BRITISH LATTER DAY SAINT[1] CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN WORLD WAR I

Andrew Bolton

World War I was the founding disaster of the twentieth century. It began for Britain on August 4, 1914. Nobody at the time realised how serious it was going to be. Ultimately, the Great War involved many nations and their empires and resulted in over 8.5 million military deaths and between 6.6 and 13 million civilian deaths.[2] It ended empires, added to

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1. Before changing their name to Community of Christ in 2001, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS Church) stylized this term as "Latter Day Saint," while The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) stylizes it as "Latter-day Saint." The references throughout this paper will be consistent with whichever organization is being discussed, and "Latter Day Saint" will be used when referring to both.

2. "Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century," Necrometrics, http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm#WW1. There is a consensus around 8.5 million military deaths. Civilian death estimates

others, and redrew maps beginning in Europe. The maps redrawn in the Middle East still plague us with consequences today. About fifty million or more died from a devastatingly destructive Spanish flu epidemic, incubated in the wartime trenches in France and spread worldwide among many populations weakened by wartime conditions.[3] In sunny August in 1914, many young would-be soldiers and their families, in an explosion of patriotism all over Europe, were blind to the coming devastation and carnage of industrialized, mechanized, and chemicalized warfare. By Christmas 1914, 177,000 British soldiers had been killed, more than one thousand every day.[4] The romantic illusion of war was fading everywhere in Europe. Much worse was to come. After pursuing an initial policy of neutrality under President Wilson, the US entered the war on April 6, 1917, over one hundred years ago. Ironically, it was also Good Friday.

Response of Latter Day Saints in World War I

What of the Latter Day Saint movement that claimed to prophetically discern the times and seasons of these latter days and also boldly proclaimed that they were *the* restoration church? The founding heart of the restoration vision was restoring Jesus Christ to the very centre of our attention: "This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!"[5] In the Book of Mormon, Jesus taught again the Sermon on the Mount in all its uncompromising

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range from 6.6 million to 13 million depending on whether the Russian Civil War and the Armenian massacres are included.

3. Jeffery K. Taubenberger and David M. Morens, "1918 Influenza: The Mother of All Pandemics," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 12, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 15–22, available at https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/12/1/pdfs/05-0979.pdf.

4. Oliver Haslam, *Refusing to Kill: Conscientious Objection and Human Rights in the First World War* (London: Peace Pledge Union, 2014), 16.

5. Joseph Smith—History 1:17. See also *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,* vol. 1, *1805–1835* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1951), 9.

and radical love of enemies.[6] According to the story told in 4 Nephi, the Nephite people responded to the ministry of Jesus by conversion. With the love of God in their hearts, they lived for two hundred years in a form of peaceful Zion that parallels Acts 2:36–47. There is economic justice, the abolition of classes and "ites," and the joy of strong families. This time ends with these words: "And they did smite upon the people of Jesus; but the people of Jesus did not smite again."[7] The founding, original vision of non-violent Zion is in response to the crucified Christ, who taught and practiced the love of enemies.

So how did believers in the Book of Mormon's message respond to World War I? For Latter Day Saints, conscientious objection (CO) would have been a faithful response to the founding vision of non-violent Zion, notwithstanding their earlier violence in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah.

David Pulsipher explains in an essay how criticism and suspicion of the war by LDS Church leaders changed after the US actually entered the war.[8] Larry Hunt in his biography of Frederick M. Smith, RLDS president from 1915 to 1946, describes Smith's belligerent nationalism.[9] So after April 6, 1917, most American leaders of both churches urged a patriotic response to World War I by their members. This was done to gain acceptance by the wider American society. Enlisting, obeying the draft, and buying war bonds demonstrated that they were loyal Americans. The gospel of peace was displaced by American nationalism as old men sacrificed their young men for acceptance by the wider American society.

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6. LDS 3 Nephi 12:19–26, 38–48; RLDS III Nephi 5:66–75, 84–92. Compare with Matthew 5:21–26, 38–48.

7. LDS 4 Nephi 1:34; RLDS IV Nephi 1:37.

8. J. David Pulsipher, "'We do not love war, but . . .': Mormons, the Great War, and the Crucible of Nationalism," in *American Churches and the First World War,* edited by Gordon L. Heath (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2016), 129–48.

9. Larry E. Hunt, *F. M. Smith: Saint as Reformer,* vol. 2, *1874–1946* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1982), 438–43.

There are now known to be four British Latter Day Saint COs in WWI. Francis Henry Edwards from Birmingham was the youngest. He was apprenticed as an articled clerk, unmarried, and RLDS. It was his seventeenth birthday when Britain entered the war on August 4, 1914. He was nineteen when he was court-martialled at the Norton Army Barracks, Worcester, in December 1916 as a CO and sentenced initially to 112 days' hard labour. Edwards served this punishment in Wormwood Scrubs prison, London before going before the central tribunal and being judged as an authentic CO. He then opted to be transferred to do work of national importance in Dartmoor Prison in Princetown—converted to a work centre for COs during WWI.

