

## FRIEND STEPHEN GRELLET



"I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again."

"If I can anyway contribute to the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, with the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain."

"I was suddenly arrested by what seemed to be an awful voice proclaiming the words, 'Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!' It reached my very soul— my whole man shook— it brought me like Saul to the ground. The great depravity and sinfulness of my heart were set before me, and the gulf of everlasting destruction to which I was verging. I was made to bitterly cry out, 'If there is no God— doubtless there is a hell.' I found myself in the midst of it."

1773

November 2: [Stephen Grellet](#) was born as Etienne de Grellet du Mabilier in Limoges. His father was a counsellor to King Louis XVI. Stephen would be raised Roman Catholic and educated at the military College of Lyons but would transform himself, after the French Revolution, into a [Quaker](#).

In Lincoln in the Massachusetts Bay Colony the first Committee of Correspondence consisted of Deacon Samuel Farrar, Captain Eleazer Brooks, and Captain Abijah Pierce.

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1790

At the age of 17, [Stephen Grellet](#) entered the body-guard of Louis XVI. During the French Revolution he would narrowly escape beheading. (He is reputed to have been the last person to be aware of the identity of the “Lost Dauphin” of France, the heir apparent to the throne of France under the Valois and Bourbon dynasties, the person who might, under different circumstances, have become King Louis XVII. The idea was that these people in the know would be able to identify this individual to the nation, if and when occasion ever arose — and of course, as we know from reading our official history texts, occasion would not ever arise.)



1795

[Stephen Grellet](#) made his way from Europe to the United States.



1796

Impressed by the writings of Friends Penn and Fox, [Stephen Grellet](#) joined the Religious Society of Friends. He would involve himself in [Quaker](#) missionary work across North America and most of the countries of Europe, and would obtain hearings with many rulers and dignitaries, including Pope Pius VII, Czar Alexander I, and the Kings of Spain and Prussia. He would become an advocate of improvement of conditions in prisons and hospitals.



## HOW A FRENCH NOBLE BECAME A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

*Sentences from 'No Cross, No Crown,' by WILLIAM PENN.*

*'Come, Reader, hearken to me awhile; I seek thy salvation; that is my plot; thou wilt forgive me.'*

*'Thou, like the inn of old, hast been full of guests; thy affections have entertained other lovers; there has been no room for thy Saviour in thy soul ... but his love is after thee still, & his holy invitation continues to save thee.'*

*'Receive his leaven, & it will change thee; his medicine and it will cure thee; he is as infallible as free; without money and with certainty.... Yield up the body, soul & spirit to Him that maketh all things new: new heavens & new earth, new love, new joy, new peace, new works, a new life & conversation....'*

*'The inward, steady righteousness of Jesus is another thing than all the contrived devotion of poor superstitious man.... True worship is an inward work; the soul must be touched and raised in its heavenly desires by the heavenly Spirit.... So that souls of true worshippers see God: and this they wait, they pant, they thirst for.'*

*'Worship is the supreme act of man's life.'*

Now we come to a Saint who had a life so full of adventures that a book twice as big as this one would be needed to contain the stories that might be told about him alone.

Unlike any of the other 'Quaker Saints' in this book, he was by birth a Frenchman and came of noble family. His name was Etienne de Grellet. He was born nearly a century after the death of George Fox; but he probably did not know that such a person had ever existed, never even heard Fox's name, until long after he was grown up. If Etienne de Grellet, the gay young nobleman of the French court, had been told that his story would ever be written in a book of 'Quaker Saints' he would, most likely, have raised his dark eyebrows and have looked extremely surprised.

'Quakère? Qu'est-ce que c'est alors, Quakère? Quel drôle de mot! Je ne suis pas Quakère, moi!' he might have answered, with a disdainful shrug of his high, narrow, aristocratic French shoulders. Yet here he is after all!

Etienne de Grellet was born at Limoges in France, in the year 1773. His childhood was passed in the stormy years when the cloud was gathering that was to burst a little later in the full fury of the French Revolution. His father, Gabriel de Grellet, a wealthy merchant of Limoges, was a great friend and counsellor of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. As a reward for having introduced into the country the manufacture of finer porcelain than had ever before been made in France he was ennobled by the king, whom he often used to attend in his private chapel. Limoges china is still celebrated all over the world; and at that time the most celebrated of its china-makers was M. de Grellet, the king's friend.

Naturally the sons of this successful merchant and nobleman were

1. Hodgkin, Lucy Violet. A BOOK OF QUAKER SAINTS. Illustrated by F. Cayley-Robinson. 1917. Variousy reprinted.

brought up in great luxury. Etienne and his brothers were not sent to a school, but had expensive tutors to teach them at home. Their parents wanted their children to be well educated, honourable, straightforward, generous, and kind; to possess not only accomplishments but good qualities. Yet Etienne felt, when he looked back in later days, that something had been left out in their education that was, perhaps, the most important thing of all.

When he was quite a little boy he was taken to visit one of his aunts who was a nun in a convent near Limoges. The rules of this convent were so strict that the nuns might not even see their relations who came to visit them. They might only speak to them from the other side of two iron gratings, between the bars of which a thick curtain was hung. The little boy thought it very strange to be taken from his beautiful home, full of costly furniture, pictures, and hangings, and to be brought into the bare convent cell. Then he looked up and saw an iron grating, and heard a voice coming through the folds of a thick curtain that hung behind it. He could hear the voice, but he might never see the face of the aunt who spoke to him. At night at home, as he lay in his comfortable bed, he used to think of his aunt and the other nuns 'rising three times in the night for prayer in the church, from the hard boards which formed their couch, even the luxury of a straw pallet being denied them.' 'Which is the real life,' he used to ask himself, 'the easy comfortable life that goes on round me every day, or that other, difficult life hidden behind the folds of the thick curtain?'

Child though he was, Etienne felt that his aunt loved him, although he had never seen her. This helped him to feel that, although unseen, God was loving him too. As he grew older he wondered: 'Perhaps everything we see here is like the bars of a grating, or a thick curtain. Perhaps there is some one on the other side who is speaking to us too.'

Etienne was only about five or six years old when he made the great discovery that GOD IS THERE, hidden behind the screen of visible things all round us. After this, he longed to be able to speak to God and to listen to God's voice, as he was able to listen to his unseen aunt's voice speaking to him from behind the curtain in the convent.

No one ever taught him to pray; but presently he discovered that too for himself. One day, when he was only six years old, his tutor gave him a Latin lesson to learn that was much too difficult for him. Etienne took the book up to his bedroom, and there, all alone, he read it over and over and did his very best to learn it. But the unfamiliar Latin words would not stay in his memory. At last he closed the book in despair and went to his bedroom window and looked out. He gazed over the high roofs of the city, away over the wide plain in which Limoges lay, to the distant mountain, blue against the sky. Everything looked fair and peaceful. As he gazed, the thought came to him, 'God made the plain and the river and the mountains. God made this whole beautiful world in which I live. If God can create all these things, surely He can give me memory also.' He knelt down at the foot of his bed and prayed, for the first time in his life, that his Unseen Friend would help him to master the difficult lesson. Taking up the book again, he read the hard Latin words once more, very attentively. This time the words stayed in his memory and did not fade away. Often afterwards, he found that if he prayed all his lessons became easier. He

could not, of course, learn them without effort, but after he had really prayed earnestly, he found he could remember things better. Then one day he learned the Lord's prayer. Long years after, when he was an old man, he could still recall the exact spot in his beautiful home where, as a little boy, he had first learned to say, 'Our Father.' Etienne and his family belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. On Sundays they went to the great cathedral of Limoges; but the service there always seemed strange and far away to Etienne.<sup>2</sup> The music, the chanting, the Latin words that were said and sung by bishops and priests in their gorgeous robes, did not seem to him to have anything to do with the quiet Voice that spoke to the boy in the silence of his own heart.

When Etienne and his brothers were old enough they were sent to several different colleges and schools. Their last place of instruction was the celebrated College of the Oratorians at Lyons. Among other things, the students of this College were taught to move so quietly that fifty or a hundred boys went up or down the stone steps of the College all together, without their feet making the least noise.

Etienne tells us in his diary: 'as we were educated by Roman Catholics and in their principles we were required to confess once a month,' that is, to tell a priest whatever they had done that was wrong, and receive the assurance of God's forgiveness from him.

