QUAKER STUDIES 6/1 (2001) [8-36]

JAMES NAYLER IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

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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.[1] Most of these individuals, Nayler included, began their military service before they became convinced as Friends. All of

1. Margaret Hirst, *The Quakers in Peace and War, An Account of Their Peace Principles and Practices* (London: Swarthmore Press, 1923), Appendix A, p. 527.

Nayler's military involvement occurred before he met George Fox, most of it before there even existed a Quaker movement identifiable as such,[2] 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,[3] 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*[4] studies Nayler's writings and the Scriptural bases of his teaching. Damrosch accepts the careful accounts in William Bittle's *James Nayler 1618–1660*[5] 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*,[6] 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*[7] 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

2. George Fox, *Journal of George Fox* (ed. John L. Nickalls; London: Religious Society of Friends, 1986), p. 58.

3. James Nayler, 'The Examination of James Nayler upon an Indictment of Blasphemy at the Sessions at Appleby in January 1652', in *Saul's Errand to Damascus* (London: Giles Calvert, 1653), p. 30.

4. Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Crackdown on the Puritan Free Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

5. William G. Bittle, *James Nayler, 1618–1660* (York: William Sessions; Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1986).

6. Mabel Richmond Brailsford, *A Quaker From Cromwell's Army, James Nayler* (New York: Macmillan, 1927).

7. Emilia Fogelklou, *James Nayler, the Rebel Saint, 1618–1660* (trans. Lajla Lapp; London: Ernest Benn, 1931).

is found in the introductory chapters of Rosemary Moore's *The Light in Their Consciences*.[8]

Unlike his contemporary, George Bishop[9] 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,[10] however, and it will be combined here with contextual materials and

8. Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences, the Early Quakers in Britain, 1646–1666* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000) Part I, chs. 1, 2, 3.

9. Maryann S. Feola, *George Bishop, Seventeenth-century Soldier Turned Quaker* (York: William Sessions, 1996).

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

accepted historical studies concerning the progress of the wars, in order to reach conclusions about Nayler's activities during this period. Furthermore, Nayler, like Bishop, will be placed, by clear documentary evidence of his presence and vote, in relationship to the overthrow of King Charles I and the monarchy.

Although we have no account in his own words for Nayler's motivation in joining the wars and continuing in them as long as he did, we do have sufficient biographical evidence, combined with history of his parish, community and region to build the outline of an answer to questions of his purpose and involvement in the revolution. We can place him in comparison with his contemporaries in the beginnings of the Quaker movement and we can offer what Nayler wrote later about his belief in the purpose of the wars.

In 1655, well after he left the military, James Nayler and George Fox wrote to Oliver Cromwell, reminding him of his promises of freedom of conscience.[11] The published letter requested, amongst other things, that Cromwell, by then the Protector of the Commonwealth, abolish support of paid clergy by tithes against the peoples' will, allow attendance at the church of one's choice and require no person to swear oaths against conscience. Nayler and Fox offered in their letter some steps to be taken toward this end, in fulfillment of promises of freedom of conscience Cromwell had made during the war years. Fox signed the main body of the letter. Nayler closed it as follows, over his own signature:

> Thus in Faithfulness to God, and in Love to you, with whom I have served for the good of these Nations, betwixt eight and nine years counting nothing too dear to bring the Government into your Hands in whom it is, as many can witness with me herein. And now my Prayer to God for you is that you may lay down all your Crowns at his Feet who hath Crowned you with victory, that so the Lord being set up as King in every conscience, all may be subject to your Government for conscience sake: And so God may establish you, and the hearts of his people, praise him in your behalf, and so to you I

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.

11. Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996), pp. 58, 63, 69-70, 107-108, 126.

> 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 Nayler referred to 'Crowns' as the symbol of victory. The plurals acknowledged that the wars were fought to free the Three Kingdoms,[13] England, Ireland and Scotland, which, since King James, father of Charles I, had been 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 under a secular monarch's rule.

