband brings an organ into the house....Later, in the critical part of the film, every Quaker man eventually picks up his gun to fight the rebels....At one point, [the mother] becomes angry and...strikes a rebel soldier to keep him from killing a pet goose...at no time did the Quaker minister witness for peace."*

There's more, but you get the idea. Radecki grudgingly admits that *"the film does have some redeeming qualities, but I rate the movie as at least somewhat harmful due to its message that violence is the only way to successfully resist violence. I wish I could say better."*

If he can't say better, however, I can: Such complaints notwithstanding,

Friendly Persuasion seems to me to come about as close to truth and fairness as I expect to see Hollywood get in a treatment of Quakerism; I recommend it to every Quaker parent, as projecting images their children ought to see and imitate. While all that Radecki mentions is, in the narrowest sense, accurate, I believe he has woefully misjudged the film, on several counts: its place in American cinema, the characters and their roles, its historicity, and, not least, its value as an expression of the Peace Testimony. Here, for perhaps the only time, I think Ronald Reagan was closer to the truth when he commended the film to Gorbachev because it *"shows not the tragedy of war, but the problems of pacifism, the nobility of patriotism as well as the love of peace."*

Why such praise? The discussion of **High Noon** points to the first consideration: the film's challenge to its cultural context, as indicated by its stars. Another of Gary Cooper's biographers, Stuart Kaminsky, put it this way: *"Instead of his usual man of action, a man who settles things with his gun and fists when he is pushed to the wall, Cooper is here a man who rejects everything his earlier characters had stood for."* The significance of Gary Cooper as Quaker Jess Birdwell is underscored when we consider that the role was originally planned for crooner Bing Crosby(!?).

ELIZA VS. AMY--NO CONTEST

Perhaps even more important was Dorothy McGuire's performance as Eliza, which earned her the Best Actress award from the National Board of Review for the *"spare yet appealing integrity"* of the role. Here is a woman who is a leader in her community, as her husband is not--she is the one who rebukes the Union commander when he enters their meetinghouse looking for recruits. She is competent and respected in her household, challenging her husband and even, however briefly, leaving him when he waffles under her eldering over the unorthodox organ. (There is, in the resolution of this contretemps, a demure hint of her as a sexual person too.) And, let us not forget, she is brave enough to face a band of rebel marauders alone and unarmed, and treat them, despite her fears, for the most part peaceably.

In short, she is just about everything as a woman, never mind a Quaker woman, that Grace Kelly in **High Noon** was not. And all this in a major, successful Hollywood film of the mid-1950s! Not only was such a female character a countercultural figure then; they are rare enough in even the better films of the nineties, for pete's sake.

But what, Friend Radecki might object, about the once-militant pacifist Quaker elder who turns gun-toting firebrand when his barn is burned down? What about the Birdwells' son Josh, who finally joins the battle against the rebel invaders to find out if he is truly a pacifist or only a coward? What about Eliza's assault with a broom to save her endangered goose? Are not these all mockeries of Quaker pacifism?

FAILINGS ARE NOT FAILURE

Not as I saw them. Rather, they simply showed these Friends as less than perfect, as people holding sincere beliefs who are not always able to live up to them completely. And contrary to the cavils of thin-skinned Friendly critics, this is not mockery; it is humanity. It makes not only for a much better drama, but also for a very sympathetic sketch of Quakerism.

In fact, only the apostate elder, whose pacifism proves to be merely barn-deep, is shown to be worthy of scorn: the Birdwells' son turns away from his gun after the battle; he has found his peace witness--at a price, but found it nonetheless. His father almost shoots the rebel who wounded him but then does not; and the wife is ashamed of herself for the broom attack. True, none of them breaks into a homily on the practicality of nonviolence; that is left to the Methodist preacher who, stops by with his gun, and laments his and society's inability to find a more peaceful way, but praises the Friends for trying, however falteringly.