The priest to whom Etienne regularly made his confession was 'a pious, conscientious man,' who treated him with fatherly care. When the boy told him of his puzzles, and asked how it could be necessary to confess to any man, since God alone could forgive sins, he received a kind, helpful answer. 'Yet,' he says, 'my reasoning faculties brought me to the root of the matter; from created objects to the Creator—from time to eternity.' After he was confirmed at College he hoped that his heart would be changed and made different; but he found that he was still much the same as before. Before leaving the College he and the other students who were also departing received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Mass. This was to Etienne a very solemn time. But, he says, as soon as he was out in the world again, the remembrance of it faded away. He settled that he had no use for religion in his life, and determined to live for pleasure and happiness alone. 'I sought after happiness,' his diary says, 'in the world's delights. I went in pursuit of it from one party of pleasure to another; but I did not find it, and I wondered that the name of pleasure could be given to anything of that kind.' In his dissipated life after leaving College, he gave up saying his prayers, and gradually he lost his belief that GOD WAS THERE. He read unbelieving books, which said that God did not exist, and that the Unseen world was only a delusion and a dream. For a time Etienne gave himself up to doubt and denial as well as to dissipation. He was in this restless state when the French Revolution broke out and caught him, like a butterfly in a thunderstorm. New questions surged over him. 'If there is a God after all, why should He allow these horrors to happen?' But no answer came. Or perhaps he had forgotten how to listen.

'Towards the close of 1791,' he writes, 'I left my dear Father's house, and bade him, as it proved, a lasting farewell, having never seen him since.' At this time, Etienne accompanied his

2. 'From my earliest days,' he writes, 'there was that in me that would not allow me implicitly to believe the various doctrines I was taught.'

brothers and many other nobles into Germany, to join the French Princes who were endeavouring to bring about a counter-revolution and restore the king, Louis XVI.

On this dangerous journey the young men met with many narrow escapes. Courage came naturally to Etienne. 'I was not the least moved,' he writes in his diary, 'when surrounded by people and soldiers, who lavished their abuses upon us, and threatened to hang me to the lamp-post. I coolly stood by, my hands in my pockets, being provided with three pairs of pistols, two of which were double-barrelled. I concluded to wait to see what they would do, and resolved, after destroying as many of them as I could, to take my own life with the last.'

Happily the necessity for extreme courses did not arise. He was, he says, 'mercifully preserved,' and no violent hands were laid upon him, though he and his companions suffered a short detention, after which they succeeded in safely joining the French Princes and their adherents at the city of Coblenz on the Rhine. Here Etienne spent the following winter and spring surrounded, he tells us, by many temptations.

'I was fond of solitude,' continues the diary, 'and had many retired walks through the woods and over the hills. I delighted to visit the deserted hermitages, which formerly abounded on the Rhine. I envied the situation of such hermits, retired from the world, and sheltered from its many temptations; for I thought it impossible for me to live a life of purity while continuing among my associates. I looked forward wishfully to the time when I could thus retire; but I saw also that, unless I could leave behind me my earthly-mindedness, my pride, vanity, and every carnal propensity, an outward solitude could afford me no shelter.'

'Our army entered into France the forepart of the summer of 1792, accompanied by the Austrians and Prussians. I was in the King's Horse Guards, which consisted mostly of the nobility. We endured great hardships, for many weeks sleeping on the bare ground, in the open air, and were sometimes in want of provisions. But that word honour so inflamed us, that I marvel how contentedly we bore our privations.'

Towards the approach of winter, owing to various political changes, the Princes' army was obliged to retire from France, and soon after was disbanded. 'Etienne had been present at several engagements; he had seen many falling about him, stricken by the shafts of death; he had stood in battle array, facing the enemy ready for the conflict; but, being in a reserve corps, he was preserved from actually shedding blood, having never fought with the sword, or fired a gun.'

In after years, he was thankful to remember that although he had been perfectly willing to take life, he had never actually done so in his soldier days. After the retreat of the French army, he and his brothers set out for Amsterdam. On the way, however, they were made prisoners of war, and condemned to be shot. 'The execution of the sentence was each moment expected, when some sudden commotion in the hostile army gave them an opportunity to make their escape.' Their lives thus having been spared a second time they reached Holland in safety.

The young men were puzzled what to do next. They could not bear to leave their beloved parents at distant Limoges, and yet it was impossible to reach them or to help them in any way. France was a dangerous place for people with a 'de' in their names in those days, and for young men of military age most dangerous of



all. Finally, Etienne and his brother Joseph settled to go to South America. 'Through the kind assistance of a republican General, a friend of the family, they obtained a passage on board a ship bound for Demerara, where they arrived in the First month of 1793, after a voyage of about forty days.'

Unfortunately this long voyage had not taken them away from scenes of violence. The Revolution in France was terrible, but the horrors of slavery in South America were, if possible, even worse. The New World seemed no less full of tragedy than the Old. Etienne saw there husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters torn apart, most cruelly beaten, often sold like cattle to tyrannical masters, never to see each other's faces again.

Amid such scenes Etienne grew more than ever full of despairing thoughts, more than ever inclined to believe that there could not be a God ruling a world where these evils were allowed to go unpunished.

'Such was the impression made upon Etienne by the scenes of cruelty and anguish he witnessed, that, many years after, the sound of a whip in the street would chill his blood, in the remembrance of the agony of the poor slaves; and he felt convinced that there was no excess of wickedness and malice which a slave-holder, or driver, might not be guilty of.'

Etienne and Joseph stayed in Demerara for more than two years. In the spring of 1795 they left South America and settled in Long Island near New York. There, they made friends with a certain Colonel Corsa, a man who had served in the British army, and who had a daughter who spoke French. As the two brothers at this time knew no English it was a great cheer to them in their loneliness to be able to visit at this hospitable house. One day Colonel Corsa happened to speak of William Penn. Etienne had already heard of the Quaker statesman, George Fox's friend, and when the young girl said she possessed Penn's writings Etienne asked to borrow them. He took back to his lodgings with him a large folio book, intending, with the help of a dictionary, to translate it in order to improve his English. Great was his disappointment when he found that the book contained nothing about politics or statesmanship. It was about religion; and at this time Etienne thought that religion was all a humbug and delusion. Therefore he shut up the book and put it away, though he did not return it to its owner. One evening, about this time, as he was walking in the fields alone, suddenly the Voice he had heard in his childhood spoke to him once more, close by and terribly clear: 'ETERNITY, ETERNITY, ETERNITY.' These three words, he says, 'reached my very soul,—my whole man shook,—it brought me, like Saul, to the ground.' The sinfulness and carelessness of his last few years passed before him. He cried out, 'If there is no God, doubtless there is a hell.'

His soul was almost in hell already, for hell is despair, and Etienne was very nearly despairing at that moment. Only one way out remained, the way of prayer, the little mossy pathway that he used to tread when he was a child, but that he had not trodden, now, for many years. Tangled, mossy, and overgrown that path was now, but it still led out from the dark wood of life where Etienne had almost lost his way and his hope.

Etienne took that way. With his whole heart he prayed for mercy and for deliverance from the sin and horror that oppressed him. When no answer came at once he did not stop praying, but continued day and night, praying, praying for mercy. Perhaps he



scarcely knew to whom his prayer was addressed; but it was none the less a real prayer.

He expected that the answer to it would come in some startling form that he could recognise the first minute and say: 'There! Now God is answering my prayer!'

Instead, the answer came far more simply than he had expected. God often seems to choose to answer prayers in such a gentle, natural fashion, that His children need to watch very carefully lest they take His most radiant messengers, His most wonderful messages, almost as a matter of course. Only if they recognise God's Love in all that comes, planning how things shall happen, they can see His hand arranging even the tiniest details of their lives, fitting them all in, and making things work out right. Then they understand how truly wonderful His answers are.

The answer to Etienne's prayer came through nothing more extraordinary than that same old folio book which he had borrowed from his friend Miss Corsa, and had put away, thinking it too dull to translate. He took it out again, and opened upon a part called 'No Cross, No Crown.' 'I proceeded,' he says, 'to read it with the help of my dictionary, having to look for the meaning of nearly every word.'

When he had finished, he read it straight through again. 'I had never met with anything of the kind before,' and all the time he was reading the Voice inside his heart kept on saying, 'Yes, Yes, Yes, that is true!'

'I now withdrew from company, and spent most of my time in retirement, and in silent waiting upon God. I began to read the Bible, with the aid of my dictionary, for I had none then in French. I was much of a stranger to the inspired records. I had not even seen them before that I remember; what I had heard of any part of their contents, was only detached portions in Prayer Books.