The other three conscientious objectors were all LDS. William Bradley was thirty-five, married, a cotton spinner from Oldham, Lancashire, and secretary of the Lancashire congregation of the LDS Church. He went before the Oldham military service tribunal on July 7, 1916 and was exempted from combatant service and recommended for hospital work—work judged to be of national importance. George Snook, a clerk to an egg and butter merchant, was from Portsmouth, Hampshire, aged forty and married with three children when he was posted to Aldershot in the Non-Combatant Corps[10] on January 16, 1917. He was demobilised on April 30, 1919. Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley was a clerk to a road board in Richmond, Surrey, aged forty-two and married with five children. He followed the difficult path taken by Francis Henry Edwards. He too was court-martialled, though in Wimbledon, London, and sentenced on November 4, 1917 to two years' hard labour. He was also sent to Wormwood Scrubs prison in London. He too came before the central tribunal and was finally adjudicated to be a genuine CO on January 4, 1918, and then sent to the Wakefield work centre in Yorkshire.[11]

10. The Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) was a corps of the British Army comprised of conscientious objectors.

11. Credit for the discovery of these three LDS conscientious objectors belongs to Cyril Pearce, a premier scholar of British World War I conscientious objectors.

More Latter Day Saint COs have come to light recently thanks in part to the tireless work of Jay Beaman, who, like Cyril Pearce in England, is compiling a database of all COs in the US and Canada. Charles Dexter Brush was twenty-eight and married with one child in 1917, RLDS and a farmer, with a fifth-grade education, living in Buffalo, Missouri.[12] British-born LDS member Albert White had migrated to Salt Lake City in 1909 at the age of eighteen. He was a conscientious objector in 1917, aged twenty-six, married with two young children.[13] George Amos Grigsby was a Canadian LDS member in Toronto and married when he called up in January 1918 and sent to France as a non-combatant.[14] In Germany there are no visible COs. Five hundred LDS men in Germany were immediately conscripted in 1914 and eventually seventy-five were

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His database "CO Register VII Access 2010.mdb" was sent to me Sept. 20, 2017, and all four Latter-day Saint COs are included. As of that date he had 18,328 entries. However, Pearce continues to add to the database. An older version of Cyril Pearce's registry is available online through Imperial War Museums. This version is now out of date by two years. It has 17,426 documented conscientious objectors and includes Francis Henry Edwards and Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley but not William Bradley or George Snook. This older public registry is available at https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley came before central tribunal with Lord Richard Cavendish and Lord Hambleden on Jan. 4, 1918. Lord Richard Cavendish was a member of the central tribunal who reviewed Francis Henry Edwards a year earlier. See the central tribunal minutes for the meeting held on Jan. 4, 1918. These minutes can be downloaded from First World War Military Service Tribunals, National Archives, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/conscription-appeals. See also National Archives MH-47-2-2.

12. Draft Registration Card for Charles Dexter Brush, form 314, no. 18. It is held under the volume label 25-32 A at the NARA (National Archives) in Morrow, Georgia, for the draft board ledger for Brush's home county in Missouri in 1917.

13. Patrick Q. Mason, "'When I Think of War I Am Sick at Heart': Latter-day Saint Non-Participation in World War I" (presidential address, Mormon History Association 53rd Annual Conference, Boise, Idaho, Jun. 9, 2018).

14. Jay Beaman, email to author with documents, Sept. 5, 2018.

killed. However, Karl Eduard Hofmann, former Social Democrat, was a reluctant soldier who had no intention of killing anyone. He was able to do medical work until he lost a leg from a lobbed grenade while tending a patient.[15] Until September 2017, there was only one known Latter Day Saint CO: RLDS F. Henry Edwards. Now, if we include Grigsby and Hoffman, there are eight, with still more perhaps to be found.[16]

Why so many British Latter Day Saint COs from small national churches? Leaders of both churches were critical of WWI before the United States entered it. Edwards, Bradley, and Snook all took their CO stand before the US entered the war on April 6, 1917, when they notionally still had the support of their American church leaders. It is important to remember that the war in Europe lasted over four years, but for the US it was over in one-and-a-half years. The hellish reality of the war was well understood by ordinary British working people. In the US, many people still had romantic ideas about the war.

The WWI conscientious objection story of Francis Henry Edwards is the best known and documented at this time. It is Edwards's story that I now want to tell, leaving competent LDS historians to work on the newly discovered British, American, German, and Canadian LDS conscientious objectors. Patrick Q. Mason, in his 2018 Mormon History Association presidential address, has already made a helpful beginning. Telling the story of F. Henry Edwards will also help others know where to begin looking for more information on the other British LDS and RLDS conscientious objectors.

15. Mason, "When I Think of War," 3, 10–11.

16. Arguably, Canadian George Amos Grigsby, as a non-combatant, was a CO. German Karl Eduard Hofmann did not have a legal right to be a CO in Germany, unlike Britain, Canada, and the US. He, like a number of others in the German army, were closet COs in WWI, quietly refusing to hurt anyone, and demonstrated by Hoffman in getting medical duties.

The Conscientious Objection Story of Francis Henry Edwards

Unlike continental armies in Europe and elsewhere at the time, the British Army was a volunteer force. The British Army up to this point had always been small, since the English Channel and the greatest navy in the world protected the British Isles from possible invasion. Initially there were plenty of volunteers responding to the patriotism and nationalism of WWI to supply the army, and conscription was not introduced until early 1916.