Does this public, political letter rely on clarity of hindsight from a position five years removed from the end of Nayler's part in the wars? It may, but Nayler's mature representation here of what a dozen years of 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

12. George Fox and James Nayler, *To Thee Oliver Cromwell* (London: Giles Calvert, 1655).

13. Feola, *George Bishop*, p. 17. Note that Bishop also referred to 'saving the Three Kingdoms' in reporting the Battle of Naseby in 1645.

14. Colonel Christopher Copley, 'The Notes of the Entertainment of the Continuance of the Officers and Soldiers of My Troop', April 6, 1649, collected in G.E. Aylmer (ed.), *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts, 1640–1664* (Harvester Press Microfilms, reproduced by permission of Worcester College, Oxford, 1977), Volume 4/2. Nayler did not serve

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[15] 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.[16] 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-Westmoreland, 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 in the text, but old calendar dates have not been changed where they appear in titles quoted in these notes.

16. J.T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry From the Reformation to the Civil War* (London: Athlone Press, 1969), pp. 53, 107, 277; Colonel Christopher Copley, *His Case* (British Library, Sloane Manuscripts, Additional: Cole Manuscripts 5832.209)

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.

18. Tom Leadly, *Lee Fair, West Ardsley, Wakefield, the story of England's oldest charter fair* (West Ardsley: Tom Leadly, 1994), pp. 1-5.

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 and environs?) derive from the first-hand report of Thomas Fairfax,[20] who had written to his father during the winter of 1642, saying that the people 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,

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.

20. Thomas Fairfax, 'A Short Memorial of the Northern Actions, During ye Warre there Fro ye Yeare 1642 till 1644', quoted in George Tyas, *The Battles of Wakefield* (London: A. Hall & Co., 1854); John Wilson, *Fairfax, the Life of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, Captain-General of all the Parliament's Forces in the English Civil War, Creator and Commander of the New Model Army* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), p. 31.

21. Wilson, *Fairfax*, p. 28.

22. Many excellent works are available concerning events leading up to the Civil Wars, for example: J.T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry*, Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: radical ideas during the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2nd edn, 1998); David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion, Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); David Underdown, *A Freeborn People: politics and the nation in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace, 1637–1641* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

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]

23. Ronald A. Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560–1642* (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. 42-43, 108-109, 266. I am grateful to Mr H. Larry Ingle for calling my attention to the importance of Anthony Nutter to the James Nayler story.

24. Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560–1642*, p. 58.

25. Mark Charles Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars: Charles I's campaigns against Scotland 1638-40* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 273; Wedgwood, *King's Peace*, p. 338.

26. Norrison Scatcherd, *The History of Morley in the Parish of Batley, and West Riding of Yorkshire and Especially of the Old Chapel in the Village, with Some Account of Ardsley, Topcliffe, Woodchurch, Batley, Howley Hall, Soothill Hall, Carlinghow, Birstal, Usher Hall, Adwalton, the Battle of Adwalton Moor, The Battle of Dunbar, Gildersome, Churwell, Cottingley, Middleton, Thorpe, also of the Remarkable Occurences in these Parts in the Seventeenth Century* (Leeds: J. Heaton, 1830).

27. Bittle, *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 landlord of most of West Ardsley.[28]

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.[29] 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.[30] 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.[31]

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.

29. George H. Crowther, *A Descriptive History of the Wakefield Battles and a Short Account of this Ancient and Important Town* (London: W. Nicholson and Son, 1886); Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War, 1642–1649*, I (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1901), p. 140; Keith Snowden, *The Civil War in Yorkshire and Account of the Battles and Sieges and Yorkshire's Involvement* (Pickering: Castledon Publications, 1998), p. 18; George Tyas, *The Battles of Wakefield*.

