James Nayler in the English Civil Wars

David Neelon
dneelon@earthlink.net

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerstudies
Part of the Christian Denominations and Sects Commons, and the History of Christianity Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerstudies/vol6/iss1/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Quaker Studies by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.
JAMES NAYLER IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

David Neelon
Cleveland Heights, Ohio, USA

ABSTRACT

James Nayler spent between eight and nine years in Parliament’s army during the English Civil Wars, but this period of his life has not been adequately discussed in any of his biographies. This article documents causes for the Civil Wars in Nayler’s home town and his enlistment, rank and service throughout the wars. His involvement in a list of major battles is shown. Nayler became a member of the Council of War under John Lambert, commander of the Northern Armies, and served as Lambert’s Quartermaster in the settlement of the rebellious army troops.

As a member of the Council, Nayler voted to support the army’s treatment of the captured King Charles I as a criminal, which led to the King’s trial and execution and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell’s Protectorate. Nayler’s position in the wars is compared with that of George Fox, William Dewsbury and George Bishop.

KEYWORDS

Nayler, Quakers, English Civil Wars, seventeenth-century, Yorkshire, Lambert

Introduction

James Nayler was one of nearly one hundred early Friends who served in the military for Parliament during the Civil Wars against the forces of Kings Charles I and Charles II. Most of these individuals, Nayler included, began their military service before they became convinced as Friends. All of Nayler’s military involvement occurred before he met George Fox, most of it before there even existed a Quaker movement identifiable as such, and almost all of it before Oliver Cromwell commanded Parliament’s entire army.

By his own account Nayler served Parliament’s army for between eight and nine years, but none of his biographers offer much information on that service, or on the circumstances leading up to it. Each focuses instead on the remarkable output of writing in the ten years after Nayler left the army, on his ministerial leadership in London, and on his ride into Bristol as a sign of the need for self-denial and personal crucifixion. Nayler’s trial for ‘horrid blasphemy’, the punishment that followed and his influence on the future of Friends’ life and ministry in the Restoration period are central features of each his biographies.

The four twentieth-century biographies offer distinct points of view. The two best and most recent works complement each other. Leo Damrosch in The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus studies Nayler’s writings and the Scriptural bases of his teaching. Damrosch accepts the careful accounts in William Bittle’s James Nayler 1618–1660 of political and legal features of the London trial, together with details of Nayler’s early ministry in the North. Works by Emilia Fogelklou in 1930 and Mabel Richmond Brailsford in 1927, are also complementary. Brailsford’s A Quaker From Cromwell’s Army, despite its incorrect title, provides a useful guide to some of the sources for details of Nayler’s life, while Fogelklou’s James Nayler, the Rebel Saint offers a rather loose and provocative, if doubtful, Freudian analysis of Nayler’s character.

By far the most useful modern contextual study of Nayler’s and other early Friends’ social and religious environment leading up to the Civil Wars

is found in the introductory chapters of Rosemary Moore's *The Light in Their Consciences.*

Unlike his contemporary, George Bishop of Bristol, Nayler did not begin publishing until after he left the army, and his public preaching while he was in the army is not well recorded. Bishop's progress through the army toward Quakerism has been told through his own contemporaneous writings and accounts of his public speaking. Nothing of Nayler's politics or spiritual journey during the revolutionary period was recorded until after his military service had ended. If he ever kept a journal, it has not been found. Were it not for the diligence of Margaret Fell and other Friends after 1652, we would have none of his correspondence.

Documentary evidence revealing his whereabouts during the wars does exist, however, and it will be combined here with contextual materials and


10. Contemporary seventeenth-century documentation has been used in the following accounts to trace the movements of James Nayler through the Civil Wars. The same documentation answers possible concerns of confusion of James Nayler, the Quaker, with unknown others of the same name. The first source regarding Nayler's service is the Clarke Manuscripts, one of the most important collections of Parliamentary Civil War documents. William Clarke was in various clerical positions in the Northern Army through the early part of the wars. In the late 1650s he became assistant to General Monks and eventually Secretary of War. The Clarke Manuscripts collection, housed at Oxford, but also available on microfilm, contains many payroll records and some enlistment records of Colonel Christopher Copley's troop, dating continuously from 1643 into 1645 and sporadically thereafter into early 1647. Nayler's enlistment in Copley's troop, his rank, promotion and periodic payroll payments, with the locations at which they were made are included. This same collection was quoted by David Underdown and by Leo Damrosch relative to Nayler's enlistment, but neither scholar pursued Nayler beyond that event. Others have used the Clarke Manuscripts as the principal resource for studies of the Putney Debates in 1647 and this author has found them valuable in ruling out Nayler's or Copley's involvement in those debates. Nayler's immediate commanding officer, Christopher Copley, has been followed in various battle accounts, primarily in contemporary documents, some of which he authored, collected in the Thomason Tracts, now housed in the British Library. Microfilm of the originals is widely available. Nayler's presence in various Copley actions frequently can be confirmed in the Clarke Manuscripts payroll records. General Lambert declared in testimony in Nayler's London trial that Nayler was his Quartermaster for two years. Clarke Manuscript payroll documentation, Thomason Tracts and other contemporary accounts make the connection between service under Copley and service under Lambert, the

change occurring in 1647. Further documentation of Nayler's service on Lambert's Council of Officers at the end of 1648 has been found in West Yorkshire Archives, providing Nayler's position relative to the trial of King Charles I. During the entire year of 1646 and during the summer campaigns of 1648, as noted below, neither Nayler's nor Copley's whereabouts has been found.

