Part 4: Human Rights

Race to freedom

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Part 4 Highlights

Part 4 addresses the human rights challenges created by the machinations of the British Empire: slavery, poverty, child labour and worker rights, prison conditions, inequality between the sexes, opium trading, the Irish potato famine and colonial domination. Our family was there on the front lines. Here are the highlights:

- *Numerous ancestors over 200 years work to abolish slavery*
- *A London lawyer works for decades to ban the trade in opium*
- *A woman of means devotes her life to improving prison conditions*
- *An Irish Quaker family works night and day to save lives in the potato famine*
- *A printer and his son devote themselves to numerous social causes*
- *Six ancestors raise women's rights to national prominence*
- *Quaker educators deliver unparalleled quality and equality in their schools*
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Left Behind

The British Empire is long gone, its colonies independent, Britain's fortunes much reduced. Did the world benefit from its existence? Was it a force for good or a force for evil? Or both?

A Force For Good?

Ardent supporters of everything British (read white, educated and British) are quick to point out that the British Empire did much good for the homeland and for the colonies they occupied.

At the surface, it seems an arguable point. The British brought effective Rule of Law (British law) to wherever they went which encouraged business by providing a reliable platform for contractual trade agreements and recourse in the courts. The Rule of Law was enforced by the British Army, Navy and police forces which also protected Britain and its colonies from outside incursions and (importantly to the British) from internal rebellions.

Servicing the needs of the colonial administration provided employment for many. The colonial administrations were organized and run efficiently and effectively (with British interests always paramount) and allowed civil transactions to occur in a timely fashion and largely corruption-free. As

well, they built roads, railways and port facilities, and developed commodity-focused industries and culture-specific luxury goods which employed yet more people.

Those efforts appear to have been good and useful things for the peoples of the colonies.

The truth of the matter is that all those developments were created for the express purpose of generating wealth for Britain, in particular, for wealthy and influential British investors and for the pleasure of elite British consumers. Any benefits which natives derived from those investments were temporal and largely only realized after independence, if at all.

Partners In Profit

For 200 years the British Empire grew from the innovations of the Industrial Revolution while industry grew from the empire's spoils. British industry produced ships, armaments, textiles, tools, railways, systems, administrative efficiency and much more. Its products and byproducts were everything required to grow the empire at the expense of those it subjugated, the native peoples of its colonies.

Colonials and subjugated nations, in turn, were obliged to labour making luxury goods for the wealthy of Britain — silk, porcelain, tea, coffee, sugar, exotic woods, gold, silver, precious gems — or labour harvesting the commodities demanded by British mills — cotton, coal, iron, timber, fish,

meat, salt. They were then obliged to buy the resulting manufactured goods to line the pockets of the factory owners and investors.

Pawns

And let's not forget the people who worked in Britain's factories, populated its navy, armies and merchant ships, picked cotton for its mills, grew the tea for its cups and the sugar to put in it. They were assuredly not the educated, the connected, the wealthy. They were the poor and disenfranchised — women, children, people of colour, indentured servants, political activists, the convicted and most notably, slaves. They were people without a voice and without a choice. Most lived and worked under inhuman conditions. Millions of slaves died at their posts.

The tragic truth is that the success of the British Empire was made possible on the backs of slaves — millions of human beings kept in a state of servitude, often brutally treated, bought and sold as chattels without regard to family and worked to death to maximize profits for their owners or serve as human 'appliances' to make life easier.

Slaves in the empire went by other names — indentured servants, pressed maidens, petty 'criminals' sentenced to years of hard labour for acts of desperation, political activists who had the courage to voice their concerns, poor factory workers removed from the land to allow the rich to get richer. If poverty holds people captive in miserable existences with no voice and no hope for a better life, then surely they are slaves.

Agents Of Change

When human beings egregiously violate fundamental human rights, there eventually appear a few courageous souls who will defy the powers that be, speak in defence of the voiceless and lead the charge for change — at any cost.

From the efforts of such people over the course of the British Empire, came dramatic social change, slowly achieved. It took the relentless efforts of many over decades to make a difference. It came in the form of small, local resistance and acts of kindness. It came from secular and religious groups such as the Quakers, who were committed to a person to building a just, egalitarian society. It came from the enlightened elite who had the influence and means to effect legislative change within the halls of power.

Social change necessarily required the demise of the British Empire, for the very foundation of the Empire, its political and economic 'success,' depended on the subjugation of peoples — slavery, militarism, mercantilism, imperialism. The irony, of course, is that the very repression used to build the empire provided the cause to tear it down.

Part 4 is the last piece of the Spriggs House Origins story. It speaks to the major human rights movements which occurred through the duration of the British Empire: abolition, women's rights, child labour, workers' rights, prison reform, cessation of the opium trade and freedom from

colonial oppression, and relates the stories of members of our family who devoted much time, effort and money to bettering the lives of the less fortunate and ultimately, your life and mine.

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Poverty

Londinium, London's Roman predecessor, was the ideal of law and order and cleanliness. It had ample fresh water, markets with a wide variety of fresh foods, public spaces, fresh air and wide streets. There was no better place to live in all of Britain.

If a citizen of Londinium, were transported through time to the year 1600, she would have been aghast at the state of things. If she was scrupulously polite, she might have described the scene before her as 'breath-taking' — a generous descriptor, for the stench of rotting corpse, rendering plants and tanneries, and sewage running in the streets was nothing short of unbearable.

The poor lived in densely packed slums in narrow, winding, airless lanes. The public water supply was widely contaminated. Slops were tossed out windows onto hapless passers-by below. The streets were packed with dogs. Pedestrians risked soakings from the wheels of carriages. The rich, handkerchiefs to their noses, removed somewhat from the chaos beyond their carriage window, rode safely through it all. Beyond the city wall lay a sprawling shanty town of countless souls, somehow scraping a living.

Fast forward 200 more years to London in 1830. Our Roman would have been stunned at what lay

before her. In those same poor neighbourhoods, little had changed. The rapid influx of workers removed from the land by the Inclosures Acts (orig sp.) had left towns unable to cope. The filth, the stench of rotting animal corpses, the sewage running through the streets, the insufferably polluted air and contaminated drinking water, 20 to 40 people to a house, it was all still there. There was no joy in being poor in 19th century London.

Child Labour

Historically, there has always been child labour. However, when Britain's first rural textile mills (they had to locate next to a stream for power) were built in 1769, a high percentage of the workers were children, hired as 'child apprentices.' to avoid having to pay wages. These child apprentices were the poorest of the poor, drawn from orphanages and workhouses. For their toils, they received clothes and food, but no more.

From the more relaxed child labour of cottage industries, child labour in the factories became something far more odious. In historian E P Thompsons words, they were "places of sexual licence, foul language, cruelty, violent accidents and alien manners."

The factories were characterized by strict discipline, harsh punishment, unhealthy working conditions, low wages and long hours. Workers were stripped of their freedom, dignity and creativity.

When steam engines became the power source for the mills, factory towns and villages sprang up

throughout the English midlands. Child labour had proven itself as highly profitable, so once again, children were extensively used in the town-based mills. Children as young as five worked 12-16 hours a day with no meal break, 6 days a week.

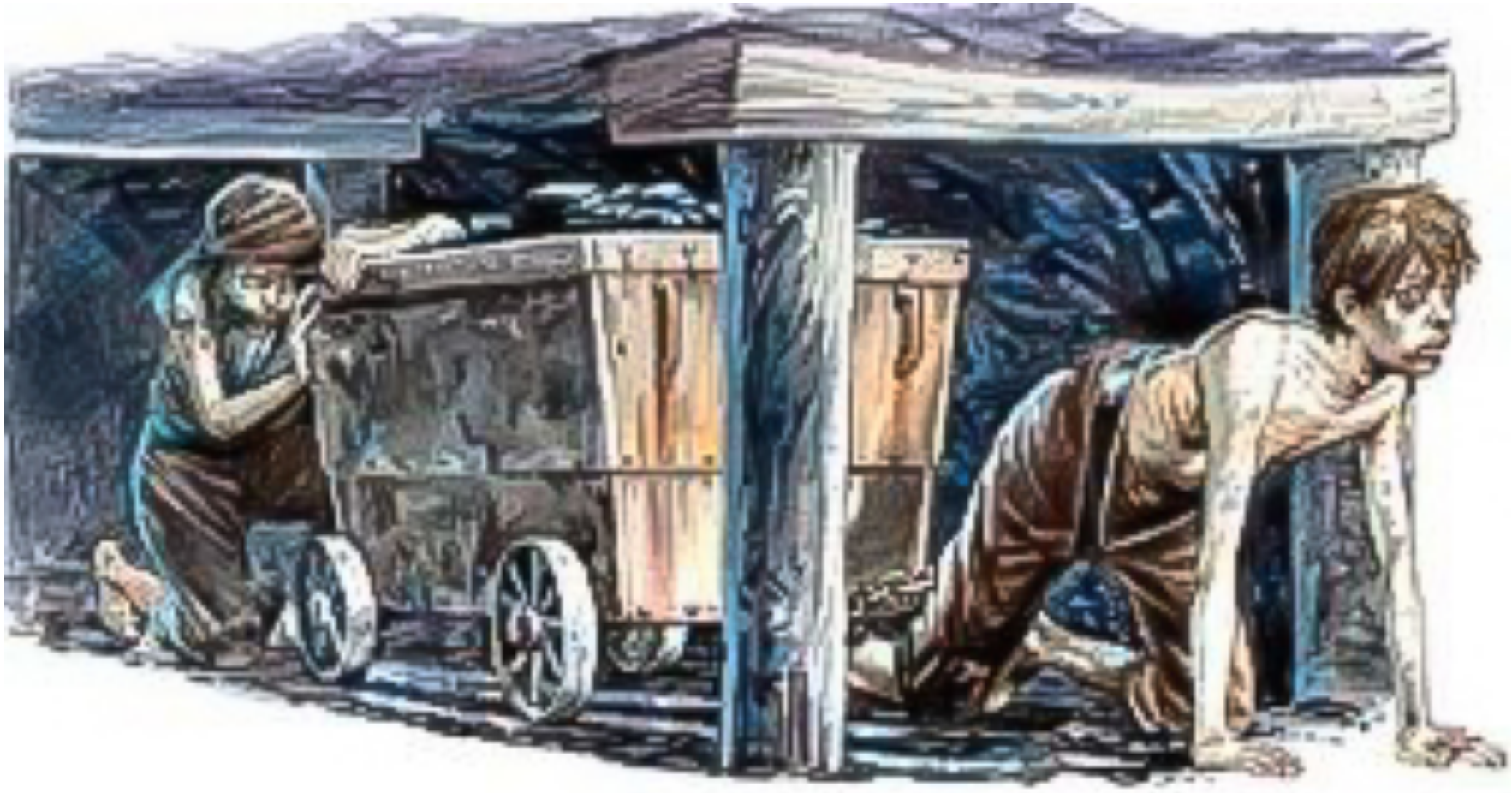
The factories were stifling, poorly lit and crowded. Reformers demanded child labour laws and by 1847, some limits had been placed on the length of the working day for women and children. Children were also used extensively in the coal and metal mines, prized for their small size to negotiate the tight tunnels. Working conditions in the mines were worse than those in the factories ;