'Whilst the fallow ground of my heart was thus preparing, my brother and myself, being one day at Colonel Corsa's, heard that a Meeting was appointed to be held next day in the Friends' Meeting-house, by two Englishwomen, to which we were invited. The Friends were Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young. The sight of them brought solemn feelings over me; but I soon forgot all things around me; for, in an inward silent frame of mind, seeking for the Divine presence, I was favoured to find in me, what I had so long, and with so many tears, sought for without me. My brother, who sat beside me, and to whom the silence, in which the forepart of the meeting was held, was irksome, repeatedly whispered to me, "Let us go away." But I felt the Lord's power in such a manner, that a secret joy filled me, in that I had found Him after whom my soul had longed. I was as one nailed to my seat. Shortly after, one or two men Friends in the ministry spoke, but I could understand very little of what they said. After them Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young spoke also; but I was so gathered in the temple of my heart before God, that I was wholly absorbed with what was passing there. Thus had the Lord opened my heart to seek Him where He is to be found.

'My brother and myself were invited to dine in the company of these Friends, at Colonel Corsa's. There was a religious opportunity after dinner, in which several communications were made. I could hardly understand a word of what was said, but, as Deborah Darby began to address my brother and myself, it seemed as if the Lord opened my outward ear, and my heart. She seemed like one reading the pages of my heart, with clearness

describing how it had been, and how it was with me. O what sweetness did I then feel! It was indeed a memorable day. I was like one introduced into a new world; the creation, and all things around me, bore a different aspect, my heart glowed with love to all.... O how can the extent of the Lord's love, mercy, pity, and tender compassion be fathomed!

After the visit of the two Friends had made this change in his life Etienne decided to give up his French name and title, and to be no longer Etienne de Grellet, the French nobleman, but plain Stephen Grellet, the teacher of languages. Later on, he was to become Stephen Grellet the Quaker preacher; but the time for that had not yet come. After Deborah Darby's visit he went regularly to the Friends' Meetings in Long Island, but they were held for the most part in complete silence, and sad to say not one of the Friends ever spoke to him afterwards. He missed their friendliness all the more because the people he was lodging with could not bear his attending Quaker Meetings, and tried to make him give up going to such unfashionable assemblies. His brother, Joseph, also could not understand what had come to him, and both Joseph and the lodging-house people teased poor Stephen about his Quaker leanings, till he, who had been brave enough when his life was in danger, was a coward before their mockery. He did not want to give up going to his dear Meeting, but he hated to be ridiculed. At first he tried to give up Meeting, but this disobedience gave him, he says, 'a feeling of misery.' When the next Sunday came he tried another plan. He went to the Meeting-house by roundabout ways 'through fields and over fences, ashamed to be seen by any one on the road.' When he reached the Meeting-house by these by-lanes, the door was closed. No Meeting was to be held there that day. The Friends happened to have gone to another place. Stephen, therefore, sat down, 'in a retired place and in a very tried state,' to think the whole question over again, with much humility. He decided that henceforth, come what might, he would not be a coward; and he kept his resolution. The next Sunday he went to Meeting 'though it rained hard and I had about three miles to walk.' Henceforward he attended Meeting regularly, and at last his brother ceased reproaching him for his Quakerism, and one Sunday he actually came to Meeting too. This time Joseph also enjoyed the silence and followed the worship. 'From that time he attended meetings diligently, and was a great comfort to me. But, during all that period,' Stephen continues, 'we had no intercourse with any of the members of the religious Society of Friends.' These Friends still took no notice of the two strangers. They seem to have been Friends only in name.

About this time bad news came from France. 'My dear mother wrote to me that the granaries we had at our country seat had been secured by the revolutionary party, as well as every article of food in our town house. My mother and my younger brother were only allowed the scanty pittance of a peck of mouldy horse-beans per week. My dear father was shut up in prison, with an equally scanty allowance. But it was before I was acquainted with the sufferings of my beloved parents, that the consideration of the general scarcity prevailing in the country led me to think how wrong it was for me to wear powder on my head, the ground of which I knew to be pride.' He gave up powder from this time. It would not be much of a sacrifice nowadays, but it was a very real one then, when powder was supposed to be the distinguishing mark of a gentleman. The two brothers were now obliged to learn

to support themselves. All their estates in France had been seized. 'Our means began to be low, and yet our feelings for the sufferings in which our beloved parents might be involved, caused us to forget ourselves, strangers in a strange country, and to forward them a few hundred dollars we had yet left.'

It was no easy matter to find employment. The brothers went on to New York, and there at last the Friends were kind: Friends in deed and not in name only. They found a situation for Joseph in New York itself, and arranged for Stephen to go to Philadelphia, where he was more likely to find work.

And at Philadelphia the Friends were, if possible, even kinder to him than the Friends at New York. They were spiritual fathers and mothers to him, he says, and seemed to know exactly what he was feeling. 'They had but little to say in words, but I often felt that my spirit was refreshed and strengthened in their company.' At Philadelphia, he had many offers of tempting employment, but he decided to continue as a teacher of languages in a school. He gave his whole mind to his school work while he was at it, and out of school hours wandered about entirely care free. But although he was a teacher of languages and although the English of his Journals is scrupulously careful, it has often a slight foreign stiffness and formality. He was often afraid in his early years of making mistakes and not speaking quite correctly. There is a story that long afterwards, when he was in England and was taking his leave of some schoolgirls, he wished to say to them that he hoped they might be preserved safely. But in the agitation of his departure he chose the wrong words. His parting injunction, therefore, never faded from the girls' memory: 'My dear young Friends, may the Lord pickle you, His dear little muttons.'

If, even as an old man, Stephen was liable to fall into such pitfalls as this, it is easy to understand that in his earlier years the fear of making mistakes must have been a real terror to him, especially when he thought of speaking in Meeting. Very soon after he became a Friend he felt, with great dread, that the beautiful, comforting messages that refreshed his own soul were meant to be shared with others. Months, if not years, of struggle followed, before he could rise in his place in Meeting and obey this inward prompting. But directly he did so, his fears of making a mistake, or being laughed at, vanished utterly away. After agony, came joy. 'The Lord shewed me how He is mouth, wisdom and utterance to His true and faithful ministers; that it is from Him alone that they are to communicate to the people, and also the when and the how.' At that first Meeting, after Stephen had given his message and sat down again, several Friends, whose blessing he specially valued, also spoke and said how thankful they were for his words. Among those present that day was that same William Savery, who, in the last story, had a bundle of valuable hides stolen from his tanyard, and punished the thief, when he came to return the hides, by loading him with kindness and giving him a good situation.

Certainly William Savery would not tell the story of 'the man who was not John Smith' to Stephen Grellet on that particular day; for Stephen was so filled with the thankful wonder that follows obedience, that he had no thought for outside things. 'For some days after this act of dedication,' he says, 'my peace flowed as a river.' In the autumn of this year (1796), Stephen Grellet, the French nobleman, became a Friend. About two years later, he was acknowledged as a Minister by the Society.

'In those days,' he writes, 'my mind dwelt much on the nature of the hope of redemption through Jesus Christ.... I felt that the best testimony I could bear was to evince by my life what He had actually done for me.'

Henceforth Stephen's life was spent in trying to make known to others the joy that had overflowed his own soul. He did indeed 'put the things that he had learned in practice,' as he journeyed over both Europe and America, time after time, visiting high and low. His life is one long record of adventures, of perils surmounted, of hairbreadth escapes, of constant toil and of much plodding, humdrum service too. His message brought him into the strangest situations, as he gave it fearlessly. He sought an interview with the Pope at Rome in order to remonstrate with him about the state of the prisons in the Papal States. Stephen gave his message with perfect candour, and afterwards entered into conversation with the Pope. Finally, he says, 'As I felt the love of Christ flowing in my heart towards him, I particularly addressed him.... The Pope ... kept his head inclined and appeared tender, while I thus addressed him; then rising from his seat, in a kind and respectful manner, he expressed his desire that "the Lord would bless and protect me wherever I went," on which I left him.'

Not satisfied with that, though it seems wonderful enough, Stephen another time induced the Czar of all the Russias, Alexander I., to attend Westminster Meeting. Both these stories are well worth telling. But there is one story about Stephen, better worth telling still, and that is how the Voice that guided him all over the world sent him one day 'preaching to nobody' in a lonely forest clearing in the far backwoods of America.

Note.—The References throughout are to the Cambridge Edition of George Fox's JOURNAL, except where otherwise stated. The spelling has been modernised and the extracts occasionally abridged.