Only indirect evidence has been found of Nayler's involvement at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650.

have unburdened my conscience herein, and let none be rash in judging, but search the Scriptures, and see if I have not laid before you the Saints practise, by the same spirit by which they were guided.12

This summary paragraph covered a lot of ground in abbreviated references Cromwell and his contemporaries would have recognized, but modern readers might not. Nayler declared that he served with Cromwell, not under his command, that is, that they were engaged in achieving a common purpose, higher than either man. Nayler addressed Cromwell as a great national leader, only one step from assuming the monarchy, but bade him turn away from that step. They served 'for the good of these nations', and edged that the wars were fought to free the Three Kingdoms, symbolized on the Stuart coats of arms. Nayler's intent, with his compatriots, was to put the government of all three in Cromwell's hands at any cost, that is, to overthrow their King, but not so that Oliver might be crowned. Cromwell should lay the crowns at God's feet, where they belonged. The nations' government should come under the Lord as King. The result of Cromwell's humility in handing over the victory would be, Nayler asserted, unity of the Three Kingdoms in peace under God, not revolution was intended to accomplish helps guide the interpretations presented in this article.

Nayler's Early Military Service

James Nayler enlisted at the age of 25 with the rank of Corporal in Captain Christopher Copley's cavalry troop on 20 May 1643,14 the eve of the Battle of Wakefield, which was fought on 21 May, Whitsunday. Enlisting at the same time, as a trooper, was William Nayler, Jr of East Ardsley, who may have been a relative. The Naylers joined a troop Copley had begun to establish earlier that year in the vicinity of Wakefield, one of the four major 'clothing towns' located in the West Riding of Yorkshire, about 30-40 miles west of York. Copley came from a lesser gentry family with land and industrial interests.15 His troop of horse was acknowledged under the command of Thomas Fairfax,17 30-year-old son of the commander of Parliament's army in the north, Lord Ferdinando Fairfax, head of a family connected for generations with the governance of York.

Nayler’s cavalry enlistment strongly suggests that he owned at least one horse, as cavalry troops in these times customarily brought their own animals. It is not surprising that he would have owned horses. Nayler was a resident of West Ardsley, also known as Woodkirk (the name of the parish), adjacent to Wakefield on the west. A trade fair at West Ardsley, licensed in 1135 by King Henry I, continues to this day as the longest running licensed fair in England, known since 1540 as the Lee Fair, after an early church commissioner.18 Like the better known but younger fair in Appleby-in-Westmorland, the Lee Fair continues to be attended, as it has since the

for seven years in infantry under Lord Fairfax, as stated in Brailsford, A Quaker From Cromwell's Army, p. 34, and John Deacon, An Exact History of the Life of James Nayler (London: E. Thomas, 1657), one of the earliest Nayler biographies. Deacon's account of Nayler's trial before Parliament (John Deacon, The Grand Imposter Examined, London: Henry Broke, 1656, p. 43) records Nayler as testifying that he served first under Lord Fairfax with no mention of infantry or cavalry. Thomas Fairfax was superior officer to Captain Copley, Nayler's immediate superior. Lord Fairfax, at the time of Nayler's enlistment, was Thomas's father, Ferdinando, who was commanding General of all Parliament's army in the North, including his son, Thomas. Thomas became Lord Fairfax after his father's death.

15. Many earlier enlistments in the above record are dated 22 February 1642. Under the calendar in use at the time, however, the year did not change until 25 March. In this paper modern calendar is used throughout the text, but old calendar dates have not been changed where they appear in titles quoted in these notes.


17. Lord Hatherton Manuscripts (Historical Manuscripts Commission), as reported by Mr David Evans of Rotherham, an independent Civil War scholar who has helped me to trace Copley's movements.

QUAKER STUDIES

1500s, by gypsy horse traders. Fairground fields known as Upper and Lower Lee Fair Close lie between the village of West Ardsley and Woodkirk church which Nayler attended.19

Fighting between the King’s forces and Parliament’s had begun in 1642. Parliament took over supplies of arms at Hull. The King raised troops in Yorkshire, essentially declared war and caused the people to choose his side or Parliament’s. Fighting spread from Hull to Manchester, Nottingham and Bradford. By year end 1642, Leeds and Wakefield were occupied by Royalist troops.

Accounts of Nayler’s first battle (surely a reasonable assumption; why else would he have enlisted the day before along with others from Wakefield Yorkinshire, essentially declared war and caused the people to choose his side were impatient for him to get rid of the Royalist military occupation of the West Yorkshire towns, ‘...for by them al traid & provisions are stopt so that the people in these clothing townes are not able to subsist...’21 Thousands of troops quartered in Wakefield and Leeds required shelter and food from the populace. Their presence was intended to suppress the growing numbers of rebels drawn from the workers and tradesmen of those pre-industrial communities and to divide them from the city of York and the port of Hull, critical market and supply centers.

The interruption of the necessities of trade was only the last of a series of insults that brought the country to war.22 King Charles I had indulged himself in personal, arbitrary rule, without benefit of Parliament, since 1629, taxing and requisitioning property of the gentry classes without their consent or support. Worse still, affecting all the classes as much as the blocking of trade, the King’s rule had been extended over the Church in a way contemptuous of and confrontational with the conservative Presbyterianism and liberal Independent practices that threatened to take over from the Episcopal, or bishop-governed, Church of England.