Worse yet was the plight of chimney sweeps. Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, narrower chimneys were mandatory to reduce fire

A child chimney sweep

hazard. That led to the use of small children as chimney sweeps. The children were typically aged 5 to 9 but children as young as 4 were used. Again, they came from workhouses, orphanages or were bought from destitute parents. The child would fit himself into the 18 inch space diagonally, then shinny up the chimney using his back, elbows and knees, brushing and chipping away the soot and creosote as he went. The ash would rain down on top of him creating insufferable respiratory disorders and painful, usually lethal scrotal cancer which set in by adolescence. These so-called 'apprentices' were really slaves, for they received no pay, worked long hours and were allowed one day off per year. A bath may not come a child's way for months. Sometimes, the boys got stuck and died of asphyxiation. They received the bare minimum of food and at night, they slept with their master in a coal cellar, covering themselves with soot sacks to stay warm.

Astonishingly, the use of child chimney sweeps continued in Britain until it was outlawed in 1873 but the practice remained in the United States into the early 1900s.



Child coal miners, Britain

London: Street children lining up for breakfast

The London poor

The London poor

The London poor

Young coal miners, late 1800s

Young coal miners, late 1800s

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Quakers

A Force For Social Change

My mother's extended family lived all over England and, with few exceptions, they were all Quakers — members of the Religious Society of Friends. They had deep Irish roots too, largely in Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Cork. They were close-knit — they married, socialized and worshiped within the Quaker community — and they were all committed to providing not just social relief, but far-sighted social change.

In the 1600s, there was growing unrest among commoners over the wealth, power and dominance of the Protestant Church. These 'non-conformists' were losing the faith in increasing numbers -- enough to be seen as a threat by the establishment. They were heavily persecuted and, routinely prosecuted – their animals, crops and lands were confiscated, their backs were lashed unmercifully and many were imprisoned. Some languished in dungeons for years, some never returned. In the early days, Quakers were obliged to hold clandestine meetings in a member's home, taking the chance that neighbours would not report them.

By the 18th century, persecution was more limited to constraints on what a Quaker could do for a living. They could not hold public office, teach in the universities or work in the military or clergy (nor would they). This, as it happened, served them well, for it required them to make a living as merchants, craftsmen, educators, inventors, industrialists and scientists.

Make a living they did. As the Industrial Revolution gained steam, Quaker businesses became renowned for innovation, quality and fairness, and they thrived accordingly. Quakers married within the Quaker community and Quaker businesses collaborated for mutual gain. They were devoted to their faith that called them to live a life of integrity, worship, hard work and community service.

Although many of these entrepreneurial Quakers became wealthy, they never forgot their religious commitment to serve the community – not just the Quaker community that required little help, but the community-at-large. This was not an obligation; it was a strongly-held devotion.

During the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, Quakers were on the streets of Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Cork, operating daily soup kitchens that kept many from death's door. Quakers lobbied for prison reform (Elizabeth Fry), the cessation of press-ganging (kidnapping boys and men to serve on Royal Navy ships) and child labour, better working conditions in the factories and on ships, the abolition of slavery and equality for women, including the vote. Quakers were, I believe, the most progressive, effective, comprehensive, intractable and continuous force for social reform in the western world – ever.

Quakers valued education and educated with values. For hundreds of years, they built and operated their own schools, seven of which continue to operate in England today. Contrary to the harsh, rote learning approach to education taken by mainstream school teachers, Quaker teachers encouraged, inspired, invited discussion and spared no resources to provide their students with an exceptional education. Graduates of Quaker schools became leaders in politics, science, economics, education and business.

Tales

Abolition of Slavery

Equality is a fundamental tenet of Quakerism and it has been so since George Fox first conceived of his new religion in the 1650s. The notion of equality to Quakers meant that no person had power over another. Titles of any kind were rejected and the power inherent in titles disavowed. Quakers would not swear allegiance to the crown, do military service, recognize the Anglican Church and so on. Thus, slavery was entirely antithetical to Quaker beliefs and over the centuries, Quakers were a constant, central force in the fight for abolition. The abolition of slavery was always a core theme of Quaker thought and practice.

Slave As Property

Slavery proved a tenacious foe for those dedicated to its elimination. To enslave another human being and justify one's actions, one must first, change one's perception of the enslaved from human being to something (and I emphasize 'some thing') less, to a working farm animal perhaps, such as a horse. A horse can be trained to do useful work and can even be viewed with affection. Yet a horse will never be a member of the family, it must always know who's boss, it lives removed from the house, it might have offspring which you also own and, if necessary, it can be sold and another purchased.

Armed then, with a perception of slave as a highly adaptable variant of farm animal, slave owners freed their consciences from any feelings of wrong-doing, a perception which was widely held in most sectors of European society at the time, further reinforcing the 'slavery is our right' mind set.

The domestication of animals changed the world. More work could be done, in particular more food could be produced, more territory could be acquired, people could travel greater distances and eat healthier diets. Employing animals greatly raised standards of living and allowed human beings the unheard of luxury of leisure time. Slavery was an extension of this advantage times a factor of 100. Great wealth could be and was achieved on the backs of slaves, as one owner could have as many slaves as he or she wished or could afford (there were many 'she' slave owners). In certain industries such as sugar cane and cotton production, slaves were the only way to achieve the outputs and massive profits which occurred, profits which flowed also to government coffers, service businesses, etcetera. Slaves, then, became an essential element of the entire economy of the British Empire.

Still Today

The modern day equivalent of slaves (apart from the unspeakable tragedy of modern day slaves themselves) is the situation in the southwestern United States where illegal Mexican immigrants living in the shadows of society cannot own property, drive a car, get health care or have a

bank account. Like slaves of yesteryear, they perform the most repetitive, degrading, backbreaking work at the mercy often, of unscrupulous employers. Yet, if all illegals were deported, the economies of those states would collapse. Illegal Mexicans have become an essential component of the southwestern economy.

The Economic Factor

The point of all this is that the fight for the abolition of slavery was more than an appeal to the consciences of Euro-Britons. It was a threat to the personal economies of the wealthy and to the economy of the nation as a whole. Those two constituencies often took the form of the same people, Members of the House of Lords and Members of Parliament. One thing was clear to those engaged in the anti-slavery movement. There were two fronts to bring on board: the public at large and Parliament.

Appeal to Parliament

The Quakers had their own system of local and regional committees which carried out myriad social change initiatives including abolition. As well, secular anti-slavery societies were formed to accomplish the same end. Towards the end of the 18th century, the Quaker community had earned an impeccable reputation for high morals and community service. They were well connected and influential in greater British society. Thus, on 16 June 1783, Quakers petitioned Parliament directly on the matter of anti-slavery.

This, the first Quaker petition to Parliament, read as follows:

To the Commons of Great Britain,

in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the People called Quakers,

Sheweth -

That your Petitioners met in this their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved negroes, conceive themselves engaged in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the Legislature.

Your Petitioners regret, that a nation professing the Christian Faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice as by a cruel treatment of this oppressed race, to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the Gospel.

Under the countenance of the laws of this country, many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to natural rights of mankind, are held, as personal property, in cruel bondage; and your Petitioners being informed, that a Bill for the regulation of the African trade is now before the House, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting Negroes. Your Petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whatsoever,

or that the House would grant such other relief in the premises, as in its wisdom may seem meet.

Signed in and on behalf of our yearly meeting, held in London, the 16th day of 6th month, 1783.

Two hundred seventy-three influential Quakers signed the petition, including my 3rd great grandfather, William Spriggs, and 25 other family members.

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Zong Massacre

Two years earlier, a horrifying event occurred in the West Indies which, no doubt, added weight to the Quakers' decision to petition Parliament. It was the Zong massacre. The Zong was a Liverpool-based ship engaged in the Atlantic Slave Trade. As the ship approached the West Indies, navigational errors caused the drinking water to run low. A decision was made to save water by tossing slaves overboard. This the crew did in lots of 50, including ultimately, the women and children. One hundred thirty slaves lost their lives.

Once the Zong reached port in Black River, Jamaica, its owners made an insurance claim for loss of cargo. The insurance company refused to pay and the matter went to court. The jury found for the slavers, although later, new evidence was brought forth which pointed fault on the part of the captain and crew. The claim was rejected on appeal. No criminal case was forthcoming, as there was no basis in law for charges of murder. The slaves were cargo, nothing more. Yet the horror of the event could not but have prodded a sector of the British public and a few Parliamentarians off the fence and into the arms of waiting abolitionists.

