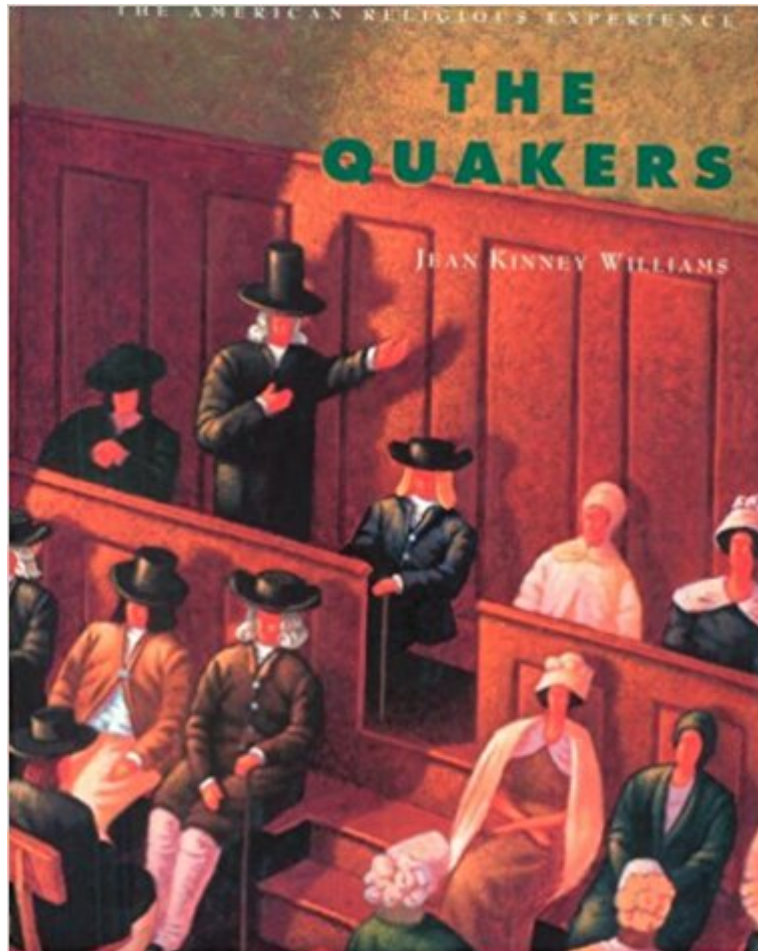




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# The Quakers (American Religious Experience)



## Synopsis

Examines the history, notable individuals, beliefs, way of life, and current status of this longstanding Christian group.

## Book Information

Series: American Religious Experience

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9-Williams examines the roots, evolving belief structure, central personalities, and current practices of the Quakers. Readers will come away from this book with a strong sense of what a Friends service is like, the role of women in preaching, the nature of the Friends' relationships with groups ranging from the Puritans to the Nazis, and what it costs to have the courage of one's convictions. Those studying William Penn will find an insightful chapter on his "Holy Experiment." The black-and-white photographs and reproductions are of uneven quality, but the research in this well-documented title is sound. Surprisingly, little else exists for children in the way of research material despite the Quakers' pivotal role in American history. A welcome portrait. Wendy Lukehart, Dauphin County Library, Harrisburg, PA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6<sup>+</sup>-12. This entry in the American Religious Experience series looks at Quaker beliefs and doctrines and the role Quakers have played in the history of this country, from the time they first came here from England in the seventeenth century through today. Williams, who has written several other books in the series, discusses the simplicity of the Quaker meeting and the Quakers' core belief in the direct relationship between each individual and God. She focuses on the Friends'

social activism, including their role in the abolitionist movement and their support for the Underground Railroad, as well as their pacifist stands in various wars and their call for prison reform and the rights of Native Americans. Williams shows that there is a long history of Friends becoming enemies, of deep differences and splits among members, and that, even today, when there is a search for common ground, this small, influential religious group is characterized by enormous diversity in culture and beliefs. The writing style is direct, and the book design is open, with clear type, lots of black-and-white prints, useful source notes by chapter at the back, a brief bibliography, and a short list of Internet sites. Hazel Rochman

This excellent book is an excellent way to learn about Quakers. Although listed as a Young Adult or Children's title, the book is more than suitable for adults who are interested in the Religious Society of Friends. We are a small, simple group of people, and the Quaker faith involves strong and unconventional spiritual beliefs (silent worship, women speaking in meeting as early as the 1600's, lack of a minister, non-dogmatic use of Scripture), mysticism, acceptance of other believers (it is not unusual to find Unitarians, Wiccans, Catholics and Buddhists in Quaker meetings), lifestyles (simplicity, most often in a non-Luddite manner), and activism (nonviolence, anti-death penalty, prison reform.) Note: Although Friends were active in the abolitionist movement, this came about only after a minority of Friends convinced the majority that slavery was an abomination. In this tastefully illustrated book, you will read about the beginnings of the movement in England, with George Fox. Follow the faith to the Americas, with information about the conflicts that divided the faith into two different groups. An absolute must for each Friend's (or those interested in learning about other Faiths, including Quakers) reading list, along with George Fox's and John Woolman's Journals, Jessamyn West's *The Quaker Reader*, and Robert L. Smith's *A Quaker Book of Wisdom*.

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