Francis Henry Edwards was a member of the Birmingham RLDS congregation. He was familiarly known as Frank. Later, he adopted F. Henry as his formal name. Frank, a serious seventeen-year-old, wrote a letter dated February 13, 1915 to his church's international magazine, *The Saints' Herald*.[17] After sharing his conviction about the church, he continued to write: "I think that in this work we cannot do too much. My fellow countrymen are making great sacrifices for their king and country, and I want to be willing to give my life, if need be, for my King, the King of kings, and for the establishment of his kingdom—to be a patriot in the great sense."[18] In his first recorded statement of conscience, he stresses his commitment to a greater patriotism. He wrote this a year before conscription was introduced in Britain.

Edwards was born into an RLDS family in Birmingham. His father had been an inactive Mormon, or Latter-day Saint. His parents were baptised into the RLDS Church on April 6, 1883. Their church life was central to the family and shaped F. Henry as he grew up. He was baptised November 3, 1905 at the age of eight years old. He fell and broke his

17. The publication was called *The Saints' Herald* from 1877–1953. It changed to *Saints' Herald* in 1954, then to *Saints Herald* in 1973. Since 2001, the publication's official name is *Herald.* References to the periodical throughout this paper will use the name that was in use at the time.

18. Francis Henry Edwards, letter to the editor, Birmingham, England, Feb. 13, 1915, published in *The Saints' Herald,* May 12, 1915, 40.

teeth at the age of eight or nine and did not get dentures until he was a teenager. He suffered in school and was very self-conscious about how he looked.[19] Perhaps this gave him a greater sense of empathy for others as victims. His faith included teachings about the worth of all souls in the sight of God and the kingdom of God on earth, or Zion.

Figure 1. A young Francis Henry Edwards.

19. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

The RLDS Church had an international presence in nine countries at this time and had just officially been established in Germany in 1914.[20] To consider killing a German soldier who was possibly a church member would be a grave difficulty given the close, loving fellowship enjoyed by RLDS Church members. Every communion service included a re-covenanting to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. Love your neighbour as yourself and love your enemy could be considered such commandments. F. Henry's motivation for being a CO is stated to be religious in his records. However, his faith included an international patriotism, and he was as strongly for economic justice as any member of the democratic socialist Independent Labour Party of his time. F. Henry grew up in a working-class home, and he had to be very careful with money later in life as well. He was always in solidarity with other working-class people. His son Paul described how he was very generous in his tips to restaurant staff and anyone doing work on his home—something he and his brother Lyman also inherited as a practice.[21]

F. Henry was called to the priesthood the next year and ordained a priest on April 27, 1916.[22] He could preach, teach, and was pastorally responsible for families. He had as much sacramental authority as a priest in the Church of England or Roman Catholic Church. However, in the tradition of his denomination, he earned his livelihood not by ministry but by employment in another job. F. Henry was an articled clerk (apprentice) in a chartered accountants' office, training to be an accountant.

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20. Council of Twelve Apostles, "Establishing the Church in New Nations," *Official Policy,* revised May 4, 2014, 11.

21. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

22. Summary in F. Henry Edwards's biographical file in Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Mo. See also Paul M. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1995), 17.

Road to Conscription in WWI Britain

The road to conscription was in stages. In July 1915, Parliament passed the National Registration Act, requiring all people between fifteen and sixty-five to be registered. This enabled the government to identify men who had not yet volunteered. Military recruiting officers then visited the homes of all men aged eighteen to forty to put pressure on them to enlist. This, however, was still not enough. On January 27, 1916, conscription was introduced in Britain through the Military Service Act. Implementation started February 3, 1916. From March 2, all unmarried men aged eighteen to forty-one could be called up for military service,[23] including F. Henry Edwards. Married men were included a few months later.[24]

There was opposition to both the National Registration Act and the Military Service Act, but people were imprisoned for speaking out or for refusing to be conscripted. Any publication that might dissuade men from joining the armed forces was liable to be seized, even biblical materials. As Leyton Richards notes, "Twenty thousand copies of the Sermon on the Mount (printed without comment as a leaflet) were ordered by a magistrate in Leeds to be destroyed as seditious literature, and their would-be distributer was committed to jail under a sentence of three months' hard labour."[25]

The Military Service Act contained a provision for conscientious objection, and F. Henry was one of around twenty thousand British conscientious objectors in WWI.[26] Of this number he was also one of

23. In American English, drafted. However, the US term "drafted" is never used in Britain. Bill Hetherington, Peace Pledge Union Archives, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017.

24. This paragraph draws from Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* 21–27.

25. Leyton Richards, *The Christian's Alternative to War,* 4th ed. (London: SCM, 1930), 89.

26. The online Cyril Pearce registry hosted on the Imperial War Museums' "Lives of the First World War" has 17,426 documented conscientious objectors, including F. Henry Edwards; see https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.

about six thousand sent to prison.[27] Although many COs were treated quite well in civilian prisons, those in the hands of the army suffered terribly. Seventy-three British COs died either in prison or as a direct result of their incarceration. Thirty-one went insane from their treatment.[28]

In May 1916, forty-two resisting COs, later called the "Frenchmen," were sent to France to serve in the army without first being able to tell their relatives or friends.[29] They were warned that if they continued to resist, they would be shot. Suffering intimidation, harsh treatment, and continuing threats, this group of COs did not yield. Messages arrived to family and questions were raised in Parliament by sympathetic members of Parliament. A Quaker journalist and Baptist pastor F. B. Meyer were able to investigate what was happening in France and interviewed the men. In the period of June 7–24, 1916, thirty-five of the men were tried by the field general court martial. On Thursday, June 15 on a large parade ground, the sentences of the first four were announced: "The sentence of the court is to suffer death by being shot." Pause. "Confirmed by the Commander in Chief." Long pause. "But subsequently commuted to

org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918. Note that access to the full records requires creating a free account. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017. He estimates that there are around twenty thousand COs altogether.

27. Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* 38.

28. David Boulton, *Objection Overruled: Conscription and Conscience in the First World War* (Hobsons Farm, Dent, Cumbria: Dales Historical Monographs, 2014), 11. See page 266 for a list of names of the seventy-three who died. For a longer discussion of those who went insane, see page 258.

29. Earlier, Bill Hetherington had estimated fifty in this group. Since then he has been able to identify by name all the "Frenchmen" and he is satisfied the number was exactly forty-two (email to author, Jun. 20, 2017).

penal servitude for ten years."[30] The other thirty-one had their sentences announced in two later similar ceremonies.[31]

Facing Tribunals, Court Martial and Prison]

So in going down the path of conscientious objection, F. Henry Edwards was not choosing an easy way. He did not know if he might be shot in France by British soldiers. First, F. Henry faced a borough council tribunal in Birmingham in order to present his case for being a conscientious objector. He was not successful in demonstrating he was genuine. Second, there was an appeal tribunal, but again F. Henry was not successful.[32]

The Military Service Act 1916, making conscription legal, was fair in its intentions about protecting the rights of sincere conscientious objectors. The implementation of the tribunal system, however, was not well done. Tribunal members were often biased against COs. Hearings were brief. The tribunals, though a form of court, usually did not have experience in following legal procedures or understanding due process. A military representative, a retired army officer or a recruitment officer, was also party to the tribunal, and his role was to argue against any CO claim and, if necessary, appeal the decision of the tribunal if CO status were granted. So, it is no surprise that F. Henry was twice refused conscientious objector status.[33] We do not know the tribunal details for F. Henry Edwards, since all records were destroyed after WWI (with the

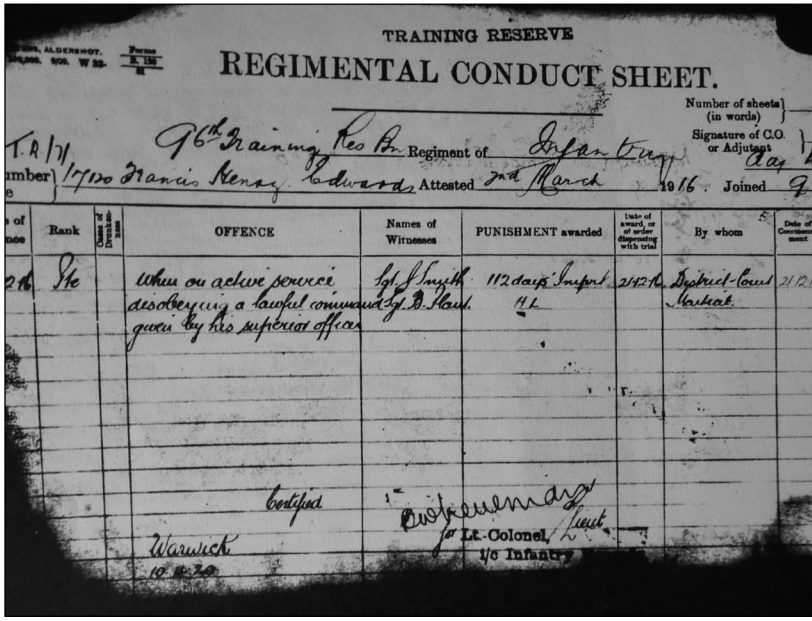
30. Felicity Goodall, *A Question of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in the Two World Wars* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1997), chap. 3.

31. Bill Hetherington, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017

32. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017. After the war, tribunal records were destroyed for the sake of space. Tribunal records for Middlesex (the county west of London) were kept in order to demonstrate how the system worked. So, while F. Henry Edwards's tribunal records are not available, the system that he went through is well understood.

33. Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* chap. 3.

exception of the county of Middlesex).[34] We do know, however, that he chose not to yield to the tribunals' denial of CO status but to resist.



TRAINING RESERVE

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET.

Number of sheets (in words)

Signature of C.O. or Adjutant

T.R. 1/1

96th Training Res Bn Regiment of Infantry

Number 17120 Francis Henry Edwards Attested 2nd March 1916. Joined 9th

Rank	OFFENCE	Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement
Pte	When on active service disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer	Sgt J Smith Sgt B. Hart	112 days Imprt H.L.	21/12/16	District Court Martial	21/12/16

Certified Warwick 10.1.20

Professional Lieut for Lt.-Colonel, 1/6 Infantry

Figure 2. F. Henry Edwards's regimental conduct sheet.

F. Henry was likely arrested at home in December 1916 by a local policeman. He would normally have come before a magistrate's court and be fined forty shillings (two pounds), nearly two weeks' wages in a working-class job. We also know that he was handed over to the army—the Worcester Regiment, 96 Training Reserve Battalion, at the Norton Army Barracks, on December 10, 1916.[35] On the same day, as a conscientious objector, he refused both to sign and submit to a medi-

34. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017.