[According to the author, this story "HOW A FRENCH NOBLE BECAME A FRIEND" is "Entirely historical. All the facts are taken from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF STEPHEN GRELLET."]

1797

January: The minutes of Rahway and Plainfield Monthly Meeting show that in the next month the case of the older mulatto worshiper Cynthia Miers was resumed, and in the following month she was received into membership. Friend John Hunt, who served on the committee, wrote of the decision as having been held back 20 years though there had never been anything to prevent her acceptance other than the color of her skin.<sup>3</sup>

There was that felt which raised the testimony in this respect, over all opposition, although the spirit of prejudice which had been imbibed on account of colour, had kept it back above twenty years within which time, [many or] divers black and mulatto people have requested to have a right among Friends, but till now have been [rejected and] put by, on account of their colour.

Among those who spoke in favor of admission were two foreign [Quakers](#), Martha Routh of England and Jean de Marsillac of France. Friend Martha described the event as follows:

At this season the further consideration of admitting black people into membership with friends, was revived; and a large committee was appointed wherein concerned women friends were admitted. Their weighty deliberations felt to me evidently owned of Truth; the result whereof was, that no distinction of colour should be an objection when such as requested to be joined to us, appeared to be convinced of the principle we profess. This being spread before the [Yearly Meeting](#) was united in, without a dissenting voice.

Here is a Silhouette of Public Friend Martha Routh (1743-1817), as she appeared when she was visiting the New World:



Friend [Stephen Grellet](#) of France, later to become well known, was 23 years of age and attending annual

3. The data elements for this series on the acceptability of persons of mixed race as Quakers are from Henry Cadbury's "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends" in [The Journal of Negro History](#), Volume 21 (1936), pages 151-213.

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meeting for the first time, having just joined the Society. He wrote in his characteristic evangelical language:

The [Yearly Meeting](#) came to the conclusion that any people of colour, becoming convinced of our principles, and making application to be received as members of our society, ought to be treated as white persons, without any distinction on account of colour, seeing that there is none with God, who has made all nations of the earth of one blood and that Jesus Christ has died for all, and is the saviour of all who believe in Him, of whatever colour or nation they may be.



Evidently there had been other cases of applicants of color and evidently these also had been delayed for many years. Not very many Negro members were immediately accepted on the basis of this [Yearly Meeting](#) ruling once it was embodied in the Book of Discipline. For nearly a century, rather than being generally distributed, this had been a mere manuscript kept by one member of each Monthly Meeting; in this year, however, arrangements were made for printing it, and so in the first printed form of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Discipline the outcome of the decision on Cynthia Myers came to be embodied in a paragraph under "Convinced Persons" ending "The said meetings are at liberty to receive such (persons) into membership, without respect to nation or color." This paragraph would remain in the Discipline not only until the separation of 1828 but in each branch of Friends in every edition for nearly a century longer, and would then mysteriously disappear.

1804

➔ [Friend Stephen Grellet](#) got married with Friend Rebecca Collins, daughter of the publisher Isaac Collins.


1813

➔ [Friend Stephen Grellet](#) visited Newgate Prison and was shocked at the conditions among the male prisoners. Then he asked to visit the female prisoners and discovered that their conditions were even worse. He told Friend [Elizabeth Fry](#) about this, and she discovered that 300 women were huddled together, along with their children, in two wards and two cells. They were forced to sleep without bedding or nightclothes, on the floor. They were cooking and washing in the same cell in which they slept. Those just arrested were thrown in with those already convicted. She would initially establish a school and a chapel in the prison, with compulsory sewing and Bible-reading, and eventually she would create a system of supervision by matrons and monitors.

**1855**


November 16: News came that the shipment of Oriental books from Thomas Cholmondeley intended for Henry Thoreau of Concord, Massachusetts had arrived in Canada.

[Stephen Grellet](#) died in Burlington, New Jersey (the body is buried behind the [Quaker](#) Meeting House at 340 High Street).<sup>4</sup>

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"  
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



**Prepared: October 13, 2008**

4. The Grellet home was located at the corner of High and Library Streets in Burlington, New Jersey. His daughter would donate two of his Chippendale chairs to the Library Company of Burlington. The house would later serve as a boarding house, its most notable resident being Kitty Balester, a student at nearby Van Rensselaer Seminary who eventually would marry Rudyard Kipling. In the mid-20th Century, the house would be moved a short distance down High Street. Only one wall of the original house, however, now remains, and it serves as the north wall of the City's municipal building. In more recent years, Louis Colaguori constructed a reproduction of the original house, at High and Federal Streets, which structure has come to shelter the local offices of Public Service Electric and Gas.



# *ARRGH: THE AUTOMATED RESEARCH*

## *REPORT GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place your requests with [kouroo@brown.edu](mailto:kouroo@brown.edu).  
Arrgh.

## [WHAT IS THIS STUFF DOING ON THE INTERNET?](#)

It occurs to me that I owe you an explanation, how come I am placing all this Quaker information and Rhode Island historical information on the Internet. Here it is, here's my explanation. Five years ago I came to Providence, Rhode Island from Southern California as a retired person, and as a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and as part of making this move, I promised my wife that I wouldn't just hang around our townhouse – but would find a way to get out there and make myself useful. Since the Moses Brown School was a Quaker institution, and since it is just down the street from our new digs in Providence's East Side, I thought I would fill in the slack hours of my retirement by providing volunteer services for the school.

The first thing I did to be of service to the school, was write up a biography of Friend Moses Brown, founder of the school, and a history of the legacy that he left to provide for the institution that he had founded. When I had this all written up (you can read what I had written at <http://www.kouroo.info/kouroo/thumbnails/B/FriendMosesBrown.pdf>), I took it over to the teachers and staff at the Moses Brown School, and presented it to them. "Here," I went, "Take this, make any alterations and elaborations as you see fit, take my name off of it and put your name on it, use it in your publicity, and use it in the teaching of your Quaker students. I give you all rights."

I was startled by their response. Instead of going "Thank you, obviously you put a lot of work into this" they went "So, who's going to pay us for looking at that?" They were more than uninterested, they were downright hostile.

And things went downhill from there. As I created more and more of these Quaker biographies, about Friend John Greenleaf Whittier the Quaker poet, about Friend Lucretia Coffin Mott the antislavery activist, about Friend Paul Cuffe the black and Native American sea captain –electronic stuff that they could use in their teaching if they chose, stuff that the computer-savvy kids could relate to a whole lot better than dusty old yellowed falling-apart Quaker paper publications– relations kept on getting worse and worse. After months and months of my finangling and their stalling, I was allowed to make a presentation of my materials to their "History Department" staff, in a classroom at the Moses Brown School. When I arrived to give my presentation, they refused to prepare the classroom's presentation equipment, and so I was unable to use their overhead projector or other tools. Instead I needed to stand in front of them holding up my laptop so they could see the screen, while attempting to explain this Kouroo Contexture I had created by use of the FrameMaker tool, and how it worked to display Quaker biographies and general Rhode Island history. They were politely unimpressed and uncommunicative, but they did grant me permission to load the database I had created into their History Department computer, a computer which was in a locked conference room not normally accessible to their students.

I then went home and waited for the other shoe to drop – but it did not drop. There was no feedback. After a few months of this silence, I started phoning them with the proposal that I drop by to refresh and update the copy of my database that I had loaded onto their machine. They never returned any of my phonecalls. Never. Not once ever.

I have no sense that any of these “History Department” staff people ever so much as glanced at the materials I had loaded onto their computer for their use. They presumably merely erased what I had gone to the trouble to load for their inspection. I found myself faced with the necessity of explaining, to my wife, why it was that I was not keeping the promise that I had made to her in moving to Providence, to get out of the townhouse from time to time, and make myself useful during my retirement.

The next thing I did was attempt to donate a PC to the school, a PC that they could have in their student facility alongside their other PCs, one that could be available to their students. I quickly found out that this was very impossible. They provided me with a series of what turned out to be lies. First they said they were checking on the availability of funds to purchase software with, and when I pointed out that the reader software for my stuff was a freebie, that no funding whatever was needed, they pretended as if they hadn’t heard me. Then, when it was not possible for them to tell this lie about cost and availability of software any more, they went on to the next lie in their series of lies, which was that they were having difficulty figuring out how to install my software. So I suggested that this was no problem, since I could simply drop by and load the freebie software onto whatever machines they wanted to have it loaded onto, using my distribution disk. They didn’t need to know how, since I would do all the work for them for free. Again they pretended as if they hadn’t heard what I had said.