30. Fairfax, *A Short Memorial*.

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

Bradford and Leeds. A much larger Royalist force under Lord Newcastle faced them at Adwalton Moor,[32] near Bradford and within easy walking distance of the old Nayler home at West Ardsley. Captain Copley's troop, of which Nayler was a corporal, was mentioned ingloriously in Thomas Fairfax's account of the battle.[33] During the heat of the fight four of Copley's troopers dismounted and stripped the Royalist Colonel Herne 'naked, as he lay dead on ye ground...' Shortly, a Royalist cannon shot fell and killed two of Copley's four men, which Fairfax says, '...gave me a good occasion to reprove it, by shewing the Soldiers ye sinfulnesse of ye Act, and how God would punish wn (sic) man wanted power to do it'. Facing Royalists on higher ground, Fairfax's troops were cut off by hedgerows from observing the rest of Parliament's army in retreat, leaving them on the field without support. Fortunately, local people in Fairfax's regiment knew a back lane out of their position, offering a way to escape through Halifax. The day was lost. Bradford and Leeds were lost. Parliament's forces had to retreat across country to Hull, where the fortified city could be defended until help came from the south.

From late that July through September, Copley's troop apparently held a base at Barnsley[34] in South Yorkshire, as Hull was besieged by Royalists. In October Copley moved to capture Lincoln and Gainsborough, then to the Battle of Nantwich in Cheshire, 26 January 1644, where Parliament's troops, led again by Fairfax, prevailed. At one point cavalry of John Lambert and (now) Major Copley were in danger close to the town, but forces 'came to their succor in good time'.[35]

During much of May and June, 1644 Copley moved about the Don Valley in South Yorkshire guarding roads to prevent relief from reaching York,[36] where Parliament's forces held Royalists inside the city under siege. Until reinforcements could reach both sides, a stand-off continued. These reinforcements, when they came, led to the enormous battle at Marston

32. Dave Cooke, *The Forgotten Battle, The Battle of Adwalton Moor, 30th June, 1643* (Hammondwike, West Yorkshire: Battlefield Press, 1996); Colonel H.C.B. Rogers, *Battles and Generals of the Civil Wars, 1642–1651* (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1968), pp. 70-71.

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.

35. William Harbutt Dawson, *Cromwell's Understudy: the Life and Times of General John Lambert and the Rise and Fall of the Protectorate* (London: W. Hodge, 1938), p. 31.

36. Courtesy of Mr Evans.

Moor. The entire northern army of Parliament fought there, including Thomas Fairfax's cavalry, of which Copley's troop was a part. James Nayler had been promoted to Quartermaster of Copley's troop on 27 May.[37]

Parliament had made a Solemn League and Covenant with the Scots, promising Presbyterian governance of the Churches of England and Scotland in return for enough troops to help defeat the Royalists. While we focus here on the military importance of this pact, the political and religious impact was almost equally important. For an excellent discussion of this, see Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*.[38]

In an effort to meet the Scots alliance Prince Rupert, the King's nephew, brought men from Lancashire and from Ireland into the battle on the Royalist side. When the two armies met on the field at Marston Moor, they numbered over 46,000 men and stretched between two villages almost two miles apart, 28,000 Parliament and Scots soldiers facing 18,000 of Prince Rupert's Royalists. It was perhaps the largest battle ever fought on English soil, before or since.[39]

Copley's command spent the night before the battle at Hessay Moor, between Marston Moor and York with the rest of Fairfax's cavalry. There, a Copley troop captain records in his journal losing three men in a skirmish with a Royalist patrol.[40] On the morning of 2 July 1644 Parliament's army withdrew southward toward Tadcaster, with Fairfax's cavalry guarding the rear, for the Royalists had broken out of York. It was thought better not to fight them back into the city but to regroup elsewhere.

Prince Rupert's arrival from Lancashire forced a change in that plan. Parliament's forces turned in their tracks to face the Prince at Marston Moor. This placed Fairfax's cavalry, formerly the rear guard, now among the advance units. The supply wagons, which had been at the rear, were gathered behind the only hill of note on the Parliament side of the field, a

37. Copley, *Notes*, Clarke Mss 4/2.

38. Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified, Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995), p. 83.

39. The English Civil Wars are examined 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 Mss, courtesy Mr Evans.

low knoll, since known as Cromwell's Plump. As Quartermaster, Nayler may have been one of those responsible for this position, but no documentation confirms that proposal.

The two armies took position by midday, but neither attacked, aside from a few testing skirmishes. By dinner time the Prince assumed that no attack would take place that day and allowed his men to eat their meals, while remaining alert. About seven in the evening Parliament's attack began. In early July at this latitude darkness comes after ten pm following a long twilight. Even so the battle went on until the combatants could hardly see each other.