35. "New Soldier's Record," Francis Henry Edwards 17120: Record of Service, 3. I am grateful to Peter Judd for finding this on the internet: http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/british-soldiers-ww1-service-records.htm.

cal examination to determine whether or not he was fit for service.[36] Two days later on December 12, he was charged with the offence of "disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer." His army records show that F. Henry's offence was witnessed by Sergeant J. Smith and Sergeant B. Haul. He was kept in the guard room for eight days. On December 21, 1916, F. Henry was court-martialled and sentenced to 112 days' imprisonment with hard labour (see Fig. 2).[37] The sentence was confirmed two days later, and he was committed to the Wormwood Scrubs prison in London.[38]

Prison and Afterwards: Wormwood Scrubs and Princetown

In Wormwood Scrubs prison, many prisoners sewed mail bags alone in their prison cells. With some six thousand COs in prison by mid-1916, largely because of tribunals' arbitrary refusal of exemption, there was a scandal in Parliament and the press. This led to devising the Home Office Scheme for COs. All imprisoned COs would be specially interviewed by the central tribunal, which was originally set up under the Military Service Act as a final court of appeal for exceptional cases. This tribunal would have the discretion to decide whether a particular CO was, after all, "genuine." For this purpose, the central tribunal would convene in Wormwood Scrubs prison (to which COs imprisoned elsewhere would be brought), and those COs found "genuine" would be offered the

36. Ibid. See also Francis Henry Edwards's records (specifically, the war service comments) in the Conscientious Objectors Register, 1914–1918, hosted by the Imperial War Museums, https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

37. "New Soldier's Record," Regimental Conduct Sheet, 7.

38. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

opportunity to perform civilian work under civilian control in specially created Home Office Scheme work centres.[39]

On January 30, 1917, Edwards appeared before the central tribunal, a panel of two: Lord Richard Cavendish and Sir Francis Gore—two aristocrats to judge whether a working-class boy from Birmingham was a genuine CO. It would have been intimidating. Edwards successfully persuaded them that he was a genuine CO.[40] One option then before F. Henry was to accept the Home Office Scheme of doing work of national importance at a work camp like Dartmoor or Wakefield. To serve the purposes of the Scheme, those two prisons had legally been decommissioned. COs had freedom to go out in the evenings and on Sundays and to wear ordinary clothes. It meant, however, continuing on the list of the army reserve. Absolutists, refusing any cooperation with the army, did not accept the Home Office Scheme and suffered repeated court-martials and imprisonment and could have a very difficult time.

Edwards, however, was not an absolutist, and he accepted the offer of the Home Office Scheme. On March 9, 1917, he was transferred for employment by the Brace Committee at the work centre in what had been His Majesty's Prison Dartmoor but was now Princetown Work Centre.[41] The Dartmoor prison was originally set up to hold French prisoners during the Napoleonic War and then Americans during the War of 1812.[42] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes book *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is set in Dartmoor and refers to the prison. At 1,430

39. Bill Hetherington, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017. I am grateful to Bill Hetherington for this paragraph.

40. See the central tribunal minutes for the meeting held on Jan. 30, 1917. These minutes can be downloaded from First World War Military Service Tribunals, National Archives, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/conscription-appeals. See also National Archives MH-47-1-3.

41. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

42. Wikipedia, s.v. "Princetown," last modified Apr. 4, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princetown.

feet and surrounded by the gloomy moor, it is a fitting, dismal place for a prison. However, for the COs, conditions were much better here than in prison. Edwards's contribution to work "of national importance" was serving in the kitchen, making cocoa, and baking bread and fruit pies for his fellow inmates.[43] Paul Edwards, his son, said that his cocoa was awful and the fruit pies not much better, so he did not become a skilled cook during his time at Dartmoor.[44] Others moved stones out of fields, worked in a granite quarry, gardened to feed the inmates, and other tasks. Classes were available in the evenings, taught by qualified COs, after a nine-hour work day and included English, French, shorthand, logic, and many others. F. Henry was proficient in shorthand—perhaps he learned it at Dartmoor.[45] There were about one thousand COs at Dartmoor, one quarter of whom were religious, while the rest were socialist and political objectors. In some ways, it was almost a university for COs. The Bishop of Exeter, however, would not let any of the COs use the chapel. If they had been normal criminals or murderers they would have enjoyed the grace of the Church of England, but COs were rejected. There were only a few work centre warders. The COs basically ran the work centre themselves.[46]

F. Henry Edwards went to the RLDS congregation in Exeter on Sundays on a bicycle bought by the congregation.[47] It was about twenty-seven miles each way, downhill going to church, uphill on the way back. The whole ride would have taken five-and-a-half to six hours. His family reported two difficulties for him during this time. On one occasion when visiting a nearby town, perhaps Plymouth, from the work centre, he and

43. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 17.

44. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

45. Felicity Goodall, *A Question of Conscience,* 48.

46. Ibid., 44.

47. I heard this from Frank Wilson, an eighty-four-year-old church member with whom I stayed as an RLDS missionary in 1977.

a few other conscientious objectors were apparently taunted and beaten up by some sailors in an attempt to compromise their nonviolence. He did not fight back. At another time, while out of the work centre on a pass, he was asked to leave a cinema because several people strongly objected to his presence.[48]

Support by Community, Quakers, and No-Conscription Fellowship

Cyril Pearce describes the communal support of COs in the industrial Yorkshire town of Huddersfield.[49] In Leicester, less than an hour from Birmingham, Malcolm Elliott also tells the same story of communal resistance to the war and conscription.[50] There were over six hundred COs from Birmingham, and no doubt Edwards also found local communal support.