Then their computer maintenance person said something very strange to me: “Look, I’m close to retirement and I don’t want to get my ass fired.” Then, inconsistently (maybe he forgot he’d said that stuff about getting fired to me), this same man said to me that my stuff was great stuff and he wanted to install it – but he wouldn’t have time until October, could I wait until then? So I said OK and waited four months, but when I went to look this guy up at the school, I found that he had retired in September. He had merely been blowing smoke up my butt. He had been stalling me until he could get himself off the hot seat.

Well, there’s a Quaker monthly meeting right next to the Moses Brown School, the Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends that I attend every First Day (Sunday). This meeting is a member of the New England Yearly Meeting, and the New England Yearly Meeting owns the Moses Brown endowment asset that runs this school. Our Meeting has a Library with multiple “PLEASE DONATE” signs posted. Since the Moses Brown School students are in and out of this building as part of their school day, I donated that PC, with my Quaker history and Rhode Island history database on it, to my meeting’s library. I figured that the Moses Brown students might have an opportunity to consult these electronic materials while in the meeting library. Maybe. -Anyway, I couldn’t figure out any better thing to do, given the

strange and unexplained intransigence I had been running into.

So I presented the machine and the database to our meeting's Library Committee. A member of the Library Committee then stood up after Meeting for Worship one First Day and publicly thanked me for my "magnificent gift," and briefly described it for the benefit of the members and attenders of the Quaker meeting.

But after this thanks, the machine and the database failed to appear in the meetinghouse library. Finally I confronted the Library Committee with "What is going on?" I learned from this committee, with reluctance, that the Ministry and Counsel committee of our meeting had taken the machine and the database away from the Library Committee. This Ministry and Counsel committee has members who are deeply involved with the operation of the Moses Brown School. They were keeping the stuff under lock and key in a dark room upstairs. Evidently they were looking it over? Then I found out they sabotaged the machine by ripping up the cover in order to get at the hardware OFF switch – forcing the machine into a hard shutdown from which it was not possible to restart the database. They had, for reasons of their own, rendered the machine unusable.

Well then, I fixed the machine, doing a file system check and restore routine, and getting everything re-initialized. Then I found myself being eldred and warned. I was to examine my conduct! Nobody had asked me to do this! Nobody wanted me to do this! What did I think I was going to pull off? I should be grateful that they didn't just throw the machine, and my Quaker and Rhode Island historical database, into the Dumpster! I found that, for having written these materials on Quaker history and Rhode Island history, and for having donated this PC to the meeting, I needed to be treated like some kind of criminal.

They appointed a censorship committee, to meet with me and put pressure on me, falsely terming it a "Listening Committee." This committee contained a Moses Brown employee who was livid in his anger. He protested that of course the Moses Brown School was a Quaker school, because his own children went there. He protested that of course the Moses Brown School was a Quaker school, because its football team went by the name "Quakers." Disregarding the fact that the school has had free use year after year of several hundred millions of dollars of Quaker educational assets, he indignantly protested that one of the problems was that the Quakers weren't "doing anything" to help the school. Where I had reported that in the graduating class of 2004 not a single student had gone on to a Quaker institution of higher education, he accused me of a falsehood – because, since then, in the following year's class, 2005, he indignantly pointed out, one-count-'em-one graduate of the school had gone on to a Quaker institution of higher education thus demonstrating that the school was Quaker.

One of the arguments for what is presently going down at the Moses Brown School has been the argument that the Moses Brown children come trooping over in columns to our meetinghouse for their own episodes of silent worship, therefore they are receiving a Quaker education. I should tell you that this is not an argument that I find persuasive. There's nothing particularly

religious about being required to sit still for a period of minutes. This sitting still **can** be religious in nature, if properly done (in a Quaker context, in a Zen context, etc.), but it can also be merely disciplinary, or merely an opportunity for daydreaming. It is only in the context of our Quaker lives that our silent worship becomes religious, which means, that if the silent sitter knows nothing whatever about Quaker lives, then the silent sitting is of necessity without religious content. It is not education because no fact is conveyed. Instead, it amounts to indoctrination, or persecution, and is naturally resented by every school child who has ever encountered it anywhere. Quite typically, being leaned on in mandatory Chapel in an institution of higher education drives young people away from religion for the rest of their lives. Thus we create persons such as Nobel-Prize-winner K. Barry Sharpless, who attended Friends Central School in Philadelphia in the 1950s, who now writes about his religious education as follows:

From 6th through 12th grades I attended a Quaker school on the Philadelphia city line. Twice a week the entire school attended Quaker Meeting, silent gatherings except when someone received a personal call to speak. I never got a call, but nonetheless my head was full: I thought about fishing and boats. Or else I thought about when next I could get from Philadelphia to our cottage on the New Jersey Shore in order to go out fishing in a boat.

Quakerism is "a historical religion" in a very important sense. What other religions attempt to convey to the following generation by creed and dogma and symbols and scriptural stories, we attempt to convey to the following generation through the study of previous Quaker lives. When, therefore, we deny to the following generation an opportunity for them to learn about these previous Quaker lives, what we are denying them is a Quaker education, and what we are replacing Quakerism with amounts to sheer self-righteous posturing.

The censorship committee accused me of having failed to follow traditional Quaker procedures, in offering this PC and these materials to the monthly meeting's Library Committee. The fact that this accusation is the precise inversion of the truth—that it has been me who has been following traditional Quaker procedures and others who, in this instance, in their insistence upon the primacy of censorship, have not been following traditional Quaker procedures—seems entirely lost on them.

Someone had written to a Quaker discussion group on the internet, "outing" a teacher at the Moses Brown School as entirely unqualified. This Moses Brown employee on my censorship committee brought this message to the group (with its identifying headers removed), and accused me of having posted that message. I of course insisted that I was neither the person who had originally carried this information as to the unqualified teacher out of the school, nor the person who had originally posted this information to the Quaker discussion list on the internet—but this did not persuade him to stop treating me with contempt. The information was "hurtful," end of story. I was going to continue to be gunned to death by these yappity yappity Quaker attack puppies, end of story.



I repeatedly asked the obvious question – whether this information, information that had originally been supplied by, and then had first been posted to the discussion list on the internet, by persons other than myself, was true, or was false. No response, as to whether this information as to an entirely unqualified teacher was true, or was false, has ever been supplied. Why should they answer such a question – the information was “hurtful,” end of story. We have transited from being Friends of the Truth (yes, we used to call ourselves that), to being instances of “Mr. Politenessman” and “Ms. Churchlady.” Evidently it is deemed to be nobody’s business but the administration of Moses Brown School, whether they have appointed a teacher who is entirely unqualified. Evidently, it is inappropriate to be concerned over the quality of the “Quaker” education that is being offered. (This callous disregard for the truth causes me to wonder whether my censorship committee, which terms itself an appointed “Listening Committee,” might not more accurately be characterized as an appointed “Enemies of the Truth” committee!)



The censorship committee has repeatedly accused me of a refusal to negotiate in good faith. I would offer that it is not my negotiation, but their own, that has been disingenuous, and I will offer two instances in corroboration of their bad faith. One of their complaints has been that the PC I donated is simply too large, and another is that as an object of value it is too likely to be stolen. When I brought my laptop to one of the censorship meetings, and pointed out that I might donate it, my gesture was met with nothing more than a stony silence, despite the fact that the laptop would have overcome the “too large” objection. (Clearly, when they had made out that their concern was with size, they were simply telling a lie as to the nature of their concern, or they would not have been exactly as absolute in regard to their rejection of the gift of a laptop PC as to the gift of a desktop PC.) Since then, the meeting has celebrated the acquisition of what the meeting newsletter describes as “a Roland console model piano with a full, rich sound which is a substantial piece of furniture.” It is at least twice the size of the largest desktop computer, and also, it fully qualifies as an object of value that is available to be stolen. They have not indicated why it is that they would be concerned that someone would steal a donated laptop, but unconcerned that someone would steal a donated electronic piano.

Again, one of the complaints of this censorship committee has been that electronic materials are maintainable, and thus I could sneak in at any time and load new, unapproved materials onto the machine without their knowledge or consent. When I offered that it was not necessary that the electronic materials be maintained –that I would not insist upon maintaining them, that there were technical ways by which the materials could be



preserved in the form they had been originally as donated— my gesture was again met with nothing more than a stony silence. (Clearly, again, when they had made out that their concern was with the introduction of new, unapproved materials in a surreptitious manner, they were simply telling a lie as to the nature of their concern.)

