



CANE CREEK MEETING HOUSE



Suffering for Peace



The Quakers (Society of Friends) were early anti-slavery supporters of the Underground Railroad. Once the war erupted and Alamance County residents chose sides, supporters of the Confederacy regarded the Friends as Unionists. Never attacked directly by their neighbors, the Quakers were subjected to various pressures to conform. The government, attempting

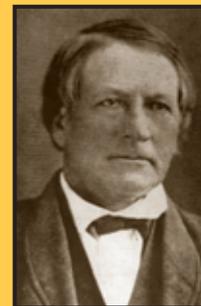


Cane Creek Meeting House, ca. 1900 – Courtesy Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College

to enforce the conscription acts, tried not only to persuade Quaker conscripts to renounce their faith but also inflicted physical and psychological violence on them.

Solomon Frazier, of neighboring Randolph County, endured an experience suffered by many others. Early in the war, Frazier paid a \$500 fine to avoid conscription. By 1864, however, when Confederate manpower needs were acute, he was arrested and taken to the prison at Salisbury. There, despite being beaten to make him renounce his beliefs, he refused on religious grounds to “take up the gun” or to serve as a prison guard. When the officer in charge became furious with him, Frazier said “If it is thy duty to inflict this punishment on me, do it cheerfully; don’t get angry about it.” When rifle barrels were leveled at his face, Frazier calmly said, “It is the Sabbath and as good a day to die as any.” Never broken, he survived this mistreatment and the war.

William Thompson, conscripted from this Meeting (congregation), was killed at Gettysburg, leaving a wife, Martha, and small children. At least seven Confederate veterans are buried in the cemetery a mile west, a silent tribute to the Friends’ spirit of forgiveness of those who did take up the gun.



Isham Cox
*Courtesy Friends
Historical Collection,
Guilford College*

As a minister for this Meeting, Isham Cox became the spokesman for the Quaker community to surrounding faiths. His membership on the Yearly Meeting’s Committee on Suffering led him to seek better treatment for Solomon Frazier’s during Frazier’s confinement. Cox succeeded because of his prestige with the North Carolina government, and finally secured Frazier’s release.