On Parliament's side things went badly from the start. Royalist General Goring, restored to his command in an earlier prisoner exchange, faced Thomas Fairfax again. This time Goring prevailed and the entire Fairfax cavalry on the right crumbled. Ferdinando Fairfax, leading infantry in the center, was beaten as well and could not assist his son. Thomas Fairfax, with few cavalrymen remaining to muster, removed the white feather from his hat, by which he was identified, and dashed across the field to get help from his counterpart cavalry officer on the left, Oliver Cromwell. Together Fairfax and Cromwell's forces fought their way back around the center lines and turned the tide against the Royalists. Goring's cavalry had wasted time and lost their advantage, by breaking ranks to plunder the Parliament supply train behind Cromwell's Plump.[41]

James Nayler's position, if it were so, was almost utterly destroyed. Parliament soldiers here sustained heavy losses. Many fled and they were not alone in doing so on either side. Even Lord Ferdinando Fairfax, Thomas's father, gave up the battle for lost when darkness fell and headed for home, about 15 miles away. Soldiers from both sides of the battle were reported on roads the next morning as much as 30 miles distant, still in retreat.[42] Yet on the battlefield it became understood by midnight that Parliament had won, for they could find no more Royalists to fight. Only next morning was it possible to learn the extent of losses to both sides. The number killed was never reliably recorded, but it was surely far into the thousands.[43]

The Royalists withdrew to the south, and Parliament's army occupied York, where Lambert was assigned to save York Minster from destruction.

41. Wilson, *Fairfax*, p. 53.

42. Young, *Marston Moor*, p. 120.

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,[44] 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.[45] 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.[46]

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 Coppley (sic), Captain Laybourne (probably Robert Lilburne, of whom we shall hear more, along with his brothers, John and Henry) and Cornet Nayler.[47] 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 £1.16*s*.[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.[49] Christopher Copley, having raised a full regiment during 1644, was made Colonel of the West Riding Regiment of Horse.[50] 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.[51]

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

44. Copley, Colonel Christopher, *His Case*, British Library, Sloane Manuscripts, Additional Cole Manuscripts 5832.209.

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, 1987 (Pontefract: John Fox; London: Longman's, 1987) (originally published as *History of Pontefract*, 1827).

48. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.

49. Dawson, *Lambert*, p. 38.

50. Copley, *His Case.*

51. C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army* (London: Methuen; New York: James Potts & Co., 1902), p. 34.

During this second siege of Pontefract Castle, Nayler was again present, being paid on 19 April and 4 May at Pontefract.[52] Colonel Copley helped handle the surrender negotiations in July.[53] He continued to be active nearby, with victories at Worksop and Sherburn-in-Elmet.[54]

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.[55] 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.[56] 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.[57] 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.[58] Nutter was ejected from that church by

52. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.

53. George Fox, *History of Pontefract* (Pontefract: John Fox; London: Longmans, 1827), p. 225.

54. Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, p. 578; Colonel Christopher Copley, *A Great Victory Obtained by Generall 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.

55. Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 59-61; Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1968), p. 287.

56. C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's War 1642–1647* (London: Collins, 1958), pp. 385, 400.

57. Wedgwood, *The King's War*, p. 400.

58. H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends, George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 13-16; T. Joseph Pickvance, *George Fox and the Purefeys* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1970), pp. 11-19; Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, pp. 4-9, 42-44, 266.

the bishops for non-conformity with the prayerbook before Fox was born. He had persisted in nonconformity at Woodkirk until excommunicated 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 beliefs 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

59. Nayler, *Saul's Errand*, p. 32; Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, p. 108.
60. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
61. Fox, *Journal*, p. 100.
62. Dawson, *Lambert*, pp. 40-41.
63. Dawson, *Lambert*, p. 42.