I have, I acknowledge, made us of the word "lie" in relation to some of these activities of the meeting's Ministry and Counsel committee. (You'll notice that I am not apologizing for this: you will not catch me apologizing for holding Quakers to a higher standard of truth.) For instance, when they posted an innocuous notice, on the machine that they were privately demanding that I remove from the building, to the effect that all meetinghouse computers had simply "been turned off for the summer," and then Summer went into Autumn into Winter while they demanded that I remove this machine that had simply been turned off for the summer, I taunted them by way of response by pointing to this innocuous notice: "Your lie has expired, time for you to invent a new lie." In general, their attempt has been to sneak around in the shadows, concealing what they were attempting in the way of censorship from the view of the general membership of our monthly meeting. Their response to my use of this term "lie," in regard to various of their efforts to conceal what they are doing, has been email to this effect: "For you repeatedly to impugn other people's characters (by calling them liars) serves only to alienate them and to end any possibility of dialog." In no case have they offered any specific explanation or justification for any of their remarks which I have been categorizing straightforwardly as lies, in no case have they apologized, and in no case have they altered or revised any of their lies.

It is as if this group were a group of Puritans rather than a group of Quakers. It is as if this were the 17th Century rather than the 21st. We are still debating censorship as if no-one had ever heard tell of freedom of speech and of the press. We are concealing what is going down as if we had never been known as the Friends of the Truth.

My donated PC, with the Quaker and Rhode Island historical materials it contains, has since disappeared from the locked room in the meetinghouse. I do not know what has happened to it. (I do not suspect that they have actually thrown it into the Dumpster as threatened. I suspect that, instead, probably, they have carried it off and have secreted it somewhere out of the public view.)

The general membership of our meeting has had no idea what has been going on. All they know is that I have been publicly thanked. Some year and a half earlier I had put my original biography of the life and works and writings of Friend George Fox in the context of his times on the internet at <http://www.kouros.info/RSOF/FriendGeorgeFox.pdf>, and yet the local stonewalling of my efforts has been so total that the general membership of my own monthly meeting was still, after this year and a half, totally unaware that I had done this work, that I have authored a 390-page biography of this founding father. Thus, recently, Jordan Vernier needed to ask the other members

of our meeting for the origination of a quote from Friend George's "journal":

> Does anyone know the original wording of this (rewritten)  
> quote by George Fox? I've been looking for it for a while.  
>>"Be patterns, be examples in every country, place, or  
>> nation that you visit, so that your bearing and life  
>> might communicate with all people. Then you'll happily  
>> walk across the earth to evoke that of God in everybody.  
>> So that you will be seen as a blessing in their eyes  
>> and you will receive a blessing from that of God within them."

– and in response, no-one referred Jordan to page 126 of my biography of Friend George! Every single person on our Ministry & Counsel Committee is very much aware of this work, yet none wanted to alert him to the fact that it existed!

Now, this Ministry & Counsel Committee has repeatedly asserted, that the suppression and stonewalling that they are practicing is due to the fact that I have written this offensive protest against their censorship (the very document that you are even now reading), a protest which they never dare characterize as false but which they repeatedly characterize as "hurtful." That this is a false description of my historical work can easily be demonstrated, technically, by going back to one of the historical "mirror" sites of the history of the internet which have captured snapshots of internet content at various earlier points in time (the current version of the file, in which hypertext links to other historical files have been added, is at <http://www.kouroo.info/kouroo/thumbnails/F/FriendGeorgeFox.pdf>), you will see that it had been created in about 2002 well before this protest and therefore had not contained this protest. Their stonewalling of my work began considerably before I began to protest against their stonewalling, and therefore for them to now allege that their censorship is due to my having protested it is, straightforwardly, disingenuous. It is an inversion of the truth: it puts what came before, after, and what came after, before. To put this in the Anglo-Saxon, the Quaker elders of my meeting are lying.

All this activity of censorship that has been going on behind the scenes in our meeting, has been entirely surreptitious, and their explanation for their secrecy has been that they are seeking to "protect me" from the general censure that obviously would be my fate were my activities known. My protests, that I do not want to be thus protected, have been completely ignored. The true explanation, of course, for why they have been sneaking around in the shadows, is not that they have been trying to protect me from censure, but that they have been trying to protect **themselves** from censure. (When someone videotaped the beating of Rodney King by police in the street, from the front window of an apartment facing the scene, the first reaction of these US coppers was that private citizens should not be allowed to make such videotapes of police brutality – the police, however, would need to bring themselves kicking and screaming into the world of responsibility for one's own conduct, because this new spotlight on police actions was not going to go away – with this new technology generally available, citizens were simply not going to stop videotaping acts of police brutality.

Similarly, when military personnel began sending around picture-phone images of brutality inside Iraq prisons, the first reaction of the US brass was to ban all taking of picture phone pictures inside their military prisons – the military was going to need to learn that this new spotlight on covert abuse was not going to go away, for with this new technology generally available, individual soldiers were simply not going to stop snapping images of instances of prisoner abuse. These are two instances of good technological development and its benevolent social consequences, minicams to bring our coppers under control and picture phones to bring our brass under control. Similarly, now, the initial reaction of this Ministry and Counsel committee of the local monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, to my attempt to provide usable electronic Quaker educational materials, has been this egregious attempt to ban Quaker history as in the same pot category with internet pornography, from which our children do need to be protected – but our control committee of meeting elders is going to need to learn now, that the good new technology of the Internet is not going to go away anytime soon, and that instead of being able to continue their long habit of sneaking around in the shadows whispering falsehoods to one another, they are going to have to learn to conduct their control operations with a spotlight of truth and disclosure shining directly upon their conduct. This transition is going to be painful, admittedly, but the outcome is eventually going to constitute a real improvement in Quaker governance.)

Incidentally, in recent years there has been another Quaker historian in this Providence meeting, Friend Rosalind "Posie" Cobb Wiggins. She had served as a teacher at the Moses Brown School, as clerk of our meeting, and as curator of our New England Yearly Meeting Archives, archives which are now kept at the Rhode Island Historical Society on Hope Street in Providence, Rhode Island. Since then she has published works about Friends and African Americans in 18th- and 19th-Century New England. Unable to sufficiently compromise in her historical researches into Quaker race history, she was driven away. She is now dead, buried as an Episcopalian, and I have pledged in her memory that I am going to prove myself to be of sterner stuff – that I will never allow myself to be driven away by these elders and their intransigence in the manner in which she had been driven away.

Posie encapsulated her difficulties with the Friends in an article "Paul and Stephen, Unlikely Friends," which appeared in Quaker History, Volume 90 Number 1, for Spring 2001. The article appears on the surface to be about problems in the Providence Monthly Meeting in the 19th Century, which is polite, but if you read beneath the surface of this bland treatment of past problems, you can see that Posie was describing the same problems as were, more than a century later, driving her away from the Providence Monthly Meeting. Now, at the time of Posie's death, I obtained a copy of this article, which is not otherwise available in Providence (not, for instance, at the Brown University Library, or at the Moses Brown Library, or in our meeting library), and I bound it and specially presented it to a member of our meeting's library committee. I described the article as a reproach of our behavior, and asked that it be

included in our library for us to consider. Since that point in time, months and months have elapsed, the one copy we have of this article in Quaker History has disappeared, and the members of our library committee have nothing to say to me. It is my considered opinion that this material, because it would induce re-examination, has been suppressed by the local thought police.

Twice I have requested an audience before our Ministry and Counsel Committee. The first time, I requested this verbally of the Clerk of our Monthly Meeting, Friend Elizabeth Zimmerman, after our Meeting for Business at Saylesville Meetinghouse. The second time, I requested this verbally of Friend William Monroe after our Meeting for Worship on a First Day, while he was sitting in the meetinghouse's library room as the official representative of our Ministry and Counsel Committee. Both requests for a personal appearance before this committee have, to date, been ignored. All official contacts from this committee to me have been by email.