James Nayler’s own minister at Woodkirk, Anthony Nutter, along with ministers of neighboring parishes, was charged for non-conformity in 1633 by the bishop’s courts at York and excommunicated.23 Nayler was 15 years old then. Nutter, aged over 80, died seven months later. The Woodkirk congregation then divided, some parishioners forming the Independent congregation of which Nayler became a member. Charges and disciplines against Independent ministers and parishioners in Yorkshire continued at least until war broke out.24

The King and Queen, furthermore, were seen as Papists and the revolts in Ireland and Scotland drew heavily on anti-Catholic animosities. Irish and Scottish rebellions spilled over national boundaries and affected Nayler’s Yorkshire as well. During Charles I’s attempt to enforce Episcopal rule in Scotland, known as the Bishops’ Wars of 1639 and 1640, unwilling conscripts in the King’s army rioted and broke into the Wakefield House of Correction, setting the prisoners free.25 Rumors circulated in 1641 that Irish rebels, having massacred Protestants in Ireland, had landed in England and were marching to Bradford, five miles from Wakefield,26 where Nayler now lived with his wife, Anne, and their infant daughters.27

19. I am grateful to Mr. Peter Aldred of West Ardsley, who has shared with me his private collection of maps of property subdivisions of the entire village.
21. Wilson, Fairfax, p. 28.

NEELON JAMES NAYLER IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

27. Battle, James Nayler, p. 3.
On the night of 20 May 1643 Thomas Fairfax assembled Parliament troops recruited from Bradford and Leeds with troops raised from the Wakefield area at Howley Hall, an elegant manor well known to anyone from the Ardsleys or Wakefield. Lord Thomas Savile of Howley Hall was the benefactor of Woodkirk Church, which was supported not by tithes, but as a donative by the Saviles. Savile was also lordship of most of West Ardsley.

Leaving Howley Hall in the pre-dawn hours to attack from three entrances to Wakefield, Fairfax had some element of surprise in his favor, but he commanded only 1,100 troops against 3,000 Royalists under General Goring. Speed was essential in capturing the city. Fortunately some Royalist officers were playing at bowls on the church lawn. Others were asleep.

Parliament's forces turned the Royalist cannon on their owners and captured the town, along with General Goring and 300 Royalist soldiers. Fairfax called it a miracle rather than a victory, for his poorly-trained volunteers were ill-matched against the Royal Army. Note that recruits from the day before, like Nayler, had virtually no time to train between their enlistment and the battle.

Although many were wounded, only seven of Fairfax's men were killed, among them his Clerk of Stores and Quartermaster. Here is evidence that the Quartermaster, today sometimes considered a non-combatant rank, was in the seventeenth century a soldier who could well be exposed to mortal risk. Nayler became Quartermaster of Copley's troop a year later.

After the exciting victory at Wakefield, the next major fight was quite the opposite. On 30 June 1643 Thomas Fairfax joined his father and substantially all of Parliament's forces in the North in an effort to defend

28. Scatcherd, History of Morley. Also, for descriptions of Howley Hall, Woodkirk, and many villages, churches, and properties in Yorkshire, see the World Wide Web pages of Genealogy UK and Ireland, GENUKI: West Riding of Yorkshire index, http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/WRY/index.html. Additional information has been supplied by Mr. John Goodchild, M. University, curator of The John Goodchild Collection, Wakefield, and by Mr Jerome Whittam, historian, of Horbury.


30. Fairfax, A Short Memorial.

31. Copley, Notes, Clarke Mss 4/2.


33. Wilson, Fairfax, p. 33.

34. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records of Copley's troop, which show the location, amount paid, and to whom, including James Nayler.


36. Courtesy of Mr Evans.
fight them back into the city but to regroup elsewhere.

37. Copley, note, Clarke Ms 4/2.


39. The English Civil Wars are covered in dozens of volumes. Following are a variety of sources helpful in understanding the Battle of Marston Moor. Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, a new edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1843), p. 491; Dawson, Lambert, p. 34; Rogers, Battles and Generals, pp. 136-51; Snowden, Civil War in Yorkshire, pp. 24-36; Wilson, Fairfax, pp. 47-54; Peter Young, Marston Moor, 1644, The Campaign and the Battle (Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire: Windrush Press, 1997), the most modern and authoritative study of this event, on which most of the following account is based.

40. Wilson, Fairfax, p. 48; Clarke Ms, courtesy Mr. Evans.

41. Wilson, Fairfax, p. 53.

42. Young, Marston Moor, p. 129.

43. Young, Marston Moor, p. 132, cites Captain Clarke’s estimate of 3,500 killed on the Royalist side alone.
Copley's Case to Parliament, a document attempting to justify payment of money due him later in the war, indicates that his command was busy soon after Marston Moor reducing remaining Royalist strongholds in the North. Pay records show that he and Nayler were at Whixley, near Knaresborough, in August and at Halifax in November. Lambert and Thomas Fairfax took Knaresborough Castle in November, capturing much money and silver. Fairfax was wounded at Helmsley Castle, then again while besieging Pontefract Castle near Wakefield. Lambert took over and brought the siege to a successful conclusion, entering the castle on Christmas day, 1644.