On August 28, 1917, Edwards was visited by a group of Quakers in Dartmoor, and in brief notes held in the Quaker archives at Friends House in London the visitor reported dates of Edwards's court-martial and his 112 days in Wormwood Scrubs prison. The Quakers also noted that Edwards was currently being held at Princetown, Dartmoor.[51] F.

48. Keith Allen, interview, Mar. 4, 2017. Paul M. Edwards told me about the cinema story in an interview in Aug. 1997.

49. Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (London: Francis Boutie, 2001).

50. Malcolm Elliott, "Opposition to the First World War: The Fate of Conscientious Objectors in Leicester," *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 77 (2003): 82–92.

51. David Irwin, email to author, Mar. 2, 2017. Case No. 3610 held in the Visitation of Prisoners Committee files (YM/MfS/VPC, box 3, file 4) at Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Friends House, 173–77 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

Henry's son Lyman reported that F. Henry had said he would have been a Quaker if he had not been RLDS.[52]

The No-Conscription Fellowship was the leading anti-conscription organization in Britain. It is likely that F. Henry had contact with the No-Conscription Fellowship.[53]

Compromised Support by the RLDS Church

What support did Edwards's church give him? His motivation was, after all, religious.[54] John Schofield, district president, went with Edwards to support his claim of CO status at the tribunals.[55] Edwards's family and friends supported him, although there were issues in the Edwards' home congregation in Birmingham. However, what did RLDS Church leaders think of the war?

At the outbreak of the war in 1914 the RLDS First Presidency had supported US President Wilson's positon of neutrality twice in *The Saints' Herald* magazine editorials.[56] Joseph Smith III had taken the RLDS Church in a peace direction in his fifty-four-year ministry from 1860–1914.[57] The RLDS Church had members of British and German

52. Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017.

53. *Conscientious Objectors Report* LXII, Jan. 5, 1917 (Information Bureau, 6, John Street, Adelphi, London, WO). This was a publication of the No-Conscription Fellowship. Edwards is reported as one of nine arrested from Birmingham.

54. See the Conscientious Objectors Register, 1914–1918, hosted by the Imperial War Museums, https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

55. Franklin Schofield told me this story about F. Henry and his father, John Schofield, in the early 1990s.

56. "Neutrality Enjoined," *The Saints' Herald* 61, no. 37, Sept. 16, 1914, 873; "Caution Enjoined—A Second Warning," *The Saints' Herald* 61, no. 45, Nov. 11, 1914, 1065.

57. Lachlan Mackay, "A Peace Gene Isolated: Joseph Smith III," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 1–17. This is a

heritage in the US, and the church in Germany had officially begun in 1914. After Joseph III's death in December 1914, Frederick M. Smith became president of the church the next year and his administration led the church through both World War I and World War II. He, like many other religious leaders, was caught up by the nationalist feelings of the time. As Sydney E. Ahlstrom wrote about the United States: "The simple fact is that religious leaders—lay and clerical, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant—through corporate as well as personal expressions, lifted their voices in a chorus of support for the war."[58]

Frederick M. Smith believed that if a man were conscripted he should go and do his duty. In both World Wars he was a vigorous US nationalist. He disparaged pacifists as "cowardly slackers" and would not allow them to speak their position from the pulpit.[59] His ethic about war was a nationalist ethic. This is arguably an inadequate ethic for a world war and an international church. He did not see that obeying it could result in German and British church members killing each other, but most other Christian leaders at the time did not see that as a problem either. So, from the president of the RLDS Church, Edwards would have had no moral support. Regardless, Frederick M. Smith did not articulate

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good overview of Joseph Smith III's peace direction.

58. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 884.

59. Frederick M. Smith was a strident nationalist in World War I like many other leaders and members in other denominations in this period. At the outbreak of World War II, Frederick M. Smith's editorial "Our Attitude to War" (*The Saints' Herald* 86, Nov. 18, 1939, 1443) argues an ethic of obeying the law of the land in terms of conscription. He also argued against conscientious objection in this editorial and other writings. Peter A. Judd in an unpublished essay, "RLDS Attitudes Toward World War I" (Saint Paul School of Theology, Feb. 24, 1975) describes well the change within the US church from "a position of strict neutrality in 1914 to a position of unqualified support for the United States and allied nations by 1918" (9). For a good overview of Frederick M. Smith's nationalist attitudes from WWI to WWII, see Hunt, *F. M. Smith: Saint as Reformer,* 438–48.

Figure 3. Frederick M. Smith ca. 1915.

his position on COs until after the United States had entered the war, and by that time, Edwards was already in the Princetown Work Centre in Dartmoor.

Back in Britain, in his home congregation in Birmingham, some members harassed the Edwards family when they sat down to worship by singing "God is marshalling his army" and adding the line, "We will have no cowards in our ranks." This created some tension at the time.[60]

After Princetown Work Centre

The Great War ended on November 11, 1918. Edwards was in the Princetown Work Centre, Dartmoor for around two years from March 1917 until the Home Office Work Scheme ended and the work camp was closed in April 1919.[61] He was released from the army reserve as part of the military demobilization a year later on March 31, 1920.[62]

Edwards went back to work at the accountants' office. However, some clients did not like that he had been a conscientious objector in the war, and his employment ended. Continuing to be involved in volunteer church work, he became secretary of the RLDS British Isles Mission. Sometimes, when preaching, congregational members would walk out in protest against his CO stand. However, in the end most came to accept his ministry.[63]

RLDS Church Leader

In April 1920, Edwards was ordained an elder and also entered general church appointment as a missionary elder in the Birmingham and London districts. Practically, he spent most of his time at St. Leonard's,

60. Ida Dix of the Leicester congregation told me about this trouble in the Birmingham congregation around 1996. She was a girl at the end of World War I. The hymn was by Joseph Woodward.

61. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017.

62. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

63. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 18.

London. He supported leaders as a secretary, continued his work as British mission secretary, served as historian, and kept church statistics.

Then RLDS President Frederick M. Smith came to Britain on a long missionary visit. He needed secretarial help, and F. Henry was asked to serve. He could, after all, do shorthand. Conscientious objector Edwards and American nationalist President Frederick M. Smith met. One imagines it could have been a very awkward encounter for both of them. Edwards tells the story of how it began: "I went to his room the first time in fear and trembling, but soon found that he was kindness personified. When I 'settled in' a little, I even ventured a question or two. . . . For me, it was like a course in church administration."[64]

A warm relationship developed between the two. Edwards went to the United States in September 1921 and studied at the church's Graceland College for a year in the religious education program.[65] Then a year later, at the age of twenty-five, he was called by Frederick M. Smith to the Council of Twelve Apostles and ordained at general conference on October 13, 1922. He immediately became secretary to the Council of Twelve and served in this role until 1946.

Edwards was then called to be a president of the church and counsellor to the new Prophet-President, Israel A. Smith, until the latter's tragic death in 1958.[66] Edwards continued this role for W. Wallace Smith, who took over as Prophet-President after the death of his brother. Edwards left the First Presidency in 1966 after serving in a very significant way as an RLDS Church leader for over forty-four years. He finally retired

64. Naomi Russell, "Sixty-nine Years of Ministry," *Saints Herald* 132, no. 15, Sept. 1985, 384.

65. F. H. Edwards's naturalization card.

66. The First Presidency of Community of Christ consists of three people, the Prophet-President of the church and two counsellors or assistants. Each is called a president and it is together that they have authority to preside over the church. So, F. Henry Edwards was not the Prophet-President but a counsellor to the Prophet-President.

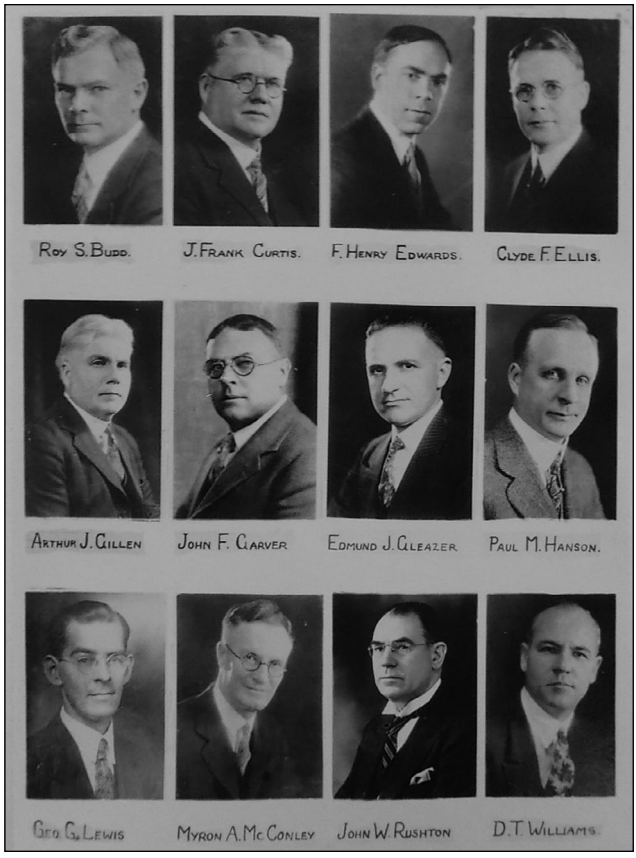

Figure 4. Council of Twelve Apostles including F. Henry Edwards.

in 1972 after serving over fifty years in full-time church ministry. He spoke French, Spanish, and passable German.[67]

Edwards was a very able administrator and perhaps the most prolific writer in the whole Latter Day Saint movement—penning over five hundred articles and over three dozen books and texts.[68] Paul Edwards called

67. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

68. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 88–123. Paul lists here F. Henry Edwards's books and articles.

his father "articulator for the church" and used this phrase as the title for the short biography that he wrote about him.[69] F. Henry's last book, *The Power that Worketh in Us,* was published when he was over ninety years old. His writing was accessible, well-expressed, and deeply Christian. Edwards did not have a college degree, was largely self-taught, and his writing contributions, which he continued in retirement, were significant.

One of his last *Saints Herald* articles, published in September 1985, was titled "Let Contention Cease" and written just after the RLDS Church had made the decision to ordain women.[70] There was uproar from conservatives. Edwards was clear that he did not intend to end debate. Debate was important. However, what was also important was how the debate about this, and other issues, was carried out. Was it done in love and with mutual respect? To the end, Edwards still believed in peacemaking.