Still, abolition would prove to be a slow, incremental process, largely because it had become such an entrenched component of the economy of the British Empire and because those who had much to lose by abolition were the wealthy who held a great deal of politico-economic influence.

First Legislation

Nevertheless, the efforts of abolition groups along with the writings and lectures provided by escaped slaves such as Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho eventually shifted public opinion against slavery, placing pressure on Parliament to legislate constraints on the practice. The first came in 1807 when the Slave Trade Act made the buying and selling of slaves illegal throughout the British Empire. Yet a no-trade law did not abolish slavery.

The Fight Continued

Abolitionists led largely by William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, continued the fight, employing every campaign tactic used today: organizing action groups, investigation and research, writing, speeches and graphic images, giving the campaign a name and slogan, obtaining the backing of the influential, petitioning and lobbying Parliament, boycotting sugar and rum, legal challenges through the courts and election campaigning and support for reformist MPs.

Abolition

Finally, in 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act ended

‘The Slave Ship’ by J M W Turner depicting the Zong Massacre of 1781

slavery, at least overtly, across the British Empire.

I say ‘overtly’ because shortly after, a system of indenturing was implemented, slavery by another name.

Seven years later in 1840, the World Anti-slavery Convention was held in London. It was designed to articulate and close the loopholes on slavery legislation once and for all. Again, a number of my Quaker family were there. That was essentially the death knell of legal slavery in the British Empire, although slavery continued in the United States until the end of the Civil War in 1865.

World Anti-Slavery Convention 1840,

Famine Relief

Jonathan Pim (1806-1885)

A terrible famine struck Ireland in 1845 and lasted seven long years until 1852. It is known as the Great Hunger, the Irish Potato Famine or in Gaelic as An Gorta Mor. The presenting cause of the Great Hunger was a potato blight which destroyed the potato crops upon which the Irish were almost wholly dependent, both for food and for family income. About one million people died and another 2.1 million fled the country, mostly for the United States. It was one of the greatest mass emigrations from an island in history. Ireland lost a quarter of its population, some towns lost 65% of their residents. There were factors which exacerbated the tragedy. Lord Palmerston and his Whig government, well aware of the horror unfolding, chose to view the matter as a natural event which in due course, capitalism would correct without government intervention. As well, at the same time as the Great Hunger was ravaging the population, landlords of the great Irish estates (including Lord Palmerston) were evicting their tenant farmers to modernize their agricultural operations and boost profits. Then, with people on their last legs, came disease which they had no strength left to resist. It was a perfect storm with deadly results.

At the time, there were about 3000 Quakers living in Ireland. Joseph Bewley, a tea and coffee

merchant from Dublin, recognized the horror unfolding and established a Central Relief Committee to spearhead a Quaker famine relief effort. Local committees were organized in all the major centres of Ireland. Every committee coordinated its efforts with other local committees and the Central committee, creating a highly efficient distribution system for funds, information and resources. The London Committee raised funds overseas, collaborating with religious groups, notably in the United States. Large amounts of money and goods were shipped to Ireland and distributed. In a single year, the Quaker coordinated initiative raised 200,000 British pounds for famine relief.

The immediate challenge was simply to keep people alive. Large numbers were dying of starvation every day. Soup kitchens were established in the worst affected towns using local people. Two hundred ninety-four copper steam vats were imported from a Quaker manufacturer in Liverpool in which a soup of rice and maize known as ‘stirabout’ was cooked. Along with bread, It was a meagre meal but it was sufficient to keep body and soul together. The soup kitchens saved thousands of lives.

Quaker efforts during the famine are succinctly described in this quote from an article published by the Quaker community:

> “Through the winter of 1846/7, Quakers distributed clothes donated by the British relief committees. Some had been made by donors and others were from factories that

had been induced to donate. By the following winter, large quantities of fabric from America were being donated, and making this into clothing generated employment.

By the summer of 1847, the focus of the Quaker relief efforts was changing. The scale of the destitution was too great for Quaker resources alone and those who had pushed through the early efforts at famine relief were exhausted. Government soup kitchens were coming into effect and Quakers saw no need to duplicate their efforts. Instead, they began to focus on providing longer term help.

Loans and grants were given to stimulate local economies, from cottage industries to flax mills. Fishermen were helped to redeem tackle they had been forced to pawn. There were some, largely unsuccessful, attempts to set up new fisheries.

English Quaker William Bennett realised that one of the reasons the failure of the potato crop had been so devastating was the over-dependence on that one crop. Wanting to encourage more diversity, he purchased vegetable seeds that he then distributed in Counties Mayo and Donegal. Later, Quakers helped to distribute a much larger government donation of seeds to 40 thousand small holders and helped to plant 9.6 thousand acres.

In 1848, Quakers supported a land reclamation scheme, paying local workers

generously to bring wasteland back into agricultural use."

In the spring of 1849, land was purchased in east Galway for a model farm. Buildings were constructed, land drains laid and a stream diverted to power a mill. The farm, employing more than 200 people to grow a variety of crops and raise animals, continued well into the 1860s, providing a working demonstration for small holders on how to successfully grow crops they were previously unfamiliar with.

A similar scheme was set up, independently of the relief committees, in Connemara by James Ellis and his wife. They turned 1800 acres of bog into a model farm, ran a school and a dispensary and laid out gardens.

Many of the Irish Friends who worked on the relief efforts, including Bewley and Pim, exhausted themselves or permanently damaged their health. In a report written in 1852, the Quakers concluded – in the face of the number of deaths and the scale of emigration that had resulted from the famine – that their response had been a failure. Yet more than £200k in funds had been raised by Quakers around the world. Nearly 8 thousand tons of food and 8 tons of seed had been distributed. Apart from those that were fed, many were given employment or taught new skills.

The scale and scope of the Quaker efforts was far out of proportion with the size of their

community and is still remembered in Ireland today."

Source: https://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/316/Famine-Relief-in-Ireland-1846-1850.

Jonathan Pim

Jonathan Pim (1806-1885) was an Irish Quaker. He and his brothers were drapers and textile manufacturers. Jonathan was the first Irish Member of Parliament. He was elected Secretary of the Central Famine Relief Committee wherein his gargantuan efforts (along with those of Joseph Bewley) at organizing and lobbying were instrumental to the success of the Quaker famine relief project. Jonathan campaigned for radical land reform in Ireland. He successfully petitioned the government to change the system of land tenure that left smallholders in such a vulnerable situation and helped to draft the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849.

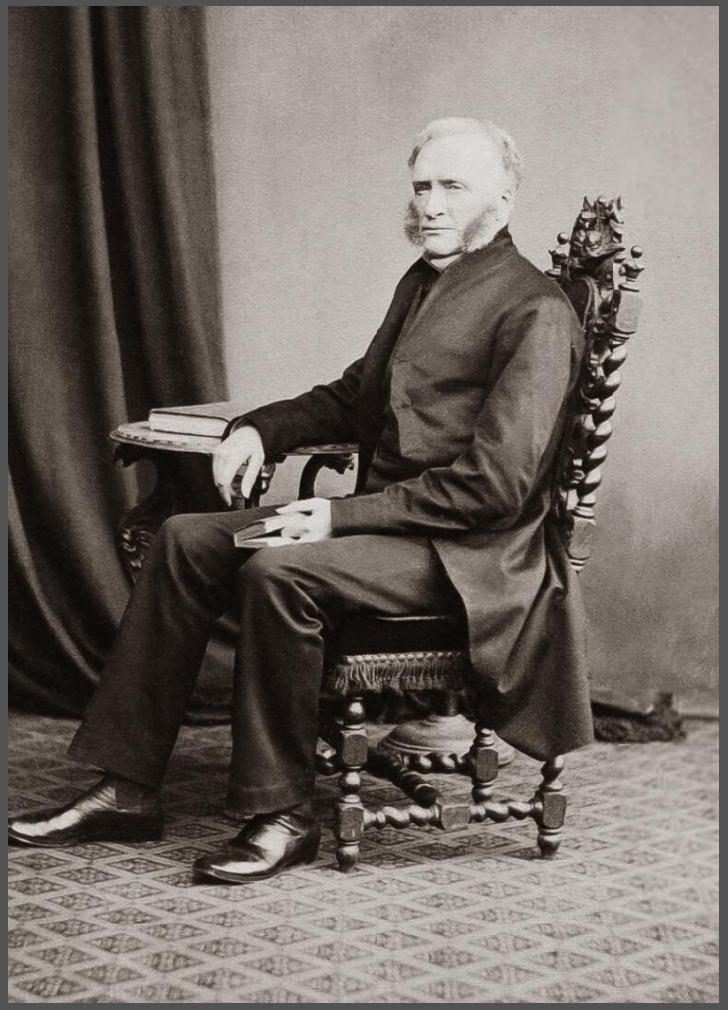
After the famine, he bought an estate in the west of Ireland for the purpose of benefiting the tenants. After the first Irish Land Act was passed in 1870, Jonathan immediately offered his tenants the option to own the land.

Jonathan's daughter Mary was married to John Richardson Wigham, the pioneering lighthouse engineer (see 'Light' in this section). Jonathan worked himself to exhaustion at famine relief. Joseph Bewley died from his famine efforts at age 56. Fifteen Quakers died from famine-related causes.

Jonathan Pim (1806-1885)

Manufacturer, MP
Famine Relief Organizer

Relation: father-in-law of uncle of wife of 3rd cousin 3x removed



Opium Trade Ban

Joseph Gundry Alexander (1848-1914)

Opium was introduced in limited quantities to China in the 7th century by Turkish and Arab traders. One thousand years later, in the 17th century, the habit of smoking tobacco reached China from North America and soon after that, the smoking of opium in China became widespread. By 1729 opium addiction was sufficiently problematic that the emperor banned the sale and use of it. The trade in opium continued unabated. In 1796 the emperor outlawed the importing and cultivating of opium. Still the opium trade continued.