These folks seem to have not yet learned the First Rule of Holes, which is "When you're in a hole, stop digging." Rather than make public disclosure of which of them are on the payroll of the Moses Brown School and therefore guilty of a conflict of interest (as I have formally requested that they do, in our Meeting for Business), they have responded that they have discovered a flaw in my paperwork, a flaw which means that although everyone had been presuming, for five years, that I was a member of this meeting, actually I am no member – and since I am no member, they don't have to respond to my questions about their private finances or their possible conflicts of interest. I honestly have come to suspect that they would disown me – if they dared. So, for the time being, what I have been doing, in frustration, is distilling my historical materials, which are in FrameMaker 7.0, into Adobe Acrobat .pdf documents of the sort that I could put up onto a website on the Internet – documents such as this file you are presently looking at. These Acrobat distillations are extremely limited in comparison with the database materials that can be seen by use of FrameMaker, but any port in a storm. My thought is, maybe the students at the Moses Brown School, as they are surfing the Internet from their home PCs, will come upon these Acrobat materials. –Well, that's a forlorn expectation I know, but it is what I am presently reduced to.

I am left in an inexplicable situation of great hostility. What has caused this strangeness to occur? It seems to me that there are a number of possibilities:

- A.) Am I dealing with a bunch of Quaker Luddites, people inherently hostile to anything electronic?
- B.) Is there something very wrong about my approach to these historical materials, something that is rendering all my work totally wrongheaded and unacceptable?
- C.) Have I failed to find the proper channels, through which I should have gone but through which I have neglected to go?

D.) Would it be, maybe, that this Moses Brown School is a Quaker institution in name only? Is the school, maybe, as I have belatedly begun to suspect, merely a toney pricey prep school, designed around getting middle-class white kids into name colleges, with this Quaker stuff being merely window-dressing designed to make the school appear congenial, and, importantly, designed to hold onto the Moses Brown endowment of Quaker educational funding – but with the school authorities basically hostile to the idea that their students should ever learn anything real about Quakerism and its people and its history?

Of these four possibilities, A, B, C, and D, I would submit that possibilities A, B, and C are non-starters. If these people were Luddites, they would be a strange sort of Luddite indeed, because they themselves have computers, they send Email, etc. If, on the other hand, there is something wrongheaded about my approach to the writing of Quaker history, then I would have expected their hostility to manifest itself **after** the officials had looked at the materials that I had created, rather than **before** they had even so much as glimpsed the materials. If it is that I have failed to go through proper channels, then for sure nobody has suggested this to me as an explanation: nobody has offered to me any idea of some channel of exploration that I might fruitfully pursue, other than "Go away." So, at the present time, I am left only with possibility D. Is it, maybe, that Moses Brown School is merely a pretend Quaker school – a Quaker school in name only – and that they are finding me annoying because I keep coming at them as if they were interested in teaching their students something about Quakerism, when actually they are not at all interested in such an agenda?

My personal suspicion is that what we have here is the classic case of the slowly cooking frog. They say that if you put a live frog in a pot of cold water, it will hide in the bottom of the pot and as you heat the pot on the stove, it will continue to hide down there, making no attempt to free itself, until little pieces of frog meat begin to appear at the bubbling top of the pot. I don't know if that is so or not, never having conducted the requisite experiment, but it may well be that the transition of this Moses Brown School, from being a Quaker institution to being a hoity-toity college preparatory school for middle-class white kids in which Quakerism is actively shunned, has been so gradual over the years, that the Quakers have not noticed that the institution is continuing to sit on several hundred millions of dollars of Quaker educational assets, while lately delivering to us, in the way of Quaker education, what amounts to chump change.

The school proclaims that it has an annual budget of approximately 20 million dollars. However, nothing on its balance sheet reflects the real worth of the hundreds of millions of dollars of Quaker educational assets that it holds within its grasp. If those hundreds of millions of dollars of real assets are captured in their accounting as part of their annual budget, I believe, a case can be made that their annual

budget is not approximately 20 million dollars, but instead approximately 30 million dollars. In other words, Quakers provide about one third of the annual budget for this school. In return for this, in return for funding a full third of the school's annual operational budget, we receive one class, maybe. This is a crime which we Quakers are committing against ourselves.

Buddy Cianci is a product of this school. (For those of you who are not up to date on Rhode Island history: Buddy Cianci was the mayor of Providence, and has been in prison for his egregious personal conduct, and is at this moment back in prison again, this time as the result of a federal prosecution for egregious political corruption.) Is it really necessary for me to point out, that if this Moses Brown School which bills itself as a Quaker school had continued to be a Quaker school, rather than becoming a pretend Quaker school – Buddy might at this moment be the mayor of Providence rather than a jailbird? – That we might, given half a chance, have been able to teach this man some ethics and self-discipline?

The East Side of Providence, Rhode Island has had two major benefactors, the Ebenezer Knight Dexter who gave us his farm for use as a city poor farm and the Friend Moses Brown, right across Lloyd Avenue from Dexter's poor farm, who gave us his farm for a Quaker school. The city broke Mr. Dexter's will in the 1950s, and where the poor farm used to be is now – a Brown University sports complex. (You can read about the breaking of the Dexter bequest at <http://www.kouroo.info/kouroo/places/DexterAsylum.pdf>.) Right now, even as you read this, an attempt is being made by the administrators of the Moses Brown School to similarly break the bequest of Friend Moses Brown that originally set up their school. Obviously they are struggling to eliminate whatever is left of the influence that the New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends once had over this once Quaker school, but of course they are not admitting that this is their agenda. In our Friends Meeting, which is adjacent to the Moses Brown School campus, we have one member who is most especially affiliated with the Moses Brown School, our present clerk Elizabeth Zimmerman. She is the teacher who presided over the ghettoization of Quakerism at the school, by confining it to one-count-'em-one course that they offer to their graduating class. Now, when the school began to attempt to break the will of Friend Moses Brown, one of our first points of concern was to discover what in fact had been in the will of Friend Moses Brown – where might we obtain a copy of this will, to read it, and discover what it had said? It proved to be extraordinarily difficult to obtain a copy. The New England Yearly Meeting was the custodian and executor for this will, but we were unable to obtain a copy of the will from the New England Yearly Meeting. The archives of the New England Yearly Meeting are stored at the New England Historical Society on Hope Street, yet these archives contain no copy of this foundational document. The permanent staff of the New England Yearly Meeting was unresponsive to our request. Therefore, Friend John Kellam and I undertook a historical investigation, and we discovered a clerk's copy of the will in storage with Providence real estate records under the mansard roof of our Town Hall downtown. Friend John and I carefully transcribed the

Moses Brown bequest document, word for word, and our idea was that we would distribute this document to the members of the Providence Monthly Meeting by putting it on our meeting's listserv, <providence\_quakers@yahoogroups.com>. When we attempted to communicate this document, however, our meeting's clerk, Friend Elizabeth Zimmerman, prevented us from so doing.

Why, under such circumstances, would the clerk of our Quaker meeting seek to prevent the communication of the truth? If you would like to attempt to answer such a question in your own mind, you will find the contents of the Moses Brown bequest document at pages 106-121 of <http://www.kouroo.info/kouroo/thumbnails/B/FriendMosesBrown.pdf>. Read it and weep.

A comparison may be useful, between the financial underpinnings of the two discrete major investments of the New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. They are the New England Friends Home in Hingham, Massachusetts and the Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island. Careful comparison reveals that they are in the same boat. The same deceitful accounting obfuscations are in play at both venues. This will call for some explanation of the concept "return on investment."

A couple of decades ago, Cutler Cleveland, an energy scientist at Boston University, helped develop a concept known now as "EROI," or Energy Return On Investment. This is a simple ratio of the number of useful therms of energy which one can extract from a natural resource such as an underground pool of oil, for each therm of energy we must put into the extracting, refining, and distribution of the natural resource. He developed this measure during a period in which our usual EROI was as high sometimes as 25 to 1, although nowadays a return of 15 to 1 is more usual. Also, we are considering the exploitation of the tar sands of Alberta, Canada, which must be heated during processing, at an estimated prospective EROI of but 4 to 1. In what follows, I will be writing of an "EROI," but my EROI will not be an Energy Return On Investment. Rather, it will be an Educational Return On Investment. How much do we need to put into the Moses Brown School per year in order to output one unit of Quaker education during that year, and is that the most bang we can expect to get for our buck? How much do we need to put into the New England Friends Home per year in order to output one unit of proper elder care, and is that the most bang we can hope to get for our buck?

The issue here is that, year after year, Quakers are being prevented from finding out what their ROI is. They are being stonewalled endlessly.

We need to know what ROI we are achieving in order to know whether it would be better:

- A.) to continue our current institutional trajectory,  
or
- B.) to liquidate our assets on the open market, put the resultant moneys into an investment pool, and dispense the annual proceeds of this fund in furtherance of our objectives.