Edwards became a US citizen with some reluctance at the beginning of World War II so he could continue to serve on the board of the church's radio station.[71] Alexander Smith, younger brother of Frederick M. Smith, was a federal judge and enabled F. Henry to take a modified citizenship oath in a private ceremony so he would not be promising to take up arms against Britain or others. Despite losing a good friend on the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, he objected to selling defense stamps in Sunday School.[72]

It is interesting that Edwards was careful not to go out on a limb publicly on causes like pacifism or civil rights for Blacks, although he believed strongly in both. As a minister he wanted to have long-term influence with people, to keep the door open for further conversation. It could be argued that it was a strategy with integrity.[73]

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69. Ibid., 85.

70. F. Henry Edwards, "Let Contention Cease," *Saints Herald* 132, no. 15, Sept. 1985, 381–83.

71. According to his naturalization card, Edwards became a naturalized citizen on Dec. 19, 1938.

72. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

73. Ibid. Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017. Lyman Edwards stated that his dad was not obsessive about his conscientious objector stand but was

Edwards's Korean War veteran son, Paul, summed up his dad's stand on peace in these words: "A particular note should be taken of Frank Edwards's lifelong advocacy for peace. But, in all fairness, it was more than that: it was the abhorrence of war. Edwards not only disagreed with the concept of war as a political tool among nations, he condemned the absurd waste of human potential and the destruction of both human life and human values as well."[74]

Family

In 1924, F. Henry married Alice Smith, President Smith's daughter. Alice, a Stanford graduate, was more than equal intellectually, and her own inner strength tempered Edwards's "in-charge" tendency. They were married for forty-nine years and had two sons, Lyman and Paul, and an adopted daughter, Ruth. Edwards was a good husband and a loving father, and both his sons speak with affection about their dad. He missed Alice terribly when she died. When his daughter, Ruth, died, he also took that very hard. Both sons affirm that F. Henry never changed his mind about the folly of war or regretted the rightness of his WWI conscientious objection stand.[75]

The Significance of F. Henry Edwards's Stand as a Conscientious Objector

In his book *The First World War,* British military historian John Keegan writes, "The First World War was a tragic and unnecessary conflict."[76]

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comfortable in what he had done.

74. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 44.

75. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017 and Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017. Phil Caswell told me that F. Henry had told Clifford Cole that he had revised his view of conscientious objection, but this is contradicted by Paul and Lyman. Phillip Caswell, interview, May 22, 2017.

76. John Keegan, *The First World War* (London: Hutchinson/Random House, 1998), 3.

Unnecessary because the conflict between Austria and Serbia was a local conflict and because the war could have been prevented. Tragic because more than seventeen million people died, and it set up the conflict that would result in World War II. If ever a war was unjust and stupid, it is the First World War. It was fueled by nationalisms that practiced human sacrifice on a huge, industrialized scale. Is it apostasy for patriotism to displace the gospel, for the president or prime minister to nullify the voice of Jesus, for national laws to replace the commandments of Jesus?

So, with hindsight, F. Henry Edwards's stand, and that of the three other British LDS conscientious objectors, looks prophetic, courageous, and righteous. He did not worship at the altar of British nationalism, nor later at the altar of American nationalism. He did not run away. He did not hide. He was upfront in his witness of resistance. It was an act of civil disobedience for which he suffered the consequences as did Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.[77] In faithfully seeking to follow the ways of Jesus, his stand was later vindicated. In Britain, more RLDS men followed Edwards in WWII as COs even though President Frederick M. Smith in the US was against this position. Perhaps Edwards, as more people learn about his story, can also inspire the growing peace mission of Community of Christ today.

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77. Henry Thoreau in his essay on *Resistance to Civil Government (Civil Disobedience),* published in 1849, described his act of refusing to pay a war tax during the Mexican-American War, 1846–1848. He opposed the slavery implications of this war and was imprisoned for this act of civil disobedience. This essay was a very important influence on Mohandas K. Gandhi and his non-violent resistance campaigns in South Africa and later in India. It is important to remember that Gandhi was a lawyer who respected law, but drew the important distinction between civil disobedience and criminal disobedience. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail,* written Apr. 16, 1963 also articulates the moral responsibility to non-violently break unjust laws that were defending racism and segregation. Both Gandhi and King suffered imprisonment for their civil disobedience. British Latter Day Saint conscientious objectors like Edwards, Bradley, Snook and Wheatley were also acting in this tradition of civil disobedience—by refusing to be conscripted and thus refusing to kill in war.

The lives of F. Henry Edwards and subsequent British RLDS COs in WWII—most of whom I personally knew—also say something very important to me. They were not only *against* an evil, that of killing a fellow human being, they were *for* something more—a world where every family could live "beneath their own vine and fig tree and live in peace and unafraid."[78] Their later years of loving, skilled, dedicated service testifies to the authenticity of their earlier witness. If they were *against* war it was because they were *for* the peaceable kingdom of God on earth, and in baptism they had given their lives fully to that. Their lives were also poems of a just spirit, lived out, incarnated. Their witness should not be dismissed.

How are we to be COs today? I look to a day when there will be enough conscientious objectors to not only close down war as a way of solving conflicts but to abolish nuclear weapons, end climate change, poverty, racism, sexism, and injustice of all kinds. Believers in Zion can do no less. Am I willing to be a conscientious objector against evil in my day as I live for the King of kings and the kingdom? Love of country is too small a love, and that is why it is a form of idolatry. "For God so loved *the world* that he gave his only Son."[79]

78. Song based on Micah 4:4.

79. John 3:16 NRSV.