

Portable Politics: Quaker Pamphleteering (1650-1700)

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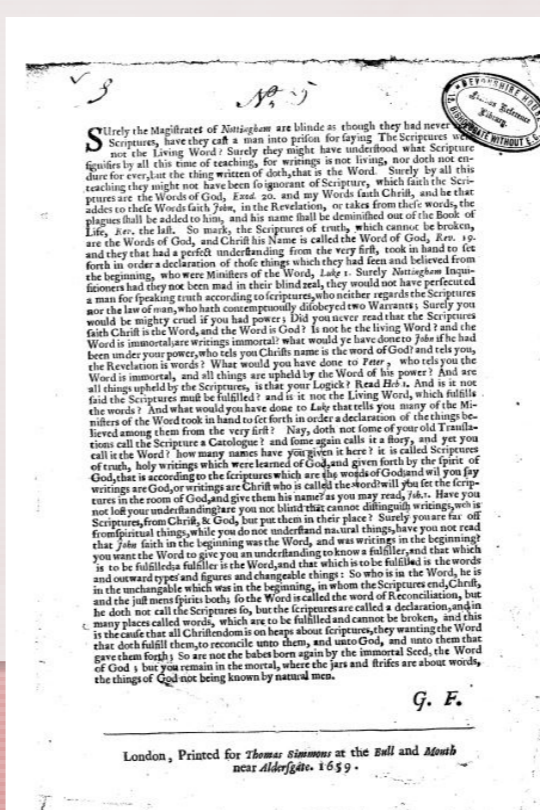
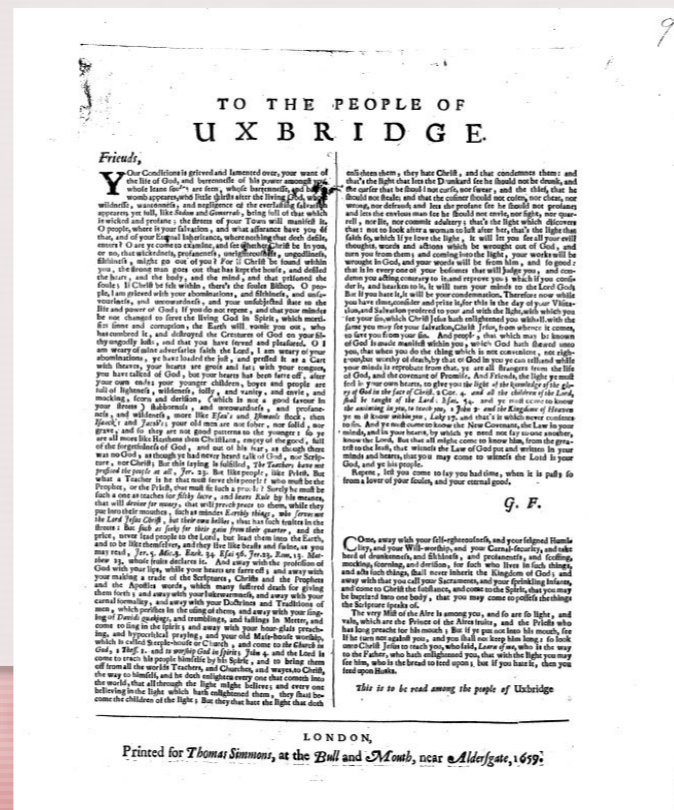
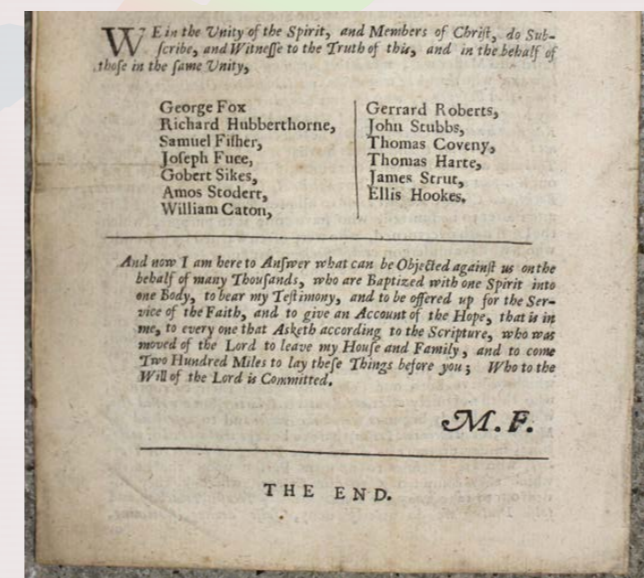
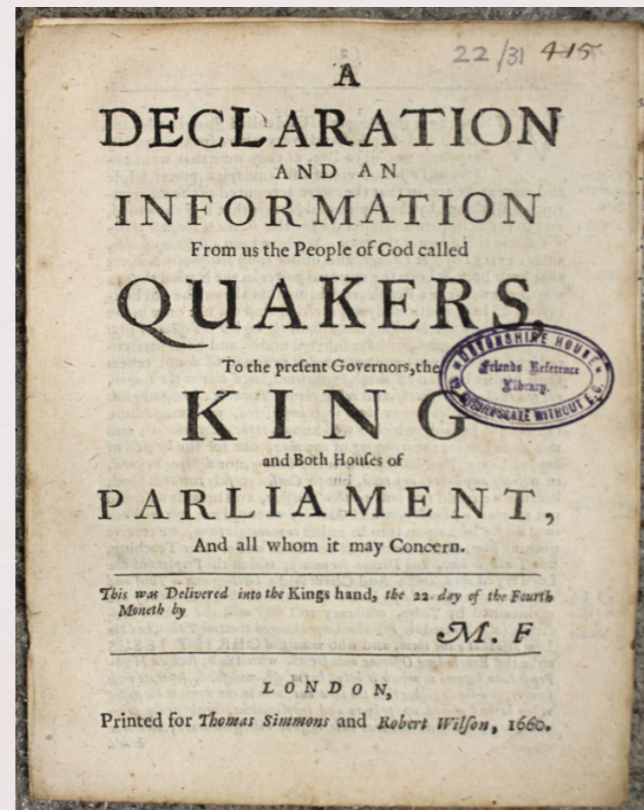
The Pamphlet as Common Ground