Prior to 1773 the British realized that opium could be grown cheaply in India and sold to the Chinese for immense profits. American companies joined in, buying cheap opium from the Turks. But there was a problem. The British were eager to buy Chinese goods such as tea, silk and porcelain which were in high demand among the wealthy in Britain. However, the Chinese had little interest in Britain's manufactured goods. With no goods to trade, the British were obliged to pay for their purchases with gold and silver. An enormous trade imbalance resulted.

Eventually, the British realized that the solution to the trade imbalance was to smuggle opium into China against the emperor's ban and sell it for gold

and silver which could then be used to buy the high profit items for the home market.

The British East India Company, which controlled all British trade with China, could not be caught importing and selling the opium itself. Instead, it contracted to 'country traders' to get it to Canton. There, the country traders sold the opium for gold and silver to smugglers who operated along the Chinese coast. The gold and silver was handed over to the East India Company which, as mentioned, used it to buy high-end, high profit goods for the wealthy back home.

In 1729 about 200 chests of opium were imported into China. That number rose to 1000 chests per year in 1767 and rose again to 10,000 chests between 1820 and 1830. Each chest weighed approximately 63.5 kilograms. By 1838, imports of opium to China reached 40,000 chests. The balance of payments had shifted in favour of Britain.

The emperor was enraged when he learned of the 'behind-the-back tactics of the British and with the resulting devastation to his empire. He ordered his executive to raid the foreigners' warehouses in Canton and destroy any opium they found. The

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[Aside: my great great grandfather on my father's side, Daniel Caldwell, was, as a young man, one of those coastal smugglers. He skippered a lorcha, a sailing vessel built for speed. The lorcha was the 19th century equivalent of the speed boats used to smuggle alcohol to thirsty Americans during prohibition in the 1920s. Read the stories of the Caldwells (Bruce House) on this site in 2022]

Chinese found plenty and burned it. The Brits, in turn, were fit to be tied and turned to diplomacy — gunboat diplomacy — to sort it out. The Chinese were defenceless against the superior might of the British Navy and the first of three Opium Wars was over before you could whistle the British national anthem.

A second opium war followed a trumped up allegation by the British, fabricated to force the Chinese to open more cities to trade. This time a French-British alliance got the desired result in short order, requiring the Qing government to legalize the opium trade. By then, trade in opium had reached 50,000-60,000 chests per year, a figure which continued to rise for the next 30 years. The street value today of one chest of opium is about one million dollars.

The third and final Opium War secured for the British the island of Hong Kong in a 100 year lease. Hong Kong and Singapore would become the British Empire's trade, naval and administrative centres in Southeast Asia and consolidate Britain's position as the dominant colonial power in the region.

The upshot of the whole mess was that after three wars, known as the Opium Wars, China rolled over and the British got rights to trade in several Chinese cities *and*…they got the island of Hong Kong. The opium trade continued unabated, devastating the nation in every social class and walkof life.

Man With A Mission

British missionaries in China had long been reporting the seriousness of opium addiction in that country and its connection to underhanded British trade. As the opium trade continued unabated, concerned individuals and citizen groups in Britain began to ‘lift the lid’ on the matter.

One such individual was Joseph Gundry Alexander. Joseph was born in Bath, England to Quaker parents in 1848. He was a devoted Quaker all his life. As a lawyer, specializing in International Law, Joseph applied his Quaker values to all he did professionally and in this way, came to focus his philanthropic efforts on two major social issues of the day — the abolition of slavery and the opium drug trade. On abolition, Joseph worked tirelessly for decades, collaborating with international abolition organizations and political entities at the highest level and writing articles to inform and convince decision-makers to take action.

In 1881, Joseph took up what became, more than any other of his notable endeavours, his life’s work: the cessation of the opium trade between India and China. Much interest had been generated in Britain in the issue, most notably after the formation of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Drug Trade Between India and China in 1874. Numerous towns organized and raised funds to support the fight and in 1882, four hundred and eighty-nine petitions for the abolition of the Opium Trade were presented to Parliament.

As is often the case with emotionally laden issues like this, there is great fire in the belly to begin but the enthusiasm cannot be sustained. Interest in the opium issue ebbed and a number of years passed during which not much progress was made. In 1891, MP and family member Sir Joseph Pease (the first Quaker elected to Parliament) put forth a resolution that the opium trade was “morally indefensible”. Family member Alfred Webb (see ‘Alfred John Webb’ in this section) proposed to Parliament that a Royal Commission be established to investigate the impacts of abolishing the India-China drug trade on the Indian economy and on Indian corporations and individuals. The objective of the commission would be to identify the reparations necessary from the British exchequer, reparations which would eliminate opposition and clear the path to abolition of the trade. Joseph Alexander was a member of that commission and travelled with others across India including visits to Singapore, Hong Kong and multiple cities in China. Every vested party was interviewed, from opium users in their opium dens to high-ranking government officials, some who used every possible tactic to stonewall the efforts of the commission and thus safeguard the considerable revenues of the trade. Others, notably in China where the negative impacts of the opium trade were most widespread and devastating, offered their full support. Joseph would make many more trips to China over the coming years.

Response by Parliament to the report of the commission was muted. Perhaps the reports seven volumes and 2500 pages proved

overwhelming, for few parliamentarians read it, choosing instead to digest the summary in the London Times. The matter was placed on the back burner and the abolitionists were obliged to start their efforts anew. Ten years passed, then in 1905 Quaker family member Joshua Rowntree published a book “The Imperial Drug Trade” which re-ignited interest in the moribund opium trade issue. Joseph’s son Horace Alexander writes

> “During the General Election at the beginning of 1906, nearly two hundred-and-fifty successful candidates formally promised to support the anti- opium cause in Parliament, and others expressed their approval of the policy of the Society. The huge Radical majority was full of men ready to tilt at the monopoly of the Indian Government, and contained many who wished to see the stain of opium cleared from the British name in the Far East.

John Morley, as Secretary of State for India, declared on behalf of the Government " that if China wanted seriously and in good faith to restrict the consumption of this drug . . . the British Government would not close the door." " To any plan for the restriction of the consumption of opium brought forward in good faith, the Government of India and His Majesty's Government would agree, even though it might cost us some sacrifice." The resolution was agreed to without dissent, and the " happy band of pilgrims " — J. G.

Opium den, China

> Alexander amongst them — who had fought so long to reach the goal now in sight, linked each other's arms and marched down from the lobby to the street singing the doxology."

Not until 1915, however, did the opium trade between India and China officially end. Yet the British Indian monopoly on opium carried on until India won its independence from Britain in 1947, thanks in good measure to the protracted mediation efforts of Joseph's son, Horace Gundry Alexander (see 'Indian Independence', this section).

Caucasian opium smokers, 1920s

Joseph Gundry Alexander (1848-1914)

Lawyer, Pacifist, Opium Trade Activist

Relation: husband of paternal 1st cousin of wife of 1st cousin 2x removed

Change Maker

Prison Reform

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)

Justice

Much of Criminal justice in the 18th century was carried out by unpaid lay individuals from the community. Police Officers were unpaid volunteers as were lay magistrates who heard lesser offences. Magistrates were easily corrupted and held the power to significantly alter a person's life. Serious cases were heard in the Crown courts where, until the end of the 18th century, there were no defence barristers. Judge and jury examined the accused and witnesses directly. Each case lasted but minutes and dozens of cases were heard in the course of a day.

The sentences handed out were largely determined by the 'bloody code,' a list of 200 crimes punishable by death which included lesser offences such as poaching, burglary and criminal damage.

Executions were by hanging and were held in public. London carried out 8 hanging events per year with as many as 20 unfortunates per event.

It was a popular diversion. Thousands turned out to jeer the prisoners as they were transported to the gallows in carts along a 3 mile route. They

Elizabeth Fry in the prisons

were noisy, riotous affairs. The same procedure was followed for those who received sentences of transportation. However, they rode the carts from the prison to waiting ships docked in the Thames. ‘Transportation’ meant going for up to 12 years to the West Indies to work the sugar plantations or to America to the cotton and tobacco plantations or later to Australia to work on infrastructure projects for the new colony. Even the very young were transported. Those who were transported rarely returned to Britain.

Lesser crimes received local sentences — fines, branding, shaming, the pillory, whipping or lengthy terms in Houses of Correction.

Prisons in Georgian Britain

The concept of prison is relatively new. It was introduced around 1750 as a more humane way to deal with lawbreakers than what then existed. What existed wasn’t much — ‘transportation’ to the colonies, often with an order to carry out hard labour, or execution. Even a petty offence such as stealing an apple from a cart or, get this, suspicion that an offence had been committed was enough to send one packing to Van Dieman’s Land (Tasmania) or British North America for 7+ years. Hundreds of offences resulted in death. It didn’t matter whether you were a serial offender, a 9 year old child, a woman with young children or mentally ill. It was equal opportunity justice.

The new approach had a decidedly religious tone. In effect, it was designed to be both punishment and rehabilitation. It invited or rather required prisoners to self-reflect, to seek and discover the error of their ways, then do penitence, hence the term ‘penitentiary.’ Under this approach, a common sentence was one year in solitary confinement (reflection) and three years of hard labour (penitence).

In the 1770s the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire took it upon himself to visit hundreds of prisons across England, Wales and Europe, then wrote a damning report called ‘The State of Prisons in 1777.’ The report described in detail the reprehensible conditions. Men, women and children, those awaiting trial, petty and serious offenders, and the insane were thrust together in the same cells. The cells were damp, unsanitary and overcrowded, and offered neither privacy nor protection. The report also laid out revolutionary ideas for change. The author was John Howard, familiar to many of us today as the namesake of the John Howard Society, an advocacy group for prisoners and parolees. John Howard’s report might have triggered a tidal wave of prison reform.