With Lambert were both Copley and Nayler. A list numbering '143 gentlemen volunteers' who entered Pontefract Castle on that day (supported, no doubt, by many common soldiers) includes Major Copley (sic), Captain Laybourne (probably Robert Liburne, of whom we shall hear more, along with his brothers, John and Henry) and Cornet Nayler. Cornet is a rank lower than Quartermaster. Correct statement of his rank soon followed, however, as three days later, on 28 December Quartermaster James Nayler was paid £1.16s.48

In February 1645 Thomas Fairfax went to London to take command of the New Model Army for Parliament. John Lambert was made Commissary General in charge of cavalry in the Northern Army under General Poyntz, headquartered at York. Christopher Copley, having raised a full regiment during 1644, was made Colonel of the West Riding Regiment of Horse. As the New Model Army was being established in London, the Northern Army, consisting of about 10,000 men, was maintained separate from it, as were several other armies in Parliament's service.

Pontefract Castle was recaptured by the Royalists on the first of March, 1645, then besieged for five months and retaken by Parliament in July.

45. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
46. Dawson, Lambert, p. 35.
47. George Fox (not the Quaker), The Three Sieges of Pontefract Castle, printed from the manuscripts compiled and illustrated, 1897 (Pontefract: John Fox; London: Longman's, 1897) (originally published as History of Pontefract, 1827).
48. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
49. Dawson, Lambert, p. 38.
50. Copley, His Case.

During this second siege of Pontefract Castle, Nayler was again present, being paid on 19 April and 4 May at Pontefract. Colonel Copley helped handle the surrender negotiations in July. He continued to be active nearby, with victories at Worksop and Sherburn-in-Elmet.

1645 also produced a series of major political and religious events. The Self-denying Ordinance, passed 3 April, required all titled officers to resign their commissions in the army, opening way for the establishment of a command structure of officers in the New Model Army based on merit, not right by birth. Parliament's long-awaited abolition of the Book of Common Prayer and its replacement by a new Directory of Worship also attracted support in the army. Further, in July, as Pontefract was being recaptured by Colonel Copley and General Poyntz, William Laud, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, was executed, to date the nearest official to the King to receive capital punishment. Thus, in one year hereditary privilege of leadership was rejected by the military, the discipline of the state church was overthrown, and the King's prerogative to govern it was taken away by Parliament.

James Nayler's old vicar at Woodkirk, Anthony Nutter, would have rejoiced at abolition of the Book of Common Prayer, if he were alive. He had argued for this since he was a young man at Drayton-in-the-Clay, the church of George Fox's family. Nutter was ejected from that church by Parliament.

52. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
54. Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, p. 578; Colonel Christopher Copley, A Great Victory Obtained by General Poyntz and Col. Copley Against the King's Forces... (Thomason Tracts, 1645, E305[14]). Note, the Thomason Tracts, invaluable in researching this period, are found at the British Library, London, or on microfilm at many major US libraries from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor. Earlier works cite the Thomason Tracts as British Museum documents with the same document numbers, as they were housed in the Museum before the modern Library was built.
57. Wedgwood, The King's War, p. 400.
the bishops for non-conformity with the prayerbook before Fox was born. He had persisted in non-conformity at Woodkirk until eccom Rearranged in 1633 after Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury. Nutter, however, worked within the church. While resistant to the policies of the bishops throughout his career, he was not a revolutionary. It was the ministers who came after Nutter, who left Woodkirk and nearby parishes with some of their younger parishioners to start independent congregations.

James Nayler was one of them.59 Another was Christopher Marshall, who had been taught in New England by Cotton Mather, then returned to England for the revolution. According to payroll records, he served as Chaplain in Copley's troop, with Nayler, at least from November, 1644 at Halifax through November, 1645 at Pontefract.60 Marshall became vicar of Woodkirk in 1650 and was challenged there by George Fox in 1652. Though trained as a Puritan Presbyterian, he had become by this time an Independent.61

Nayler's and Copley's part, if any, in the pursuit of the King in 1646 has not been discovered. Lambert's role is instructive, however, because his special talent for negotiation and conciliation was revealed. Lambert was assigned repeatedly by Fairfax, after victories at Dartmouth, Torrington, Exeter, Barnstaple and Oxford, to negotiate and settle the factions left behind in defeat. In most cases Lambert accomplished this work in the company of Henry Ireton, who would soon become Oliver Cromwell's son-in-law.62

After the King fled Oxford for Scotland, Lambert was charged, as he had been at York, with the preservation of the city, its treasures, and in this case, the university. During the occupation much preaching was done at Oxford by army officers, chaplains and by common soldiers, described in one account as 'Presbyterians, Independents and worse'.63 A pejorative which may have included Levellers. As we have seen, the war against the King was also a war against his Church and the social order that supported it. Lambert encouraged free expression of religious belief by his troops, much as Fairfax and Cromwell did in the New Model Army and this expression expanded to include socio-political dissent as well.

Early in 1647 King Charles I was handed back over to the English, for

Scotland, too, was divided between pro- and anti-Royalist factions. The Royalists had lost, for the time being.