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

64. Dawson, *Lambert*, p. 57.
65. Copley, *His Case*.
66. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records.
67. Thomas Burton, *Diary* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), vol. 1, p. 33.
68. Nayler, *Saul's Errand*, for examples see Nayler's answers to the priests of Westmoreland, p.15; the accounts of his disputes with clergy in the area of Kendal and Orton, p. 20; the account of his trial at Appleby, p. 29.

of arrears. Poyntz sent a letter, dated 3 July 1647, to the Speaker of the House of Commons, advising of impending mutiny. Only five days later the General was in fact captured by his troops and delivered under guard to imprisonment at Reading. Fairfax took charge, released Poyntz, and directed Lambert to take over command of the Northern Army.[69]

Lambert's orders required him to decrease the size of the army, reducing both costs and the threat of mutiny. Some soldiers refused to disband without satisfaction of arrears and indemnity against civil claims for crimes they may have committed under orders. Lambert made repeated efforts with Parliament to get the soldiers paid and in the meantime persuaded many to return home if they were no longer needed. Copley took charge of Pontefract Castle, an important Yorkshire headquarters. Nayler and Copley became members of Lambert's council of officers.

Nayler was probably at Pontefract in December 1647, engaged under Lambert's command in the efforts to settle the army's grievances. His consistent 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 and York further support the conclusion that here is where Lambert would have found him most useful.

An example of the work in process is found in 'Parliamentary Army Council of War Minutes 1647–1648',[70] which includes a transcription of a paper dated 1 December 1647, called 'Concerning Inequality of Quartering'. Published later in January with Lambert's approval,[71] this policy statement sets standards of quarters to be provided, along with daily allowances, 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. Lambert's success in settling these differences depended on clear policy and discipline. Nayler, remarkable for his clear writing and speaking, must have

69. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, II, pp. 321-22.

70. *Parliamentary Army Council of War Minutes 1647–1648* (York and Pontefract, Document C469, West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield).

71. John A. Lambert, *A Declaration of the Northerne Army with Instructions concluded at a Councell of Warre, concerning the Northern Forces also a Letter concerning the Countries resolutions in relation to the Scots* (York, printed by Thomas Broad, 1648) Thomason Tracts E421(31).

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 Westmoreland 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 campaign. 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 of Love from the Kingdom of Scotland unto Lieutenant General Cromwell and Officers and Soldiers Under his Command* (London, 1648) Thomason Tracts E468(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 sallied forth 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.[74] 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.[75]

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,[76] 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[77] 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,[78] 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

74. Oliver Cromwell, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, with elucidations by Thomas Carlyle, S.C. (ed.) (3 vols.; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons; London: Methuen, 1904), I, p. 383.

75. Richard Holmes (ed.), *Collections Toward the History of Pontefract, The Sieges of Pontefract Castle, 1644–1648* (Printed by the liberality of Thomas William Tew, esq. 1887).

76. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, IV, p. 232.

77. Clarendon, *History of the Great Rebellion*, p. 669; Dawson, *Lambert*, p. 83.

78. Fox, *Three Sieges of Pontefract*, p. 119.

one of the former Parliament soldiers who changed sides, or was originally a Royalist. Nayler was a common name in Wakefield. Joseph Nayler, also listed among the Royalist defenders of the Castle, was from Flanshaw, a village in Wakefield parish, three miles from West Ardsley.[79] Records also show that four Naylers served with James in Copley's troop,[80] namely John, from Batley, just on the other side of Howley Hall from Woodkirk (thus, only five miles from Wakefield), Robert from Billingley, near Barnsley, east of Wakefield, William Junior from Altofts, a village adjacent to Wakefield, and another William Junior from East Ardsley. Either William could be James Nayler's brother.[81]

Outcome of the Second Civil War

A most important meeting took place at Pontefract on Friday, December 12, 1648.[82] 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,

79. Fox, *Three Sieges of Pontefract*, p. 42.

80. Clarke Mss 4/2 payroll records. James Nayler died owing money to a William Nayler, as well as to a John Nayler, according to the accounting for his estate, found at Friends House Library, London; or in Brailsford, Quaker From Cromwell's Army, p. 197.