It almost did. In 1780 Sir George Onesiphorus Paul of Gloucester built a prison applying Howard’s ideas. Men, women and children were separated, prisoners wore uniforms, were taught to read and write, were fed sustainably and their health was monitored. As well, prisoners were classified to prison areas according to their status: awaiting trial, young offender, petty offender or serious criminal. What Sir Paul and John Howard

built 250 years ago was in large measure the prison system we use today.

It caught on. Several more prisons were built on the Paul-Howard model. However, adverse circumstances allowed prison reform to slip beyond the back burner into the backyard. Rising crime statistics, more conservative attitudes (read fear) among the public, MPs and policy makers, and a war with France left prisoners to languish in indescribable hell-holes of filth, overcrowding and corruption.

Elizabeth Fry

Elizabeth Fry Elizabeth Fry was born Elizabeth Gurney to an affluent Quaker family. Her father was a partner in Gurney Bank. Her mother was a Barclay of Barclay's Bank. Elizabeth was 12 when her mother died, leaving Elizabeth to share child rearing responsibilities.

At age 20, Elizabeth married Joseph Fry, also a banker, a Quaker and member of the Fry's chocolate family. The couple had 11 children. Elizabeth visited Newgate Prison at the suggestion of a family friend. She was horrified and began visiting the prisoners, bringing food and clothes. That was the beginning of her lifelong dedication to prison reform.

Elizabeth founded a school for children imprisoned with their parents. She introduced useful work, notably sewing for the women, and bible study. In 1821, Elizabeth co-founded a women's reform association which became the first nation-wide

women's organization in Britain. In 1824 Elizabeth co-founded the Brighton District Visiting Society providing volunteers to visit the homes of the poor offering help and comfort. The model was duplicated across Britain.

Elizabeth's efforts didn't stop there. In the 1820s she began campaigning for the rights of women being transported to the colonies. On the day of their departure, the 'transportation' women of Newgate Prison were placed in open carts, often huddled together in chains with their few possessions. As the carts proceeded through the streets of London, bystanders jeered and pelted the women with eggs, rotten fruit and filth. Anticipating the infamous journey, the terrified women often rioted in the prison the night before their departure.

Elizabeth visited the Governor of Newgate and persuaded him to use covered carriages for the trip to the dock. Then she convinced the captains of the ships to ensure that the women and children received a fair share of food and water during the voyage. As well, she arranged for the women to take sewing supplies with them to occupy their time, and provide them with a useful skill and a small income upon arrival. Elizabeth visited 106 ships and 12,000 convicts. Her efforts were a significant impetus for the abolition of transportation which finally came in 1837.

In 1840, Elizabeth opened a training school for nurses. One of her students was Florence Nightingale who achieved fame orchestrating nursing for wounded soldiers in the Crimean War.

Elizabeth visited prisons throughout Britain as well as Europe. Many of her recommendations, including separation of the sexes, useful work and religious and secular instruction were implemented during her lifetime.

On several occasions she was invited to visit Queen Victoria who became a keen supporter of her work. Elizabeth died of a stroke in 1845, aged 65. One thousand Londoners attended her funeral. On her birthday in 2002, the British Mint introduced a new 5 pound. On it was Elizabeth Fry's portrait. In Canada today, the Elizabeth Fry Society operates nation-wide, providing support to women prisoners and parolees and their families. Elizabeth Gurney Fry was one of the outstanding figures of social change.

Elizabeth Fry in the prisons

Elizabeth (Gurney) Fry (1780-1845)

Prison Reformer

Relation: paternal 1st cousin of wife of 3rd cousin 1x removed of husband of great-aunt

Change Maker

Richard Davis Webb
(1805-1872)

Richard Davis Webb was born to an Irish Quaker family. In 1837, aged 32, he co-founded the Hibernian Antislavery Association with two others. Webb and two of his sons, Alfred and Richard, corresponded regularly with one of the most influential American abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison.

The famous Frederick Douglass, American escaped slave turned orator and abolitionist, held a strong admiration for Webb. Douglass found that most white abolitionists would fail to speak their minds with him for fear of being accused of racism. Richard Webb, he said, argued with him honestly and without reserve. Douglass hoped relationships such as theirs would exist across races when slavery ended in America.

Webb printed pamphlets, posters and books for human rights movements including Douglass's best selling book, 'The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.' He also wrote 'The Life and Letters of Captain John Brown' and actively supported women's suffrage.

Alfred John Webb

(1834–1908)

Alfred John Webb was extraordinary in the breadth of his human rights efforts. He was an Irish MP, supporter of home government, president of the Indian National Congress, a member of suffrage, anti-slavery and anti-imperialism groups, an outspoken critic of the opium trade, the Indian caste system and racism, and printed literature for organizations involved in yet more reforms. The following is a direct quote from Wikipedia.

Alfred John Webb (1834–1908) was an Irish Quaker from a family of activist printers. His father was Richard Davis Webb. He became an Irish Parliamentary Party politician and Member of Parliament (MP), as well as a participant in nationalist movements around the world. He supported Butt's Home Government Association and the United Irish League. At Madras in 1894, he became the third non-Indian (after George Yule and William Wedderburn) to preside over the Indian National Congress.

Early life

Alfred Webb was the first child and only son of the three children of Richard Davis Webb and Hannah Waring Webb (1810–1862). The family ran a printing shop in Dublin and

belonged to a Quaker group that supported reforms such as suffrage, the abolition of slavery and anti-imperialism. The family press printed booklets for many of these causes and, in turn, their regular customers grew to include other similar organizations, including the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association and the Ladies' Land League, an organization founded by Fanny and Anna Parnell in 1880 that advocated on behalf of poor tenant farmers.

Career

Alfred Webb was interested in literature and history and began to write a Compendium of Irish Biography. In 1865, he began to take a more active interest in Irish politics. He was inspired by the Fenians, although he believed in non-violence and the Fenians of that time believed that Ireland could only gain independence through an armed revolution. He was first elected to the House of Commons of the United Kingdom on 24 February 1890, when he won a by-election for the West Waterford constituency. He was again returned for West Waterford in the 1892 general election, this time as an anti-Parnellite MP.

His family had taken an interest in the welfare of British colonies and had been outspoken opponents of the opium traffic into China. Webb was a close friend of Dadabhai Naoroji, a key member of the Indian National Congress, who was also a friend of other Irish nationalists including Michael Davitt and Frank

Hugh O’Donnell. While they attempted to involve Naoroji in Irish politics, Webb was invited by Naoroji to preside over the Indian National Congress in 1894.

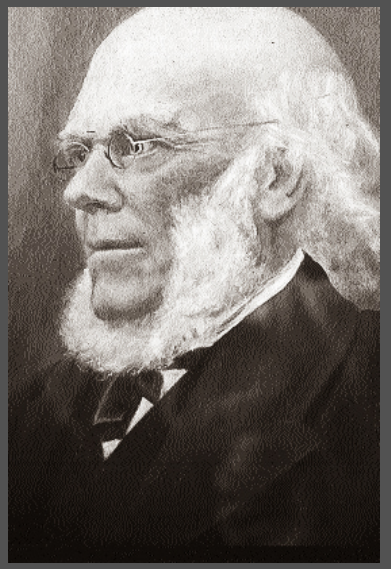
Webb was a supporter of Anti-Caste, Britain's first anti-racism journal which fellow Quaker activist Catherine Impey founded in 1888. Webb was able to rally subscribers and activists for the journal around the world. For example, although he was not a regular subscriber, Webb and Dadabhai Naoroji co-signed a letter with others to request support for a new association: ‘The Society for the Furtherance of Human Brotherhood’.
Source: Wikipedia

Change Maker

Richard Davis Webb (1805-1872)

Irish publisher and slavery abolitionist

Relation: father-in-law of 3rd cousin 3x removed

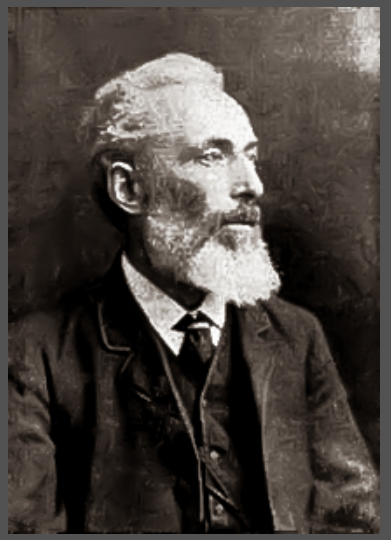


Change Maker

Alfred John Webb (1834-1908)

MP and Human rights activist on multiple fronts

Relation: husband of 3rd cousin 3x removed



Women's Rights

Prior to the onset of the Industrial Revolution women had a vital role in ensuring the social and economic success of the family unit.

> "[Women] brewed beer, handled the milk and butter, raised chickens and pigs, grew vegetables and fruit, spun flax and wool into thread, sewed and patched clothing, and nursed the sick."

So crucial were they to the family operation that it earned them unspoken equality with their men. As industrialization grew, men opted for factory jobs and home-based economies began to disappear, and with them diminished the importance of the woman's role which became limited to unpaid household work. Women from the lower class were obliged to take low wage jobs which often subjected them to harsh, intimidating treatment by male overseers.

Working-class women did not have the servants available to middle and upper class women and thus, their lives were significantly harder.

> "Domestic chores for women without servants meant a great deal of washing

World Anti-Slavery Convention 1840, London

and cleaning. Coal-dust from home stoves and factories filled the city air, coating windows, clothing, furniture and rugs. Washing clothing and linens meant scrubbing by hand in a large zinc or copper tub. Some water would be heated and added to the wash tub, and perhaps a handful of soda to soften the water. Curtains were taken down and washed every fortnight; they were often so blackened by coal smoke that they had to be soaked in salted water before being washed. Scrubbing the front wooden doorstep of the home every morning was done to maintain respectability."

