

Title: Their Finest: The Quakers' Contributions to the Abolitionist Movement

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The abolitionist movement prior to, and following, the Civil War was greatly helped and advanced by the Quakers of the United States. The Quakers were influenced by their religious and moral codes to support the movement to end slavery. They were crucial members of the movement, and without them, the liberation of the slaves would have been an ever harder battle to win. Quakers played a pivotal role in the Underground Railroad, educating freed slaves, and helping them assimilate into society (Genovese 4). For Quakers, their religion inspired them to see that all men were created equal, and that included the African-Americans who were forced into slavery, with Historian Thomas Hamm going as far as to say, "Nearly every history of the anti-slavery movement affirms the Quakers' precedence... in recognizing the evil of human bondage and in speaking out against it" (1). It is true that not all Quakers supported this form of radical abolitionism, and some were still racist in their mentalities towards African-Americans. However, most did not think in this manner, and spoke and wrote about the trials faced by African-American slaves to capture the sympathy of the American people to help them in their struggle (Blackwell 8). It can be argued that without the Quakers, the abolitionist movement would have lost a great amount of its support. The Quakers were responsible for helping the movement gain traction and obtaining for the escaped slaves an easier transition into society in the North, and these contributions can't be ignored.

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