But why did they have to be shown to be so flawed in other ways? Why the organ, the dancing, the romance with a soldier, the fear of being called cowards, and more? Is this not more mockery? They should have been more homiletically peaceful, some may say. They should have been more thoroughly plain; they should have been more, well, ***Quakerly.*** But it is here that what seems like the film's deepest flaw is in fact one of its greatest virtues; because, verily, dear Friends, that's the way it really was among Indiana Quakers in those years.

Make some allowance for the Hollywood treatment, but Jessamyn West's stories on which the film was based were not inventions. Rather, she re-created a real Quaker girlhood as recalled for her by the grandmother who had lived it. (Look up her poignant memoir, **The Woman Said Yes,** for the details.) And in those years, Indiana Friends did indeed join the Union army in great numbers; they did turn to music in their homes and in their worship; their separatist way of life was in fact fast dissolving.

THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIANA

Perhaps this was a great loss, a default on their Quakerism (though Friends in Western and Indiana Yearly Meetings will give you an argument about that). But in any case, it happened just about that way. (Read Thomas Hamm's fine study, **The Transformation of American Quakerism,** for a scholarly account.) And is it not unseemly for members of a body of truth-seekers and speakers to be trashing **Friendly Persuasion** for just those features of its story which are, for better and for worse, the closest to the actual historical truth about us?

If that's not enough for you, think of it this way: Which movie would you rather have had Gorbachev and the Politburo settling back to watch after the Reagan summit, their feet up and the vodka handy, reading between the subtitles for cinematic clues to the future contours of US-Soviet relations (with, in the bargain, a sketch of that quaint sect of Quakers)?

Take your pick: **Friendly Persuasion,** and the less than perfect Quaker Birdwells; or Grace "killer" Kelly and the apocalyptic machismo of **High Noon.**

I don't find the choice hard at all.

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. . . Great-aunt Felicity paused for a moment while she counted some stitches. Then she added, "thee knows, I'm told that old Plain Peter is still around the Stillwater Meeting House. His ghost that is."

"Really?" said Wilbur John. He hadn't heard about this before.

"Yes," she said, her knitting needles moving again, "I'm sure of it. He's been seen sitting on those facing benches, eyes glowing under that old black hat of his. And a number of young Friends who had gone out into worldly diversions have found him waiting for them when they went to the meetinghouse of a lonely evening. He had seen what they had done, and he stood up and shouted at them, **'For shame, for shame! Be plain, be plain!'** *He ran them right out of there, too, scared out of their wits, as I'm sure thee can imagine."*

"Yes," said Wilbur John, "I can imagine."

And he could. The Stillwater meetinghouse was friendly enough in the daytime, but at night it would be an ideal spot for ghosts, with its long old benches and the high balcony, and one side of it, where the women used to sit, not used anymore and all covered with dust. It made him a little nervous to picture it.

"Now don't think I'm just trying to frighten thee," great-aunt Felicity said. "It's better to be plain out of conviction than from fear. But I know what I have heard."

When Wilbur John left the house that afternoon, he was . . . .

To find out what happened when young Wilbur John Stratton went looking for the Quaker ghost in the Stillwater Meetinghouse, send for your copy of *Old Plain Peter, the Ghost of Elders Past*. Copies are $5.00 postpaid. And look for news of more in a series of spine-tingling, heart-tugging Quaker ghost stories in future issues of *A Friendly Letter*.

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FRIENDS ON FILM: A GUIDE

Compiled by Dennis Maulsby

(Ed. Note: Movie buff Maulsby is a member and clerk of Penn Valley Meeting in Kansas City and a bank vice president. He found most of the movies described here via late-night TV and VCR, and is seeking out more. If you know of other films with Quaker content, please let us know, via this Letter.)

(A Further Note about Availability: Movies, like books, go in and out of print. Many of these films are on video, but finding some of them can be difficult; try your library for video directories, and/or a video wholesaler.)