Before 1839 women had few rights and in law, were viewed as the property of their husband or father. Divorce proceedings were accompanied by high fees which only wealthy women could afford. After divorce, custody of the children fell to the husband who was also required to support them financially. Public pressure from women through the 1800s established a presumption of custody to the mother to the age of sixteen.

Divorce for the middle class became possible when fees were reduced although divorce on the grounds of adultery, desertion or cruelty remained elusive until 1857 with the passage of the Matrimonial Causes Act which made divorce a civil affair beyond the reach of the Church.

By 1882 four laws had been passed which, together, were called the Married Women's Property Act, allowing married women control over

their own assets. Poor women, especially unmarried mothers, single independent women and widows with children continued to live difficult lives throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century.

Gradually, education and elevated work opportunities for middle class women opened up: Women found work as secretaries, teachers, nurses, librarians and even medical doctors. Working class women remained, for the most part, stuck with low paid factory jobs and miserable working conditions.

Despite protracted efforts by multiple suffragette movements, the vote for women proved unachievable by the end of the 19th century. For all but a few wealthy female landowners, women were considered intellectually immature and incapable of comprehending the complexities of political issues and thus unable to vote responsibly.

In the late 1800s they were permitted to vote in local elections but the right to vote federally did not extend to women in Britain and other countries until the early twentieth century and much later for some. In Canada, women were granted the federal vote in 1928 and later for provincial elections. Sadly, nay outrageously, the last to receive the vote in Canada were indigenous women, granted federally in 1949 and 11 to 15 years later provincially.

Curiously, the first jurisdiction in the world to continuously grant women the vote (in a number of countries the vote was granted, then later

removed) was Pitcairn Island, the remote South Seas hideaway of Bounty mutineers. The vote for women was first granted there in 1838. See 'Tales' in this section for an interesting story of Women's Rights on Pitcairn Island involving…yes, a relative.

As the 19th century wore on, reforms which advanced women's rights occurred at a glacial pace and their impacts were generally less than profound. As outrage among women grew, some adopted radical tactics. Women protesters engaged in "heckling, banging on doors, smashing shop windows, burning mailboxes, and arson of unoccupied buildings." Women imprisoned for radical actions went on hunger strikes, public buildings were damaged and Liberal Party meetings were systematically disrupted.

Militant suffragettes suspended their actions at the outbreak of World War I and did not resume them after the war. Ten more years passed before women in Britain achieved suffrage on an equal basis with men in 1928.

World War II proved a landmark event in the fight for women's rights. British women including young Princess Elizabeth, and women throughout the Dominion volunteered to work in the factories, hospitals, schools, farms and military. Many women carried out jobs previously the domain of men and often they proved to be superior workers.

All this opened the eyes of society to the realization that there were no limits to what a woman could do. From the war effort, women amply

demonstrated that they were every bit the equal of men.

However, those same women suffered tremendous disappointment at war's end when, by law, they were obliged to give up their jobs to returning male soldiers. The war had bestowed upon war effort women, perhaps for the first time, cherished gifts — a sense of value, heightened self-esteem, independence and a robust social life free of the dictates of men.

Despite the let-down which many women experienced after the war, the seed was planted for women to assume an equal role to men in all facets of society. Seventy-five years have now passed since the end of the war and although women's rights have come a long way, much still remains to be done before women with roots in the British Empire (or with origins from almost any other place in the world) can confidently say "We have arrived."

In every significant social change movement, change required the sustained efforts of a handful of dyed-in-the-wool activists who kept the effort moving relentlessly forward. Here are the stories of several such women in our family who devoted their lives to the cause of women's rights and who were the driving force of change.

Elizabeth (Eliza) Wigham

(1820-1899)

Eliza was born into a Quaker family. Her mother, sister and brother died when she was ten. Her father John Tertius Wigham was a cotton and shawl manufacturer and her brother John Richardson Wigham was a prominent lighthouse engineer (read his story herein). In 1840 John Wigham remarried Jane Smeal, a leading activist in Glasgow. The Wighams were part of a group of influential Quaker anti-slavery families operating in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle and Dublin. Eliza became a leading suffragist and abolitionist of the 19th century. She lived in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Eliza and her friend Elizabeth (Pease) Nichol attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, as did a number of our Quaker family members.

Eliza was treasurer of the Edinburgh Ladies Emancipation Society and with her step-mother Jane Smeal, established the Edinburgh chapter of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. She served on the Ladies' London Emancipation Society in 1863 and that same year wrote 'The Anti-Slavery cause in America and it's Martyrs,' designed to influence British foreign policy. As well, Eliza lent her expertise to the successful campaign to repeal the British Contagious Diseases Acts which aimed to contain prostitution.

Jane Smeal (1801-1888)

Jane Smeal was born into an affluent Quaker family. Her father, William Smeal, was a Quaker tea merchant from Glasgow. Her brother William was

an ardent abolitionist. Jane became a leading figure in the female anti-slavery movement and in movements for women's rights. Jane was the second wife of John Wigham and the step-mother of Eliza Wigham in whom she found a close friend and avid collaborator in social change. Jane, based in Glasgow, also joined forces with her friend Elizabeth (Pease) Nichol to campaign for universal suffrage. It was an uphill battle. In a letter to Pease she wrote:

> "The females in this city who have much leisure for philanthropic objects are I believe very numerous - but unhappily that is not the class who take an active part in the cause here - neither the noble, the rich, nor the learned are to be found advocating our cause. Our subscribers and most efficient members are all in the middling and working classes but they have great zeal and labour very harmoniously together."

Chauvinism in the Ranks

In 1838, Jane and Elizabeth published a notable pamphlet 'Address to the Women of Great Britain' urging women to organize female political associations, a response to being shunned by the male anti-slavery movement.

Two years later, when female abolitionists from the United States and Britain arrived at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, they were advised that they would not be permitted to speak and would have to sit separately, removed from the floor. The women were stunned and outraged. Much heated debate ensued, leaving a number of the female

delegates convinced of the need for women's rights. The movement for women's suffrage in Britain is generally acknowledged to date from the exclusion of women from the floor of this conference.

It had become abundantly clear to the women that they were persona non gratis within the movement and secondary citizens within society itself. Women responded and organized female anti-slavery and suffragette societies in towns and cities across Britain.

The driving force for abolition in Parliament was two figures, Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. Both were opposed to having women in the movement on the grounds it was inappropriate for the sex.

Elizabeth Pease (1807-1897)

Elizabeth Pease was a 19th century abolitionist and woman suffragette. She was born into the Quaker family of Joseph Pease and Elizabeth Beaumont. Joseph was a founder of the Peace Society. Elizabeth was the niece of Sir Edward Pease of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (see Peak & Decline). Quakers, including Elizabeth's parents, held a strong conviction that girls were the equal of boys and thus, gave Elizabeth a first rate education.

Influenced, undoubtedly, by her family's philosophical leanings, Elizabeth engaged in the abolitionist movement. By 1837, aged 20, she was leading the Darlington Ladies Anti-Slavery Society.

In 1838, she and her friend Jane Smeal published a pamphlet entitled ‘Address to the Women of Great Britain’ in which they urge women to start up their own anti-slavery groups. Implied by the pamphlet, perhaps, is that the two women had been sufficiently rebuffed by the all-male anti-slavery groups that they saw no future in working with them.

Two years later, she attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, and any concerns she might have harboured about male chauvinism within the movement were amply realized. She and five women delegates from England and the United States were told they would not be allowed to participate and would be seated in a segregated area out of sight of the male delegates. An uproar followed as a number of male American delegates insisted the women be allowed to join in. The women were not granted access to the floor, but the experience jump-started a women’s suffrage movement in which Elizabeth Pease played a key role.

After the convention, Elizabeth moved to Edinburgh and served as treasurer for the Edinburgh chapter of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage, established by Jane and Eliza Wigham.

At age 46, Elizabeth married Professor Dr. John Pringle Nichol (1804–1859) of Glasgow, a presbyterian, obliging Elizabeth to leave the Quakers.

Change Maker

Jane (Smeal) Wigham (1801-1888)

Abolitionist & women's suffrage activist (far right)

Relation: wife of maternal grandfather of wife of 3rd cousin 3x removed

Change Maker

Eliza Wigham (1820-1899)

Abolitionist & Women's Rights Activist

Relation: aunt of wife of 3rd cousin 3x removed

Elizabeth (Pease) Nichol (1807-1897)

Anti-slavery and Women's Suffrage Activist

Relation: 3rd cousin 1x removed of husband of grandaunt

Change Maker

Maimiti Isobel Mauatua
(1764-1841)

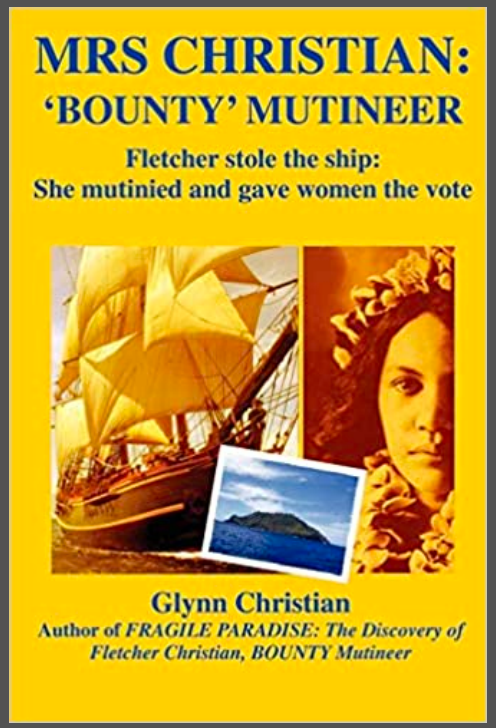
Maimiti Mauatua was the Tahitian consort of Fletcher Christian of Mutiny on the Bounty fame/ infamy.