Now Parliament had to deal with its own largely disaffected army. The troops had not been paid. Citizens who had quartered troops or sold supplies to them were owed as well. Parliament had little means, whether inclined or not, to satisfy anyone. Troops were disbanded for economy or to keep the peace, but many refused to leave the army without satisfaction. Thomas Fairfax called on Lambert's talents again to settle the rebellious army and civilian population in the North.64

Nayler in Lambert's Council of Officers

Late in 1647 Copley's command was consolidated under Lambert.65 On 26 January Colonel Copley and Quartermaster Nayler were paid at York,66 the headquarters of Lambert's command. Later in the year both began serving directly under Lambert, who testified nine years later at Nayler's blasphemy trial after the Bristol ride, 'He was two years my quarter-master, and a very useful person'.67

Readers of Nayler's tracts will be aware of his clear, logical discourse. Accounts of his intense, yet good-natured debates with clergy and of his trial testimonies suggest a quick-witted, persuasive style.68 Furthermore, having served as troop quartermaster for Copley in Yorkshire, he was intimately familiar with quartering arrangements, persons and places. He was certainly qualified to assist Lambert in his work during the second half of 1647, attempting to settle discontent among soldiers and citizens in the North.

This work included dealing with the aftermath of Major General Sydenham Poyntz's command in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Prior to his downfall, Poyntz had been field commander in the North. Lambert had been under his command, and so therefore had Copley and Nayler, as well as Colonel Robert Lilburne, the elder brother of John, the famous Leveller leader. Robert Lilburne's soldiers and others were rebellious, demanding payment

59. Nayler, Saul's Errand, p. 32; Marchant, Puritans and the Church Courts, p. 108.
60. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
63. Dawson, Lambert, p. 42.
discipline. Nayler, remarkable for his clear writing and speaking, must have
Councell if Warre, concerning the Northern Forces also a Letter concerning the Countries resolutions
are in Nayler’s area of responsibility as Quartermaster. Soldiers in Poyntz’s
command had mutinied over matters including pay and quartering. Lam­
for the various ranks of cavalry soldiers, staff, and general officers. Additional
ment sets standards of quarters to be provided, along with daily allowances,
within a year, invite this judgment. The nature of the work under way at
Pontefract and York further support the conclusion that here is where
Lambert’s command in the efforts to settle the army’s grievances. His con­
sistent appearance at Pontefract prior to and following this date, together
with his minuted attendance at meetings of Lambert’s Council of Officers
within a year, invite this judgment. The nature of the work under way at
Pontefract for the various ranks of cavalry soldiers, staff, and general officers. Additional
disciplinary problems are addressed under the title ‘Against the Disorders of
Soldiers’, signed, as it was published, ‘Thomas Margetts, Advocate’.
Margetts was Lambert’s secretary and treasurer, but the matters discussed
are in Nayler’s area of responsibility as Quartermaster. Soldiers in Poyntz’s
command had mutinied over matters including pay and quartering. Lam­
bert’s success in settling these differences depended on clear policy and
discipline. Nayler, remarkable for his clear writing and speaking, must have

71. John A. Lambert, A Declaration of the Northen Army with Instructions concluded at a
Councell if Warre, concerning the Northern Forces also a Letter concerning the Countries resolutions
in relation to the Scot (York, printed by Thomas Broad, 1648) Thomason Tracts E421(33).

been a necessary participant in the process of restoring order in his area of
responsibility.
At year end 1647, however, the King escaped, and the Second Civil War
was on. The King signed an agreement with his Scots supporters, promising,
for his part, to deliver a Presbyterian form of governance of the Churches of
England and Scotland. At last he had backed away from his support of
the episcopacy. His favorite bishop after all, William Laud, was dead.
Royalist uprisings spread, and Lambert gathered his Yorkshire forces to
secure the North against a Scottish invasion. From Spring 1648 onward
activity all over the North reached a hectic pace. The climax of the war was
at hand. Royalist general Marmaduke Langdale was sent in April 1648 to
consolidate his forces with allies from Scotland and invade England from
the North. Lambert was assigned, with insufficient forces, to hold back this
attack until Cromwell, engaged in a two-month struggle at Pembroke
Castle, could assist. Meanwhile, the situation at Pontefract reversed itself
again. In a surprise take-over from within, the castle stronghold went over
to Royalist hands. Former Parliamentarian governor of the castle, Morris,
had changed sides and declared for the King. Lambert had to send a
powerful force back to Pontefract to besiege the castle for the third time.
Copley and Nayler could have been near Carlisle with Lambert, or at
Pontefract, or at one and then the other. No documentation has been found
to clarify their whereabouts until late in 1648, when we can be sure they
were both at Pontefract.
During the summer of 1648 Scottish troops under Lord Hamilton, allied
with English Royalists under Langdale, tested Lambert’s resistance in West­
moreland around Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Brough and Barnard Castle.72
Upon arrival of Cromwell’s reinforcements, both sides moved southward,
toward a major battle near Preston, at which the Scots and Royalists were
defeated. Civilian atrocities were charged against the Scots during this cam­
paign. English feelings against the Scots ran high for some time after.
Nevertheless, Cromwell was able to reach settlement with the Kirk Party in
Scotland, who opposed Hamilton’s Royalists. Parliament’s army, led by
Cromwell and Lambert, rode into Edinburgh unopposed, took charge of
the city, and received a letter of commendation to Parliament for the
humane conduct of their occupation.73