In the case of the New England Friends Home, would we be able to provide better elder care for more people by retaining the existing home, a converted mansion, or by closing this establishment and funding the retirement of selected elder persons at nearby for-profit commercial facilities?

In the case of the Moses Brown School, would we be able to provide a Quaker education better by continuing to support the institution that now uses our facilities rent free, providing its students with little or no Quaker-specific educational materials, or by sending this institution an annual rent invoice (without an appraisal we cannot know, but my personal back-of-the-envelope calculation indicates something in the range of \$10,000,000 per year) and using the proceeds to fund a specifically Quaker educational context? What is our "EROI," our Educational Return On Investment?

In both the case of the New England Friends Home and the Moses Brown School, as I have previously indicated, the institution is currently stonewalling our efforts to determine the cash-out value of the asset, and thus preventing us from discovering whether or not our ROI is the best that might be generated. They are insisting that they will not allow their performance to be realistically measured. Their argument is that it isn't nice to question people's intentions and performance in such a manner. The methodology with which this stonewalling is implemented is a refusal to allow a full independent audit and asset appraisal made in accordance with the highest and best economic uses to which the assets might be subjected.

It is to be noted that there are clear conflicts of interest at play. Some of the people who are loudest in denial have financial interests at stake, such as being on the institutional payroll, having received a subsidy for their own children, or anticipating the future receipt of such a subsidy. The people who have these financial conflicts of interest are refusing to disclose them – arguing that their financial affairs are none of anybody else's business, this whole affair amounting to a disruptive incursion upon their personal privacy!

Rather than those with financial conflicts of interest being identified and barred from the governing process, the inmates have taken charge of the asylum. Those with conflicts of interest are on the inside of the governing process reacting with hostility in order to totally exclude anyone who is not subject to their same conflict of interest. Those without a conflict of interest are now being considered unreliable, untrustworthy, loose cannon.

Have you seen the 1997 Hollywood movie "Men in Black"? There is a farmer character "Edgar," played by Vincent D'Onofrio, who lurches through the movie filled with malice, who is lurching and filled with malice not because he is a farmer or because he is Vincent D'Onofrio but because his body has been hollowed out by enemy aliens who resemble cockroaches, who are manipulating his corpse, using it as their "cover" as they attempt to achieve

their own mysterious designs.



This resembles the present Moses Brown School, lurching through its current educational trajectory of preparing the children of the well-to-do white people of Providence for their upward mobility as graduates of Ivy League colleges. The body of this Quaker school has been hollowed out by non-Quakers who do not in any way resemble malicious enemy alien cockroaches, who instead in every way resemble plain simple Quakers, and who have in this manner made themselves the proud custodians of the educational grant that had originally been made by Friends Moses Brown and Obadiah Brown for the sheltered-from-the-lay-world education of young Quaker scholars. The purpose of this grant, which today amounts to an endowment worth several hundred millions of dollars, has been in this manner entirely subverted and misappropriated and realigned into free money, available only for this new use. The school's moles have over the years become more Quaker than the Quakers, and dominate all the regulatory committees, never forgetting which side of the butter their bread is on, institutionalists who serve but one master. Follow the money and you will see that, in a classic instance of regulatory capture, the tail now wags the dog.

The nature of this seems to come into focus in the latest update to the recommendations of The Project Group, to the Board of Overseers of Moses Brown School and New England Yearly Meeting, adapted April 16, 2007, in their Recommendation No. 5- Separate Incorporation for Moses Brown School. In this recommendation, I note, interestingly gone are all their previous demonstrably bogus attestations that their actual concern is merely for issues of liability and insurance! "That Moses Brown School be separately incorporated and that title to all real estate (land and buildings) used by the School be transferred out of New England Yearly Meeting, subject to existing deed restrictions, and into a corporate entity to be identified by the Board of Overseers of the School. The purpose of the recommendation is to recognize, and formally reflect, the long standing reality that the operations of the School are, and have been, de facto separate from those of New England Yearly Meeting." As I parse this recommendation, it seems to me to mean that 1.) those currently in power in the school administration don't want to have the Quaker property appraised for its current market value,

because 2.) they don't want it to be known how much it is worth, because 3.) they don't want to be asked to pay for it or to pay annual rent on it, but instead 4.) they want to appropriate it to themselves in order to be able to use it more freely for purposes which are noncongruent with Quaker purposes, 5.) they are resolved not to correct the "conflict of interest" issues that have to do with their infiltration of their governing boards, amounting to "regulatory capture," and 6.) they need to appropriate the Quaker property by means of some legal maneuver that will render to what is blatantly a theft the appearance of legitimacy.

The above has been reinforced, during August 2007 at the New England Yearly Meeting, by the official report and recommendations of this "Project Group." It reported to the assembled Quakers that there is a "Friends Council on Education" and this trade association has set up a standard for what can be considered to be "a Quaker school." This minimum standard does not include any requirement that the instructional curriculum of "a Quaker school" include any information about Quaker history. The instructional curriculum of "a Quaker school" can in fact be entirely indistinguishable from the instructional curriculum of any secular institution of education. They can offer their students information about Quaker history, or not, and it doesn't matter one little bit one way or another. All that is required, from the standpoint of the students' acquisition of information, is that they offer incidental lip service:

- "Intentionally teaches about and models Quaker testimonies" (this isn't documented, so you'll just have to take our word for it that we do in fact do this; by the way, did I mention that this won't be on the test?)
- Conducts business in the manner of Friends (the students of course are not present so this has nothing to do with them; just take our word for it that we know how Friends conduct business and just take our word for it that we actually do follow such procedures)
- Holds regular meetings for worship (although the students don't need to be there, and any non-Quaker parent can forbid their child to be included)
- Has a substantial portion of Quakers as Board members (for board members we of course want rich people, because of course we expect them to become donors)

This "Friends Council on Education," this excuse for low standards, has a presence on the internet at <http://friendscouncil.org/> as a trade association similar to, say, the cheese council that urges: "Eat more cheese!" How could we tolerate that they so blatantly not have a requirement, that the curriculum of instruction of a school for it to be considered a Quaker school must differ to some degree from the curriculum of instruction of a lay school, must importantly include the offering of considerable factual information about the history of Quakerism? Quakerism is in a very important sense a historical religion, for in the entire absence of a theology and a creed, the only way we have of learning what a Quaker ought to be, is by careful reconsideration of the lived experiences

of real Quakers down through the centuries.

To the contrary, insists Friend Don Gates of the Providence monthly meeting. "What the word 'Quaker' indicates is 'excellence.' Any school that is excellent is therefore a Quaker school, and that is true regardless of whether the school offers its students any information about Quakerism." According to Friend Don's estimate, therefore, even a Roman Catholic school taught by nuns on behalf of the local diocese, or a Moslem madresseh teaching the memorization of the Qur'an, if what they offer is an excellent education, fully qualify as "Quaker schools."

To the contrary, also, insists Friend Carl T. Bogus of the Providence monthly meeting, a professor of law. Friend Carl, a person who had attended the Moses Brown School during a time period in which he admits that there was no Quaker presence whatever in the daily life of the school, declared to me: "I have not read anything that you have written but I have seen the origination document by Friend Moses Brown. Its requirements have been fully met whenever there is a school -any school, regardless of the extent to which it is Quaker or not Quaker-on the premises." According to Friend Carl's estimate also, therefore, even a Roman Catholic school taught by nuns on behalf of the local diocese, or a Moslem madresseh teaching the memorization of the Qur'an, whether or not what they offer is an excellent education, if only they are geographically situated upon the property donated by Friend Moses Brown, fully satisfy the stipulations of the deed of trust.

You will be able to understand, from the manner in which I am writing this report, that I myself consider such attitudes to be preposterous evasions of responsibility, if not tantamount to collusion in theft. Dear reader, if you have any thoughts on this subject, please do inform me at <Kouroo@brown.edu>. Do you find the bequest document of Friend Moses Brown to be problematic? Do you find my internet materials wrong, or offensive? Am I approaching you in an offputting manner? Is there some explanation **other than** that the Moses Brown School is actually a mere pricey toney prep school, not a Quaker institution at all? Is there some explanation **other** than that the clerk of our Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and her Ministry & Counsel Committee, are captive to this outside influence from an educational business corporation, and are presently representing, not the Quaker interest, but instead the interest of these nearby pseudo-Quakers? Is there some explanation **other** than that pseudo-Quaker infiltrator and mole employees from this school have long invaded this "House of the Lord" and by now have transformed it conveniently into a den for thieves? My inquiring mind needs to know!