The Mission

Captain William Bligh and the crew of the Bounty had been sent on a mission by the Royal Navy to acquire breadfruit plants in Tahiti and transport them to the West Indies where they would be grown as a food crop for slaves. The Bounty spent five months in Tahiti gathering the plants. During that time the crew became immersed in the alluring Tahitian culture, a number forming relationships with Tahitian women. Discipline fell away despite Bligh's best efforts. When the Bounty finally weighed anchor crew resentment at leaving Tahiti was high and tensions grew as Bligh heaped increasingly harsh punishments, criticisms and abuse on the crew, targeting Fletcher Christian in particular, to get them back into shape.

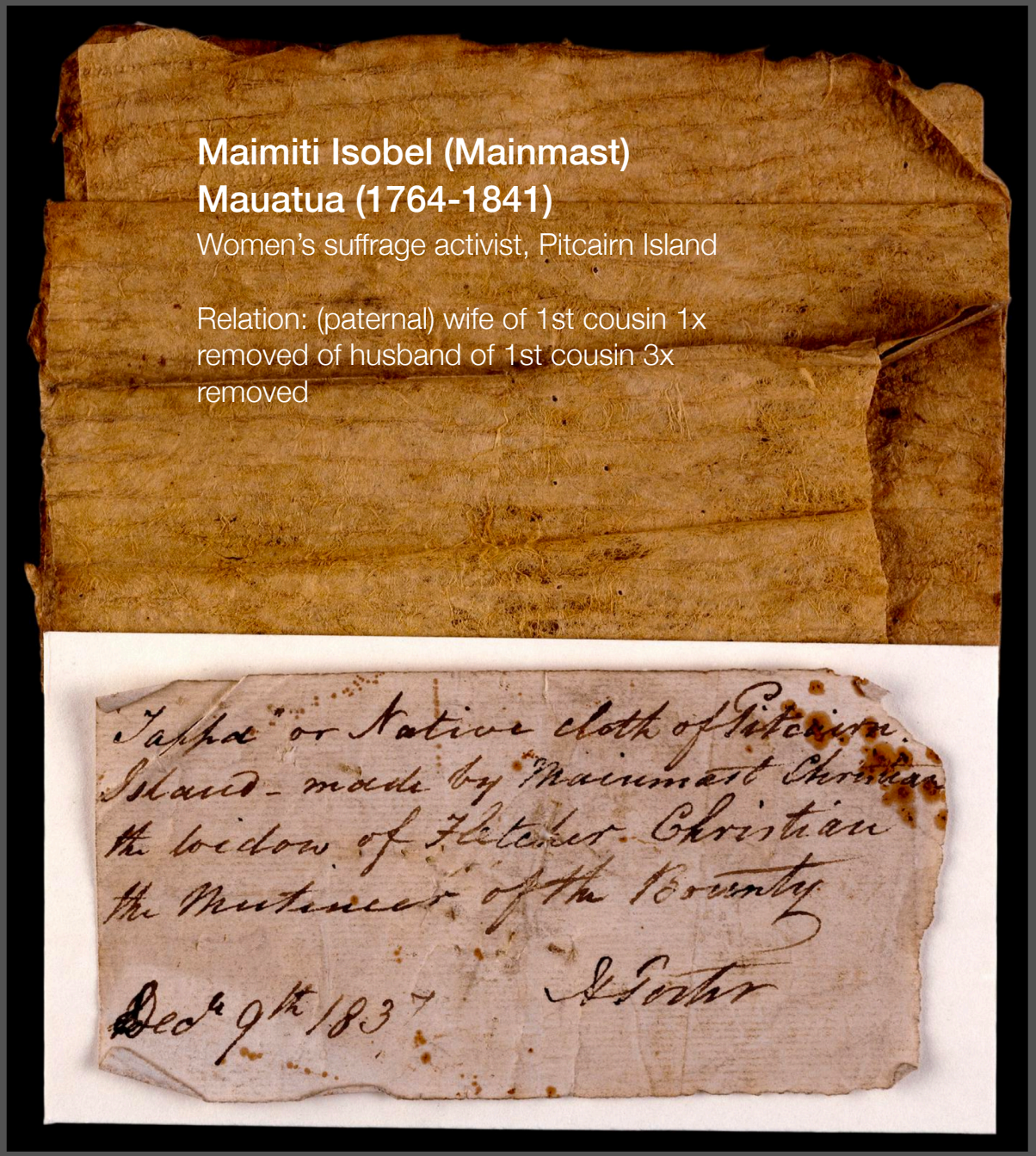
Mutiny

Finally, in April of 1789, 8 crew members with Fletcher Christian as their leader, had had enough and staged a mutiny, sending Bligh and 18 loyal crew off in a longboat to their fate. The mutineers were now on the run. For months they moved from island to island, returning briefly to Tahiti. Then the decision was made to find an uninhabited, remote island where they could establish an idyllic society and live in peace. They found Pitcairn Island, as perfect a hideaway as could be imagined, alone in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean.



Right: "Tappa or native cloth of Pitcairn Island made by Mainmast Christian, the widow of Fletcher Christian, the mutineer of the Bounty

Dec 9 1837"



Hidden

For nineteen years, the mutineers and the Tahitian men and women who joined them, lived undetected on the island. However, paradise alluded them. Life on Pitcairn Island became a living hell driven by jealousy, fear, hate and violence.

The Hunt

Remarkably, Captain Bligh navigated the longboat 6500 km to safety, he and the surviving crew barely alive when they reached land. They returned to England, whereupon the HMS Pandora was dispatched to hunt them down. They found 14 of the Bounty crew in Tahiti, but finding no further trace of the mutineers, the HMS Pandora turned for home. The ship foundered on the Great Barrier Reef killing 31 crew and 4 Bounty detainees.

In the end, it was not the Royal Navy who found the mutineers. A passing ship discovered the settlement in 1808. Only one of the mutineers, John Adams, remained. The original Tahitian men and the rest of the mutineers had killed each other.

The Vote For Women

However, descendants of the Bounty's Tahitian and European hideaways remained. One woman, Mamiti Mauatua, Fletcher Christian's consort (wife) stepped forward to insist on social change. No more would violence and abuse be tolerated. Community decisions would be made by vote. Men, women, girls and boys would be treated equally. In 1838, three years before Mamiti

Mauatua's death at age 90, universal suffrage was formally extended to the residents of Pitcairn Island.

The island became the first jurisdiction in the world to continuously provide the vote to women.

Mamiti Mauatua (1764-1841)

Women's Rights Activist

Relation: (paternal) wife of 1st cousin 1x removed of husband of 1st cousin 3x removed

Change Maker

Anna Maria (Fisher) Haslam

(1829-1922)

Anna Maria Haslam (née Fisher; 1829–1922) was a suffragist and a major figure in the 19th and early 20th century women's movement in Ireland. The following is a quote from Wikipedia.

Early life and Family

Anna Maria Fisher was born in Youghal, County Cork, Ireland in 1829.[1] She was born the 16th of 17 children to Jane and Abraham Fisher. The Fishers were a Quaker family with a business in Youghal. They were noted for their charitable works, especially during the Great Famine.[2] She helped in soup kitchens and became involved in setting up cottage industries for local girls in lace-making, crocheting and knitting. She was brought up believing in equality for men and women and also supporting the campaign against slavery and for temperance and pacifism. She attended Quaker boarding schools, Newtown School in County Waterford and Castlegate School in York. She then became a teaching assistant in Ackworth School, Yorkshire. She met Thomas Haslam who was teaching there and who was from Mountmellick, County Laois.

Anna and Thomas Haslam

(1825-1917)

Anna and Thomas Joseph Haslam married on 20 March 1854 in Cork Registry Office. Their marriage was mainly celibate as they had chosen not to have children. In later writings Thomas argued in favour of chastity for men. Anna and Thomas Haslam shared a belief of equality for men and women and he supported her campaigns. Thomas was born in 1825 to a Quaker family. He was a feminist theorist and from 1868 he wrote about many topics concerning female rights and issues such as prostitution, birth control and women's suffrage.

Both Anna and Thomas were expelled from the Society of Friends “for harbouring ideas contrary to Quaker teachings.” Yet both maintained links with the Quaker community. Thomas published a pamphlet called "The Marriage Problem", in which he raised and supported the idea of family limitation and outlined a number of contraceptive methods including the safe period.

Feminism

Anna Haslam is best remembered today for her work with votes for women. She was a pioneer in every 19th century Irish feminist campaign and she fought for votes for women from the year 1866. Anna and Thomas Haslam were founding members of the Dublin Women's Suffrage

Association (DWSA) in 1876. This marked the start of a remarkable campaign in Dublin for women's suffrage. Anna, supported by Thomas' written works, continued for years to campaign for women's rights. In 1896, women in Ireland won the right to be elected as Poor Law Guardians, members of the official bodies which administered the Poor Law. It was a start.

Ireland's early women's rights activists worked closely with their English counterparts who also faced discrimination in education, employment, sexual freedom and political participation. The DWSA organized the introduction of a private member's bill to remove disqualification 'by sex or marriage' for election or serving as a poor law guardian. The bill passed in 1896 and the association immediately wrote to the newspapers and published leaflets explaining the process on how register to vote and stand for election and encouraged qualified women to go forward as candidate.

By 1900, there were nearly 100 women guardians. Haslam then led a campaign to encourage qualified women to stand for election in 1898. Women won eligibility to vote in local government elections, and to stand for elections as rural and urban district councillors. In 1913, she stepped down as secretary of the Association and was elected life-president.

Achievements

One of her longest campaigns was for repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864. The act

allowed for state regulation of prostitutes in areas in which the army was stationed. The objective of the act was to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases amongst the military. It authorized the compulsory internment of women for up to 3 months, which was later extended to one year. Medical treatment was also enforced on the women. She opposed the act on the grounds that it legitimized prostitution, commodified women and undermined family life. After 18 years of campaigning, the act was finally repealed.