72. Dawson, Lambert, pp. 67-78.
73. A True Account of the Great Expressions if Love from the Kingdom if Scotland unto
Lieutenant General Cromwell and Officers and Soldiers Under his Command (London, 1648)
Thomason Tracts E409(26).
Now the treachery at Pontefract Castle had to be addressed. When Royalist troops took the castle in June 1648, they were let in by turncoats. Prisoners were taken, but few lives were lost on either side. The siege began in remarkably good nature. Shots were exchanged. Royalists saluted into the countryside from time to time. Despite Parliament's attempts to tighten the siege, the Royalists inside remained confident that starvation was not to be their downfall. Indeed Cromwell wrote to Parliament in the fall that up to 240 head of cattle were in the castle, along with provisions and water sufficient for a year. He requested the largest siege guns available to batter down the walls, and large supplies of ammunition. Colonel Copley, meanwhile, was assigned to make periodic visits inside the castle to keep up a good communication, although he had no authority to negotiate terms.

The siege might have been resolved more favorably for the Royalists but for a bold adventure late in October. Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, one of the most respected figures in Cromwell's army, known as the first officer to advocate trial of the King, was to be a witness against Royalist General Langdale, on trial for atrocities committed around the Battle of Preston. Rainsborough set up headquarters at Doncaster, twelve miles from Pontefract, to assist in taking the castle. Royalist soldiers inside Pontefract Castle, concerned that Langdale would be hanged, undertook to capture Rainsborough as hostage to gain Langdale's release. The adventurers made their way to Doncaster by ruse, but Rainsborough resisted so strongly that the Royalists killed him and returned to the castle. Various accounts have from 20 to 40 men leaving the castle, though only six seized Rainsborough. Five of the six returned to Pontefract Castle. One was killed.

According to one account, among the murderers was one John Nayler, of Wakefield. Although not the soldier named as killed in the action, he seems to have disappeared at the end of the siege of Pontefract, and escaped punishment that others received. Whether this Nayler was in any way related to James has not been discovered, nor do we know whether he was James Nayler's brother.

A most important meeting took place at Pontefract on Friday, December 12, 1648. Senior officers present, listed as General Lambert's Council of Officers, with Lambert as Commander-in-Chief, include Colonel Bright, Captain Baynes, Captain Lilburne, Captain Westby and Quartermaster Nayler, among thirty-six officers present. This meeting places Quartermaster Nayler by name and vote with the revolutionaries at one of the critical focal points in the process of overturning the old government. By assuming a power greater than Parliament's at this point in national affairs, the army councils assured the end of monarchy, a death sentence for the King, and the eventual Protectorate of the Commonwealth under Cromwell. While the councils of the New Model Army in the south were the most influential in arguing for the King's trial, the council of Lambert's Northern Army, of which Nayler is here shown as a member, were concerned that their own agreement with the revolutionary process be recorded.

Absent from this meeting was Colonel Copley. Although he appeared at council meetings earlier, by late 1648 he was no longer listed. The reason may have to do with his falling out with Cromwell. Copley later stated in his case to Parliament for payment of compensation due, mentioned above,
that Lt. General Cromwell had Copley's name taken off the list of regimental commanders because Copley wouldn't become subservient to Cromwell's "...ambitious ends...then under the curtain, since discovered." With benefit of hindsight, Copley declared that he had known of Cromwell's subversive plan to dispatch the King and take over his power and Copley would have none of it, though that meant paying a dear price in terms of the loss of his command, pay and compensation for bullets and iron he had sold to Parliament from his metals business.

Cromwell had stopped in Pontefract on his way south from Scotland until about the first of December 1648, perhaps in order to avoid the struggle between the army and the Parliament in London. The Presbyterian majority in Commons had attempted for some time to reach a negotiated settlement with the King, by now in the form of the proposed Treaty of Newport, an agreement which could only lead to restoration of Charles I as monarch. The army, having had enough of the King's broken promises, sought to end negotiations and impose its will on the settlement. A Remonstrance to this effect and more had been sent to Parliament. Cromwell, an Independent and therefore of the minority party, maintained a judicious (or perhaps indecisive) remove from the controversy as his son-in-law, Ireton, acted as leader of the radicals in both army and Parliament. Lambert seemed quite in control of the siege at Pontefract, while Cromwell delayed returning to London much longer than necessary. On 28 November Fairfax sent Cromwell a direct order to proceed to Windsor with all possible speed. Parliament tried to ignore the army's Remonstrance and persisted in negotiations with the King. Fairfax, supreme commander of the army, issued a warning to Parliament on 30 November. A demand for immediate payment of £40,000 arrears due from the city of London followed. The army began moving toward London the next day and by 5 December, the military take-over of the city was complete. On the morning of the sixth, members of Colonel Pride's regiment met the members of Commons at Whitehall and began arresting Presbyterian members and removing them under guard. The Purge took close to 140 members out of the House, those present, including Nayler, supported the Remonstrance, which is to say, the army's revolution, at least as far as it had gone at that point.

The 12 December 1648 meeting of Lambert and his officers was held in the midst of this complex situation. Lambert spoke in favor of moderation in proceeding with the King. Other officers favored alignment with the army's Remonstrance to Parliament, treating the King as a criminal and laying out required democratic principles for remaking the government as a republic. Despite this split, an effective compromise was possible. The officers sent a report to General Fairfax, which supported the Remonstrance and practically named as traitors any who would deal with the King as if he were still their monarch. Only two of Lambert's council voted against the officers' report to Fairfax, namely Colonel Bright and Captain Westby. Their negative votes are noted in the margin of the Minutes. The rest of those present, including Nayler, supported the Remonstrance, which is to say, the army's revolution, at least as far as it had gone at that point.

