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Vann & Eversley's "Friends in Life and Death: The British and Irish Quakers in the demographic transition, 1650-1900" - Book Review

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Quaker and the eponymous hero of some two dozen detective stories in the late nineteenth century. Broadbrim's affiliation to the Friends was recognisable not only by his hat but by the peculiarities of his speech; the association of these with sobriety, wisdom and the pursuit of justice conveyed a positive image. And in 1919 there was published in New York a dance tune that confounded the notion of Friends as the bearers of grey habits, 'All the Quakers are Shoulder Shakers'. Neither these examples nor *Moby Dick* nor *Uncle Tom's Cabin* nor Kellogg's cereal packets are deeply explored in this volume, though it prompts such work to be undertaken.

Roger Homan
University of Brighton, England

Vann, R.T. and Eversley, D. *Friends in Life and Death: The British and Irish Quakers in the demographic transition, 1650-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp 281, ISBN 0521526647, Paper, £20.95.

This book by two distinguished historians in their particular fields, was first published in 1992 and its appearance in paperback is long overdue and will be welcomed by all of those who are involved in researching the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain, Ireland and on the other side of the Atlantic. The authors have analysed the life experiences of over 8,000 Quaker families to provide a painstaking reconstruction of Quaker populations in Britain. These they have compared with a variety of English and other populations to produce a work of great value to historians studying Friends either in a local or wider historical context, as well as to those engaged in family history. The work will also be of interest to those studying social history and demographic change in this period.

The period under consideration was one of unprecedented demographic change and Vann and Eversley consider the demography of a group of people whose distinctive life-style and religious beliefs set them apart from the general population. The study shows that these differences effected changes to the demography of Friends as a group. It shows that Quaker women in the nineteenth century were choosing not to marry in increasingly large numbers which has interesting implications for the history of Quaker women and for the history of women in general. This suggests that the distinctive values and beliefs of Friends not only altered women's perceptions of the importance of marriage but also may have affected their opportunities for marriage. It concludes that fertility rates for Quakers in the first one hundred years were fairly low and that the group barely reproduced itself. However, in the period 1750-1850, fertility rates rose significantly but this rise was mitigated by a rise in age at first marriage which was offset by a shorter interval between births despite the later age of women at marriage. The authors have considered geographic and environmental influences and show that this rise in fertility displays variations; fertility being higher in the cities but lower in the North-East of England. Professors Vann and Eversley demonstrate that the Irish Quakers were exceptionally fertile even when compared with other populations. At the same time as fertility was increasing, life-expectancy amongst

Friends also increased. Finally, they conclude that it took a century for a distinctive pattern of Quaker fertility and nuptiality to emerge and that it was British Quaker marriage and birth rates, and not mortality, which were closest to those of the people around them in the first 100 years. Only after 1750, when the rest of English society was marrying at an increasingly early age and Quakers were marrying later, was there a deviation. Mortality rates on the other hand show that Quakers appear to have had an advantage, especially in Ireland, over the rest of the population and that this advantage increased after 1750.

This study provides the first in depth analysis of the demography of Friends and makes a valuable contribution to understanding the social and economic history of the Quakers in Britain and Ireland. At the same time, it will prove invaluable to historians requiring comparative demographic evidence when studying other groups in society. It is an exceptionally fine piece of demographic work and it will be welcomed at an affordable price.

Sheila Wright
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Heavilin, B.A. and Heavilin, C.W. (eds) *The Quaker Presence in America: 'Let us then try what Love will do'* (Series in Quaker Studies, Vol. 5), Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003. pp.vii + 283; ISBN 0-7734-6790-4, Cloth; £74.95, \$109.95.

This book witnesses that Midwestern American Friends in Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings can speak in a more united, positive, and Christian voice than was suggested by Earlham President Douglas Bennett's recent survey published in 2000 as *Among Friends* (Richmond, IN: Earlham School of Religion) Most of the Heavilins' book consists of the first formal printing or reprinting of annual Quaker Lectures at the Yearly Meeting sessions, choosing from the many possibilities one as early as 1966 and two others by Elton Trueblood, a clear, crisp one on Holiness and Perfectionism by John Miller, and one on 'Primitive Christianity Revived' in 2001 by David Johns, all faculty members at the Earlham School of Religion. The set includes one by its present Dean, Jay Marshall, who also wrote a short preface, and a Pendle Hill pamphlet by its first Dean, Wilmer Cooper, on 'The Testimony of Integrity.' (The reader may ask why some lectures and authors were not included.)

The best may be an essay written especially for this book: Earlham Archivist Tom Hamm's thoroughly researched 'Indiana Quakers and Politics, 1810-1865', during which years most Friends were tactful Whigs rather than radical Abolitionist Republicans. Charles Heavilin's own 'Christ and Universalism,' expanded from an article on the inadequacy of universalism, impressed this reviewer more than his longer new essay 'Placing Friends in the American Context,' which leans on Christopher Hill, and on David H. Fisher's *Albion's Seed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) to link inward and outward radicalism as Friends' contribution to American culture, but also provides the bonds to a 1927 chapter on the Inner Christ by Rufus Jones, who never separated Quaker missions and service, and Linda Selleck's lecture condensing her work on Quaker women's programs among Freedmen after the Civil War. Barbara