For their brevity, ease of circulation, and populist associations - and for their ephemerality - pamphlets were part of everyday life.

My work explores how Quaker pamphleteers seized on the potential of print, using it to engender community spirit in readers, or, more combatively, deploying it as a means of expressing collective protest.

The Politics of Conviction

Quakers backed up protests - for instance, this one to King Charles II - with written accounts of their demands. One of their encomiums for collaboration is the support conveyed through transcribing and printing the names of signatories to a petition.



Pamphlets contributed to the democratisation of print in that their authors challenged the idea that publication was the preserve of the elite.

The Quaker 'church' was its people, the collective body.

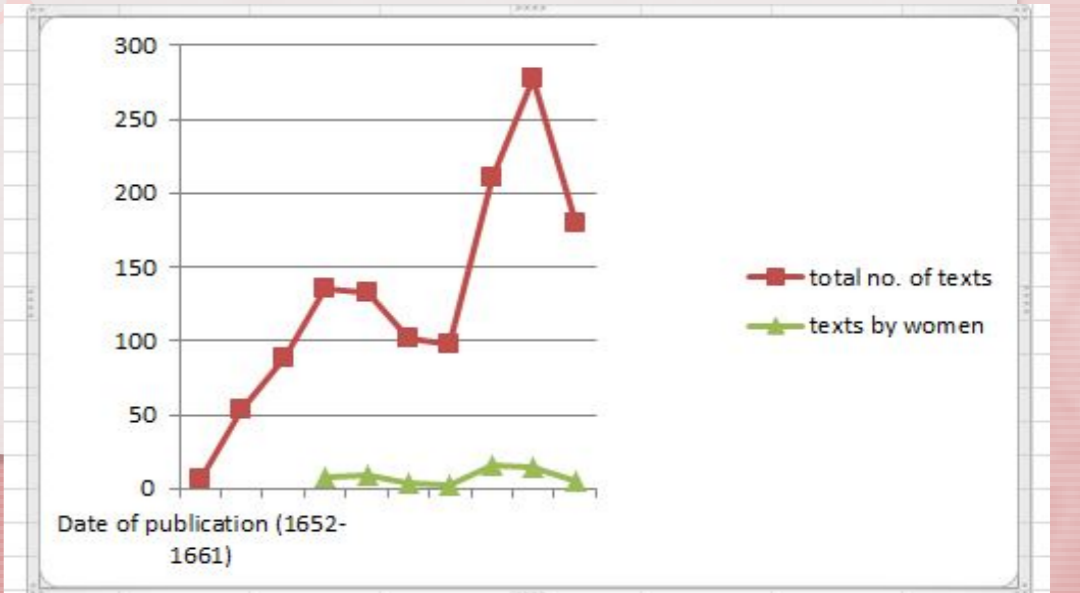
This was a socially diverse 'church', and the published writings reflect the movement's constituency.



A Declaration and Heemskirk The Quakers Meeting have been provided © Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

Egbert van Heemskirk's picture of Quaker women is barbed (see the inscription). Yet it defies the meaning he assigns it by representing a woman's spiritual authority.

The graph represents Quaker published writing as estimated by David Runyan and Rosemary Foxton (in two separate bibliographies). Quakers were the most prolific pamphleteers of the century, and they published more women's works than any other religious group.



By a friend to righteous men,

Edward Burrough.

The Quaker Edward Burrough was involved in constructing the Quakers' public image. Identity formation through print might take this format of one Friend addressing another.

Word frequencies can encapsulate the tone of Quaker pamphleteering. The commonest words used in a representative sample of 1659s texts are shown below. See Judith Roads' corpus of searchable and machine-readable texts at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/quaker-historical-corpus.html>