86. Dawson, Lambert, p. 91.
87. Parliamentary Council of War Minutes, 1647-1648 (see n. 82 above).
88. A Declaration of the Officers belonging to the Brigade of Col. John Lambert Commander in chief in the Northern Parts, now lying Lesgores before Pontefract Castle. At a General Meeting of them, to advise upon (and declare their sense of the present conditions of Affairs of the Kingdom.) To his Excellency the Lord General Fairfax and his General Council. As also Col. Lambert's Letter concerning the same. Pontefract 12 December 1648, signed Tho Mangetts. (London: John Partridge, 1648), Thomason Tracts, E177(10).
Lambert attached a letter of his own to Fairfax, to the effect that the officers in the North had established a committee to meet weekly and consult upon 'public affairs', sending their recommendations to Fairfax for his information, via Captain Baynes. In response to these communications, Lambert asked Fairfax to report in like fashion on just what was going on in London. While Lambert aligned himself with Fairfax in this communication and thus reassured Fairfax of his own moderate intention, he was at the same time advising Fairfax that the junior officers were more radically inclined. The chairman of the newly established officers' committee was to be Robert Lilburne, recognizable to Fairfax as the possible organizer of formidable army resistance to moderation in the north. The officers' report, though rendered official by Lambert's signature, was without his wholehearted support.

Further revealing possible concern about Lambert's moderation, Thomas Margetts, Lambert's secretary, sent a letter of his own to Baynes, advising him to make a strong case for the commitment of the Northern Army to the Remonstrance and the revolution. Afraid they had already missed the chance to join their support with the rest of the army's, he expressed concern that the Northern troops would, ever after, come last in consideration, including when it came to getting paid. 89

James Nayler's vote had aligned him with Lilburne in support of the Remonstrance, seeking removal of the King. 90 Robert Lilburne shortly was to go to London himself, in place of Baynes. There he sat on the commission of judges in the trial of the King, and when the verdict was given, Lilburne signed the King's death warrant. 91 Fairfax and Lambert both, although they were named by others to the commission, declined to attend its meetings. Lambert never attended, Fairfax only once. 92

With the King's execution the Second Civil War was effectively ended, but England was not settled. Army discontent, government and economic collapse at home, the threat of continuing Irish revolution, Royalist efforts in England and Scotland to restore monarchy in the person of Charles II, all combined to threaten the country. Woven through these great issues was a persistent dissent among sectarians in many parts of the country, and among more radical political elements within the army. The army debates held in 1647 at Putney over the future of government, had generated a series of declarations of popular dissent that continued and became more insistent after the dispatch of Charles I. Any moderate in Parliament must have felt threatened. 93

Nayler and the Levelers

Prominent in dissent were the Levellers and since Nayler was accused in his trial at Appleby in 1652 94 of having been among them, they deserve mention here. John Lilburne, middle brother of three, the most articulate Leveller, became a Quaker at the end of his life. 95 Although he admired Nayler's writings and commended them to his wife, he never mentioned meeting Nayler, nor did Nayler refer to Lilburne. Nayler, however, was often in proximity to John's older brother, Robert, who, as we have seen, was another prominent leader amongst army radicals. While Robert seemed for a while to take a more moderate position than the Levellers with respect to the monarchy, 96 Parliament's Presbyterian majority nevertheless had good reason to fear him as an incendiary to their delicate structure of power. Some troops under Lilburne's command, after all, had mutinied against General Poyntz. The same Parliament, however, saw fit to release John Lilburne from the Tower on 1 August 1648. Cromwell was seen to have his eyes on the monarchy, even at this early date. Some in Parliament argued that John Lilburne might be able to speak effectively against that threat. 97 Henry Lilburne, the youngest brother, heard a different story, that the

89. Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 182.
90. The appearance of Captain Lilburne on the attendance list raises an interesting question. Robert Lilburne was a Colonel at this time and often sat with Lambert's council. His cousin, Thomas, was a Captain, described in the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) as a Cromwell supporter. He served in the Northern Army in proximity to Robert. Either or both Lilburnes could have been at the meeting, but it is certain that Robert emerged as chairman of the committee.
91. A List of the Names of so many of those Commissioners as sate and sentenced the late King Charles to Death, Thomason Tracts, 101(7), and Samuel Gardiner, Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 379, 380.
92. A List of the Names of the Judges of the High Court of Justice for the Tryall of the King, London, Jan 11th 1648, Thomason Tracts 669(1370); Dawson, Lambert, p. 93.
Levellers were plotting to murder King Charles I. Although he was governor for Parliament of Tynemouth Castle, Henry was a moderate when it came to the monarchy and could not be part of such a thing. He declared for the King, just as the governor of Pontefract Castle had done, but Henry met with swifter retribution. Within twenty-four hours he had been killed by his own soldiers and the castle was in Parliament's hands again. 98 Henry did not live to see the King's execution in January 1649.

By May 1649 the Leveller movement had gained such a following in the army that numbers of Leveller soldiers revolted in at least two places. 99 One such group of mutineers marched toward London and were apprehended at Burford, with severe punishment ordered by Cromwell. It was with this group that Nayler was accused, three years later, of associating. He denied it, claiming he had been 'in the North' 100 which probably meant Pontefract. No one at either the Appleby or the London trial asked Nayler if he were ever associated with any of the Liburnes. The answer to that question might have had the same effect, guilt by association, as an admission of involvement with the Levellers.