Murphy's War, 1971, starring Peter O'Toole & Sian Phillips. Murphy is a British sailor, who is rescued from the sea after his warship has been sunk by a German submarine in the last days of World War II. The action takes place off the East coast of South America near a small primitive Indian village. Sian Phillips plays a female Quaker doctor assigned to the village by a Friends' relief organization.

A group of Germans is hiding out upriver from the village, waiting out the war. Murphy attempts to destroy them for killing his lost ship's sole remaining officer. His simple desire for survival gradually becomes a mania for revenge, in spite of the doctor's efforts. In fact, Murphy remains confused to the end about the doctor's Quaker beliefs. She in turn is unable to prevent his destruction.

The Deep Six, 1958, with Alan Ladd and William Bendix, is another variation of the Quakers-at-war motif. Ladd is a rising artist whose career and budding romance are interrupted by the Korean War. Although descended from a long line of Quakers, Ladd ends up a navy officer after ROTC in college. His early pacifist beliefs are thoroughly tested by active duty. You guess which option ...violence or non...he finally chooses.

Cheyenne Autumn, 1964, features Richard Widmark and Carroll Baker. Baker is a beautiful Quaker schoolteacher assigned to a Sioux reservation in the desert southwest. In desperate shape, thousands of miles from their home in the Black Hills, the Sioux appeal to Congress and the president in vain. Then they attempt a return to their homelands.
Most of the film deals with the Sioux's attempts to avoid capture. Naturally the Quaker teacher goes with the Indians, while her suitor, Cavalry Captain Widmark, leads the pursuit.

Bedlam, 1945, starring Boris Karloff, pits Quakers against his special brand of evil. The movie's unusual setting highlights the early Friends' mental hospital reform work. Karloff is cast as a corrupt and venal manager of a British insane asylum. A handsome Quaker stonemason and a convinced female Friend, played by Anna Lee, take on the villain. Lee, having been wrongfully committed due to Karloff's machinations, works from within, while the stonemason rallies outside support, and Karloff is eventually defeated.

The movie cast historical British mental hospitals in such a poor light that it was banned in Britain.

Angel and the Badman, 1947, with John Wayne, Gail Russell and Harry Carey. This boilerplate western is a precursor of High Noon, which lacks all the distinction of the latter, but retains some homely virtues of its own.

The plot features Wayne as a onetime good guy, Quirt Evans, gone bad. After collapsing on the doorstep of a Quaker family, he is nursed back to health by Friend Penelope, Gail Russell. Russell, while no Eliza Birdwell, is more appealing than Grace Kelly's Amy Kane, and prettier too.

Once indoctrinated with the Quaker lifestyle and emotionally bonded to the Quaker maid, Wayne's good side re-emerges. But of course there are bad guys with guns yet to be faced, and the question of violence to be confronted.

This time, luckily, Friend Penelope doesn't end up a killer, though Harry Carey as the sheriff fuzzes the issues by coming through as the *deus ex machina* at the last moment. But at fadeout Wayne, yes the Duke himself, is declaring he'll spend the rest of his life behind a plow rather than a gun.

The July Group, 1985, was filmed on a shoestring in Canada with a cast of unknowns, but it is one of the best of this bunch, perhaps because it, like ***Friendly Persuasion,*** was based on a novel by a serious, creative Quaker. In the late Stanley Ellin's novel, ***Stronghold,*** (discussed in AFL#3) a small-town Quaker banker's family is taken hostage by a band of cutthroats who want a couple million bucks and a helicopter. The family, supported by their small meeting, decides to try nonviolent resistance to the plot.

Here is a story that even Thomas Radecki should find acceptable. With little sermonizing, and amid much realistic fear and trembling, this small band of Quakers takes on hard-core violence head-on, in their own peaceable but determined way. Violence is not entirely avoided (the genre does have its demands), but...see it and judge for yourself. This film is hard to find, alas, but worth the search.