81. Damrosch, *Sorrows*, p. 15.

82. *At a Genll Councill of Officers mett at Pontefract on Friday the 12th of December 1648, Parliamentary Army Council of War Minutes, 1647–1648* (Wakefield, West Yorkshire Archives, Document C469).

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...'[83] 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.[84] 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, leaving the radical Independents and their followers in charge of legislation under the direction of Fairfax, Ireton and the army leadership. Only as these moves were being completed did Cromwell arrive from the North, expressing surprise, but general approval, that all this was happening.[85]

83. Copley, *His Case.*
84. Dawson, *Lambert*, pp. 85-96.
85. For an excellent, fully detailed account of the events briefly summarized here, see David Underdown, *Pride's Purge, Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). See also, Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 363.

General Lambert had been kept in the North for two reasons.[86] One was military necessity, the other the radical army leadership's concern (certainly Ireton's, possibly Cromwell's also) that Lambert might put his considerable forces behind Fairfax in London, acting in favor of moderation and eventual restoration of the King with some agreeable constraints. While both Fairfax and Lambert were, first and foremost, military leaders in Parliament's cause, they were also careful moderates in regard to the monarchy. Both men appeared to align with the Independent political party in Commons and both therefore stood for the removal of Charles I. Whether that meant the end of the monarchy, or even the end of the King's life, was not clear and both Fairfax and Lambert avoided irrevocably declaring themselves, a prudent policy during a revolution which could change direction on short notice. So, Lambert and his officers of the Northern Army were kept ill-informed until Pride's Purge was in effect and the army in the South was firmly in control of a reduced Parliament, which was already drawing up charges to bring the King to trial.

The 12 December 1648 meeting of Lambert and his officers was held in the midst of this complex situation.[87] 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,[88] 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 Leaguer before Pontefract Castle, At a Genral 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 Councel. As also Col. Lambert's Letter concerning the same.* Pontefract 12 December 1648, signed Tho Margetts. (London: John Partridge, 1648), Thomason Tracts, E477(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]

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 Catalogue of the Names of so many of those Commissioners as sate and sentenced the late King Charles to Death*, Thomason Tracts, 1017(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 669f13(70); Dawson, *Lambert*, p. 93.

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 Levellers

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

93. For a compact account of these disorderly events, see Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*. For the text of most of the debates, see A.S.P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritanism and liberty, being the Army debates (1647–9)* from the Clarke manuscripts with supplementary documents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1951).

94. Nayler, *Saul's Errand*, p. 30.

95. Pauline Gregg, *Free-Born John, a Biography of John Lilburne* (London: George G. Harrap, 1961), pp. 341-46.

96. Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, pp. 86-87.

97. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, IV, p. 179.

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 Lilburnes. 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 Lilburne and his controversial publication within a month of the Leveller mutinies, it is easy to see that John Naylier's name might be remembered and later confused with James Nayler's.

98. Cromwell, *Letters*, I, p. 244.

99. Wilson, *Fairfax*, pp. 156-57.

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 Ireland's Jugling Pretended Reliever*, 30 April 1649, Thomason Tracts, E552(10).

The End of Nayler's War

Levellers notwithstanding, the next important national problem to be addressed, the greatest immediate threat, was Ireland. James Nayler very nearly went there. If he had, he would have become involved in Cromwell's relentless massacre of the Irish opposition, which resonates even today. What would have been the course of his spiritual leading if he had been ordered to give no quarter to trapped civilians? As it turned out, he was spared. Although Lambert's command was among those chosen by lot to go with Cromwell to Ireland, an exception was made.[103] Lambert's troops were needed in Scotland, for the peace there had not held. The young Charles II was gathering Royalist support for invading England to regain his father's crown.

The deciding battle was at Dunbar in September, 1650. Cromwell had been called back from Ireland and given command of all the English armies only a few months before, replacing Fairfax. Cromwell usually gets full credit for the victory at Dunbar, but Cromwell himself gave major credit to Lambert and his cavalry, both for the winning strategy and for winning the fight.[104]

The story of James Nayler's inspired preaching to an assembly of soldiers after the battle is told in his several biographies[105] and is the only indication found so far that Nayler was present in Scotland. Though this description is second-hand reporting from years after the fact, it has become the cornerstone of the assertion suggested by Brailsford's title, that Nayler was 'A Quaker from Cromwell's Army'. Dunbar was Nayler's first battle under Cromwell's command.