Anna Haslam was involved in the 1866 petition and gathered 1,499 signatures to extend suffrage to women as well as men. In 1867 male suffrage was extended but it wasn't until 1911 that the Suffrage movement achieved the significant victory of securing the right of women to stand for election as local councillors.

In 1918, a woman of almost ninety, she went to the polls "surrounded by flowers and flags", with women who united in her honour to celebrate the victory of the vote. It was a grand and well-deserved acknowledgment of Anna's steadfast commitment to the right of all people to have the vote. The same year in which she died, 1922, the Irish Free State extended the vote to all men and women over the age of 21.

Editor's Footnote:

The expulsion of the Haslams from their Quaker community raises a question for me. On the one hand, the tenacity with which Quakers held to

their principles and practices made them an incomparable force for social change. Yet did not the rigour with which they adhered to those principles and practices ultimately foster the seeds of internal discontent, if not self-destruction? That is to say, any closed system such as the Quaker community which does not entertain new ideas will fail to adapt to changing circumstances and eventually become irrelevant.

Quakers have changed, of course, and today are much in keeping with modern life, yet I wonder if earlier fundamentalism held onto for too long cost them broader acceptance and membership.

Thomas Joseph Haslam (1825-1917)

School Teacher, Women's Issues Advocate

Relation: husband of 1st cousin 4x removed

Anna Maria (Fisher) Haslam (1829-1922)

Leader in the Irish women's movement

Relation: 1st cousin 4x removed

Indian Independence

Horace Gundry Alexander (1889-1989)

Horace Gundry Alexander was one of four boys born to a Quaker family in Croyden, England. His father, Joseph Gundry Alexander, was an eminent lawyer who devoted his life to pacifism and the cessation of the opium trade (see “Opium” herein).

Horace attended the Quaker’s Bootham School in York, England, graduating from Cambridge in 1912. Two years later, with the outbreak of World War I, Horace worked as secretary to various anti-war committees. He was designated a conscientious objector and assigned to teaching duties for the course of the war. In 1918, he joined the staff of Woodbrooke, a Quaker college in Birmingham where he remained until 1944. In 1927/28 Woodbrooke sent Horace to India on a fact-finding mission to investigate India’s growing demand for independence. Horace returned convinced that independence must happen.

In 1928 he first met Mahatma Gandhi and in 1930 he mediated discussions between Gandhi and the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin. Those discussions enabled Gandhi to attend the Second Round Table Conference on the future of India in 1931. Following the conference, Horace, along with fellow Quaker Agatha Harrison and others,

founded the India Conciliation Group, designed to clarify British understanding of India's political position. Horace wrote extensively on the subject in the British press.

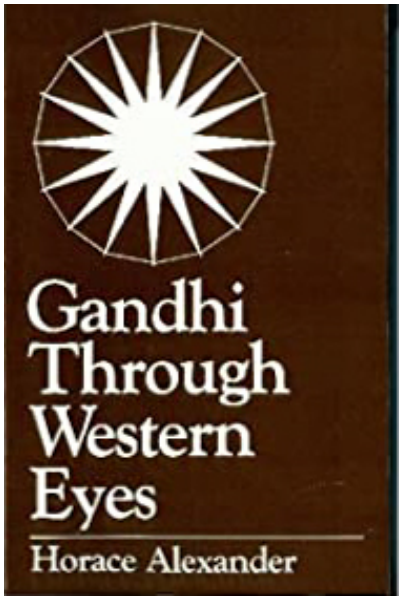
Over the years that followed, Horace became immersed in the affairs of India, spending much of his time there. He returned again to India during World War II with the Friends Ambulance Unit to establish air raid protection from threatened Japanese attacks and he was among the first to bring famine relief to Bengal following the devastating cyclone of 1942. The following year Horace returned to England to raise funds for famine relief and to explain Gandhi's 'Quit India' campaign (which called for the orderly withdrawal of the British) to politicians and the public.

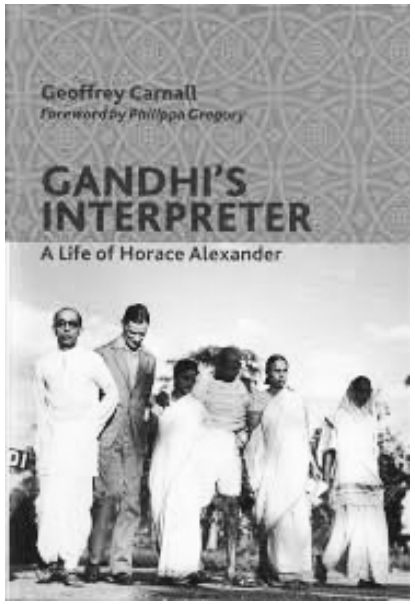
Horace had exceptional listening skills and a calm humble demeanour, well-suited to his work as a mediator. However, the intractability of British officials in London and Delhi towards Indian Independence frequently left both Horace and the hapless officials infuriated. "How childish statesmen are!" he wrote. "Do they not realize that the threat [of independence] will always remain while they remain?"

After the war came a Labour government committed to Indian independence. Horace and Agatha Harrison joined the cabinet mission charged with negotiating with Indian leaders. The twosome worked quietly in the background and made a significant contribution to convincing Gandhi that the British delegation were there in

good faith.

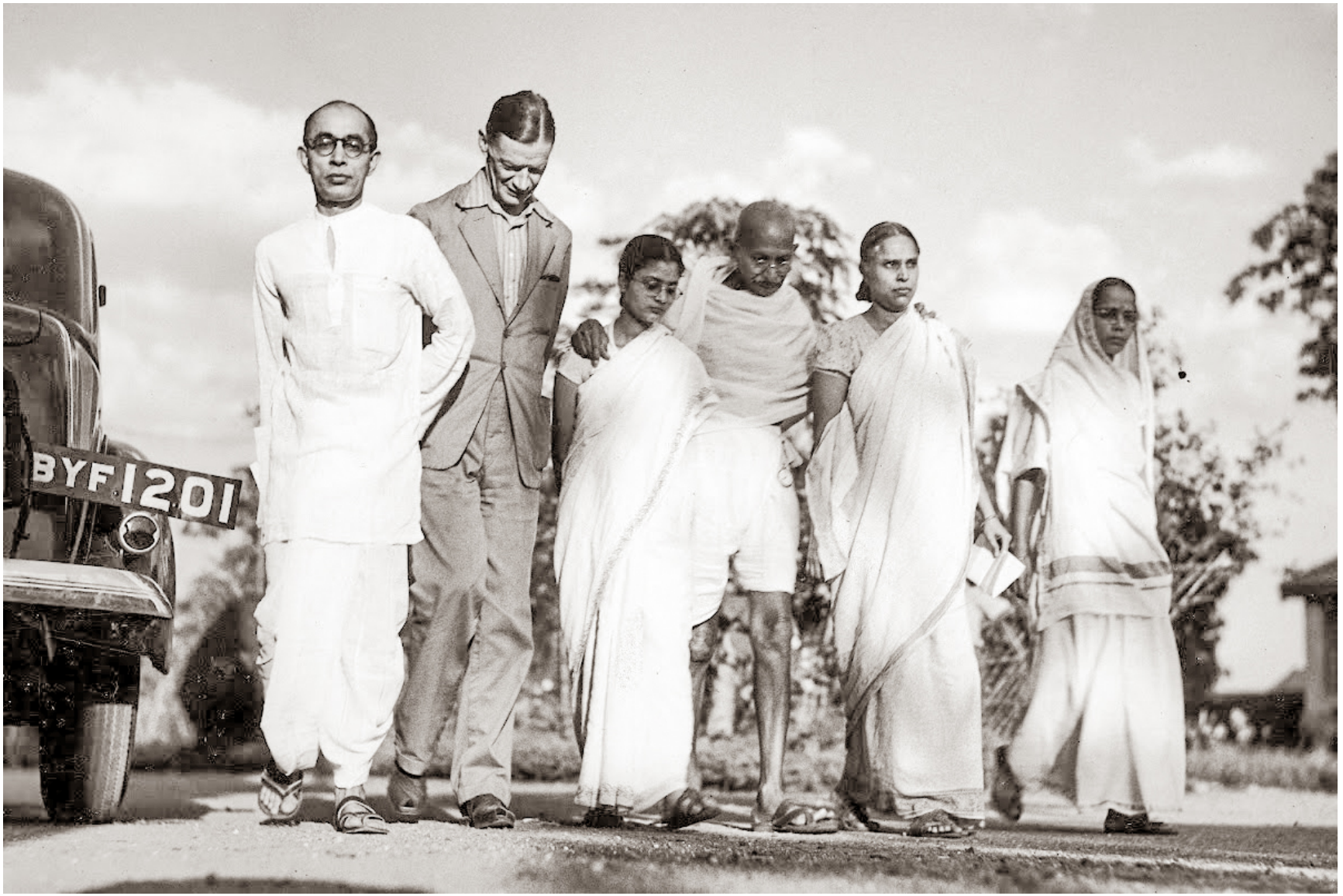
When Indian independence was declared on 15 August, 1947, Horace was there. By then, he and Gandhi had become fast friends. Gandhi once described Horace as "British in nationality but Indian in heart," and "one of the best English friends India has."





Honoured

Horace retired from his work in India in the 1950s. He was once described by Gandhi as "British in nationality but Indian in heart," In 1984, aged 95, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan medal, the highest honour given to a non-Indian civilian. Horace died in 1989 in Pennsylvania, aged 100 years.



Horace Gundry Alexander with the Gandhi family

Horace Gundry Alexander (1889-1989)

Mediator, pacifist, lecturer, ornithologist

Relation: 1st cousin 1x removed of wife of 1st cousin 2x removed

Change Maker