The Courageous Mr. Penn, 1941, with Clifford Evans and Deborah Kerr. A British biography of the founder of Pennsylvania, which vividly portrays the persecution he faced, including his historic role in inspiring a jury to defy judicial bullying and establish their right to their own verdict, a keystone of our justice system. While building his pioneering colony against great odds, the film's Penn also romances the aristocratic Kerr, who converts to Quakerism and marries him. A fine historical drama.

Down To The Sea In Ships, 1922, with Raymond McKee and Clara Bow. This film highlights the once-great Quaker whaling community of New Bedford, Massachusetts, with sequences showing Friends at worship and doing business, in authentic plain dress in an authentic old meetinghouse. Mainly, though, it is a silent sea spectacle, with stowaways, lovers pursued by a villain, and an appropriate piano score.

Raid on Rommel, a 1971 Richard Burton vehicle about a commando raid on Nazi oil supplies in North Africa, gives Friends at least an honorable mention. The raiders' medic is a British Friend who ably voices the Quaker peace testimony. He is also the focus of the film's comic relief, when he is assigned to guard the captured nymphomaniac mistress of an Italian general.

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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

John Woolman was a devout Christian. But his was a distinctively Quaker Christianity, universalist and mystical. The uniqueness of his faith was shown concretely when he visited a band of Delaware Indians in north central Pennsylvania in Sixth Month, 1763. This trip, like all his journeys, was prompted by leadings which he tested with his monthly meeting. Describing these, he used one of his most remembered phrases: ***"Love was the first motion."*** The trip was dangerous: There was warfare on the frontier, with natives attacking whites, whites attacking natives, and various tribes attacking each other. But the trip's most remarkable encounter was not with the Delawares or their chief Papunhank, but with a Moravian Brethren missionary, David Zeisberger, who arrived at the Indians' camp about the same time.

Like Woolman, Zeisberger kept a diary, in German. As translated by Quaker scholar Ralph Pickett, it shows that Zeisberger was a classic Christian missionary, sent to make converts of these Delawares, who had expressed interest in Christianity. Zeisberger and Woolman debated what conversion and Christianity should mean for Papunhank's people. *"The Quakers told* [the Indians]," Zeisberger wrote, *"...the religion meant nothing; it would not improve them, for there were people among all religions who sought and loved God; they should heed the work of the good spirit and strive accordingly."* But Zeisberger was not deterred. Nor, for that matter, were the Delawares. Quaker universalism was not for them: *"Papunhank said to them that God had now sent the* [Moravian] *brethren to them,* [and] *they...wanted to stay with them."* More than theology was involved here: Woolman was welcomed as a pilgrim, but Zeisberger had been sent by the Moravian church; and the Delawares were hoping to gain, along with a religion, protection from enemy tribes and anti-Indian whites. Who could blame them?

Woolman omitted the debate from his ***Journal.*** He did note that he asked not to be interpreted when he preached in the Indians' meetings, so human language would not get in the way of the spirit. It was after such a message that Papunhank spoke another of the ***Journal's*** more memorable lines: ***"I love to feel where words come from."*** Thereafter, Woolman wrote, *"feeling my mind to be at liberty to return..."* he headed home.

The Moravians did what they could for their Delaware converts, as also did the Friends, but in time they were relentlessly uprooted by white settlers.

QUAKER CHUCKLE (?)

From our ***"I Kid Thee Not"*** bureau, via Friend Marietta Forlaw, comes a clipping from the Greensboro New & Record of last Fourth Month. It seems the High Point, North Carolina city padres are out to close a topless bar, and a reporter, hot on the story, interviewed one of its performers, code-named "Angel," between, um, sets.

"I'm putting myself through...College doing this," she told him, adding that many of her regular customers were respectable professional men. *"We dancers are good people,"* she said; most are married or, like her, engaged.

Furthermore, she declared, *"I'm a Quaker. I don't smoke, drink alcohol or do drugs. That's why they call me Angel."* In typically Quakeish fashion, she finished up by baring a bleeding heart: *"I think instead of putting their energy into closing us down, people need to worry about the homeless, hunger and drug and alcohol abuse."*

Presumably the shirtless can take care of themselves.