Nayler's army career ended sometime after Dunbar, but this is not documented. We have only the information that he was released and went home too sick to fight any longer. Consumption or tuberculosis is mentioned,[106] but Nayler lived a very active life for several years after his recovery.

103. C.H. Firth, assisted by Godfrey Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), pp. xxi-xxii.

104. Dawson, *Lambert*, pp. 115; Rogers, *Battles and Generals*, pp. 294-97.

105. Fogelklou, *Rebel Saint*, p. 42, who quotes from an account in James Gough, *Memoirs* (Dublin, 1782), reporting a conversation with an unnamed Parliament army officer at an inn several years after the Battle of Dunbar, where the event described took place. See also Bittle, *James Nayler*, p. 5, Damrosch, *Sorrows*, p. 83, and Brailsford, *Quaker from Cromwell's Army*, p. 33, all referring to the same source.

106. Brailsford, *Quaker From Cromwell's Army*, p. 36.

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.[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.[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,[109] a village adjacent to Wakefield. Although the two met there again the following spring,[110] 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,[111] which is planted as early as possible in the spring.[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.

107. Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 131.

108. John Gough, *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.

109. Fox, *Journal*, p. 73.

110. Fox, *Journal*, p. 100.

111. Nayler, *Saul's Errand*, p. 30.

112. From personal conversations with farmers around West Ardsley, March 2000.

Conclusion

We can be sure that James Nayler had personal experience of both secular and religious events which contributed to the complex causes of the English Civil Wars, or more properly named, The War of the Three Kingdoms. His home town, Wakefield, was threatened by the King's impetuous efforts to make war on neighboring Scotland for its refusal to consent to governance of that country's church by the King's bishops and prayerbook. Bad enough that loss of the so-called Bishops' Wars brought the occupation of parts of northern England by the Scots, but even before that, rioting soldiers of the King's ill-managed and unwilling army disrupted Wakefield and other Yorkshire towns. Nayler also witnessed around his home the fear of invasion and massacre by Irish civil war rebels against Charles I. Finally, his home town was occupied and blockaded by the King's forces so that commerce and livelihood were stopped in the dead of winter.

On the religious side Nayler had witnessed, at least since he was fifteen years old, the strong arm of Church discipline and excommunication being applied against the priest of his own parish of Woodkirk, as well as against neighboring clergy and parishioners. Nayler had been a part of the split in his parish, leading to the establishment of a separatist Independent congregation.

That break between Anglican bishops, Presbyterians and Independents continued to flourish during Nayler's time in the wars, until it became institutionalized in the split between Presbyterians and Independents at the end of Charles I's reign. We have evidence that Nayler took a part in the army's settlement of the war, on the Independent side. We believe, from one account, that he was at some time an active preacher in the army, but we do not know the content of his ministry.

As to Nayler's military activity, however, we can say with strong evidence that that he saw much battle action and that he remained involved in the rebellion for a very long time. The list of battles in which he participated is long: Wakefield, Adwalton Moor, Nantwich, Marston Moor, the sieges of Pontefract, Dunbar, plus a number of lesser actions. They span the period between the spring of 1643 and the fall of 1650.

Nayler accepted rank and responsibility when it was offered to him. George Fox refused to fight or to lead soldiers.[113] William Dewsbury, Nayler's younger friend, got out of the war in 1645 and 'put [his] carnal

113. Fox, *Journal*, pp. 64-67.

sword into the scabbard'.[114] 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.[115] 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:[116]

> *...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

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114. William Dewsbury, 'Works', quoted in Hirst, *Quakers in Peace and War*, pp. 45-48.

115. Feola, *George Bishop*, p. 20.

116. James Nayler, 'A Lamentation (By One of England's Prophets) over the Ruins of the Oppressed Nation...' in George Whitehead (ed.), *A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles, and Papers, Written by James Nayler* (London: J. Sowle, 1716), pp. 99-109.