Ironically, the charges against James Nayler of being with the Levellers were probably a case of mistaken identity. Quartermaster John Naylier (note the slightly different spelling) in the command of Captain Bray, under Major Reynolds of Kent, signed a petition to Parliament in April 1649 which, among several other issues, supports John Lilburne. 101 Naylier then published his own tract protesting ill-use of his troop by Major Reynolds, blaming him for their 25 weeks of arrears in pay (a common complaint in the army at the time) and accusing him of trying to sell his soldiers for service in Ireland for £4 a man and a promotion to Colonel for himself. In this tract Quartermaster Naylier mentions that he has been accused of being a Leveller, but he righteously denies it. 102 Due to his petition for Liburne and his controversial publication within a month of the Leveller mutinies, it is easy to see that John Nayler's name might be remembered and later confused with James Nayler's.

98. Cromwell, Letters, I, p. 244.
100. Nayler, Saul's Errand, p. 30.
101. The Foxe's Craft Discovered, 2 April 1649, Thomason Tracts, E549(7).
102. The Newmade Colonel, or Inland's Juying Prenticed Believer, 30 April 1649, Thomason Tracts, E552(10).
Pneumonia and influenza are additional possibilities. The winter in Scotland between 1650 and 1651 was wet, cold and unusually harsh. Food and shelter were scarce. Both armies suffered deeply. Cromwell himself reported that he was so severely ill that his life was in danger.\textsuperscript{107} So many soldiers died or were disabled during the winter that both sides needed considerable reinforcement in order to resume fighting in the spring.

The Scots and Charles II, in danger of being trapped at Inverkeithing in July, 1651 by Lambert's cavalry, made a desperate turn and went toward England. Lambert gave chase. Cromwell followed. Holding at Worcester, a well-fortified city, half encircled by a river with few bridges, Charles II stood against Cromwell and Lambert but was defeated, ending this chapter of the war and making way for the establishment of the Commonwealth and Oliver's Protectorate.

Whether Nayler went as far as Worcester is doubtful. No evidence that he did has been discovered.\textsuperscript{108} Yet his own description of serving 'between eight and nine years' means that he left the army after May 20, 1651. The battle at Worcester took place on September 3, 1651. Later that year, in winter, Nayler met George Fox at the Roper's home in Stanley.\textsuperscript{109} a village adjacent to Wakefield. Although the two met there again the following spring, Fox described Nayler as being convinced after their first meeting at Stanley. This is consistent with Nayler's description of hearing the voice of God calling him while he was at the plow planting barley, \textsuperscript{111} which is planted as early as possible in the spring.\textsuperscript{112} The second meeting with Fox seems to have taken place in May, well after barley planting. In any case, and whether or not he fought at Worcester, it appears that Nayler began his association with Fox and the other Quakers of the early itinerant ministry after he had left the army, apparently with no intention of returning to military service.

---

108. John Gough, \textit{A History of the People Called Quakers, From their first Rise to the present Time} (4 vols.; Dublin: Jackson, 1789), Vol. 1, p. 233, says that Nayler, disabled by sickness, returned home about 1649, thus differing with his brother James's account of Nayler's presence at Dunbar.
112. From personal conversations with farmers around West Ardsley, March 2000.
Nayler’s military service ended much later. He took a position closer to that of George Bishop of Bristol, who argued at the army's Putney Debates in favor of revolution against the oppressive monarchy, declaring God's displeasure with the King as evidenced by His gifts of victory to Parliament's army. Nayler sat in officers council in the North, voting to overthrow the government and to establish a committee of communication led by an officer radical enough to become signatory to the King's death warrant.

In these four future Quaker leaders can be seen a range of experience and attitude toward the wars of revolution. Fox never took arms himself, though he did not seem to deny that course to others who were so led. Dewsbury took arms in his time of seeking, but laid them down when his leading became clear to him. Nayler embraced the revolution and fought on through it. Only after victory over Charles II did he turn from fighting a physical to a purely spiritual war, joining Fox and Dewsbury. Bishop remained in the army and government a few years longer, serving the Protectorate in the hope that the new leadership would deliver a peaceable, Godly regime. Then he, too, became disillusioned with Cromwell, Parliament and the cronies of the Commonwealth, and was convinced to turn toward the Friends of Truth.

Nayler may have spoken for all of them and many others when he wrote to those in power, near the beginning of his ministry, from Westmoreland in 1653:

...How has your judgment failed you to think that all this Shaking and Overturning hath no further End, but to set up Flesh, and to exalt one Man to rule over another, by his own Will, where Christ should reign forever?

AUTHOR DETAILS

David Neelon is an independent scholar with interest in Early Quakerism and Seventeenth-Century English History. He has been a member of Friends Meetings in Massachusetts and Ohio for about thirty years. He laid down in mid-life his former career of developing industrial real estate in order to take up fiction writing and historical research.

Mailing Address:
2773 N. Park Blvd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, USA. Email: dneelon@earthlink.net

115. Feola, George Bishop, p. 20.

Anna Deborah Richardson, women's movements

From the mid-1850s, campaigns around 'women's rights'...