

Binford, Helen Bills Titsworth ^[1]

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by J. F. Moore, 1979

28 Dec. 1885–4 Oct. 1952



Portrait courtesy
of "The Quaker",

Guilford College. ^[2]Helen Bills Titsworth Binford, Quaker ^[3] educator and leader, was born in Western Springs, Ill., of English ancestry. She was the daughter of Abraham Dunham Titsworth, Jr., and Mary E. Harrison Titsworth. Educated first in the schools of Richmond, Ind., and Whittier, Calif., she was graduated from Earlham College ^[4], Richmond, Ind., in 1907 with an A.B. degree. She remained at Earlham for a year of graduate study and studied modern languages and music in Europe in 1909–10. She taught languages for the next two years at Friends University ^[5], Wichita, Kans., and for the following year at Maryland College for Women. She married Raymond Binford ^[6] in 1913 and spent the next thirty-eight years with him in a variety of leadership positions in Quakerism and in higher education, most of them at Guilford College ^[7], where he was president from 1918 to 1934.

In addition to her career as a language teacher (English, French, and German) at Guilford in 1925–27 and 1930–32 and as college hostess, Helen Binford was among the most active women in North Carolina public life from 1918 to 1952. Her interest in the local schools of Guilford County ^[8], in which she had four children, led her to become president of the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers ^[9] and national secretary of the PTA. She was among the early leaders of the North Carolina Council of Churches ^[10] and served as director of the Carolina Institute of International Relations, under auspices of the American Friends Service Committee ^[11] (AFSC), a forerunner of the Southeastern Regional office of the AFSC.

She was chairman of the Girls Aid Committee of Guilford College and was in great demand locally and nationally as an able and forthright speaker on the causes of world peace, race relations, and women's education. As a member of the Religious Society of Friends ^[12] (Quakers), she was active in New Garden Monthly Meeting ^[13], North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends ^[14], and the national and international branch of Quakers known as the Five Years Meeting of Friends (now the Friends United Meeting ^[15]). She also traveled widely on behalf of the Friends Fellowship Council and Friends World Committee for Consultation ^[16]. She served as codirector of the Civilian Public Service Camps ^[17] for conscientious objectors at Buck Creek, near Marion, and at Gatlinburg, Tenn., from 1940 to 1943, and of an international work camp under the AFSC in Mexico in 1945. She then returned to teaching for two final years at William Penn College, Oskaloosa, Iowa, from 1948 to 1950. She was a member of the Democratic ^[18] party.

Helen Binford was mother of four children: Anna Naomi Kirschner, Richard Titsworth, Frederick Harrison, and Mary Margaret Bailey. She died at Guilford College and was buried in New Garden Cemetery. Her portrait hangs in the Board Room of Guilford College.

References:

Dorothy L. Gilbert, *Guilford: A Quaker College* (1937).

Guilford College Archives (Greensboro), for a memorial to Helen Binford.

Additional Resources:

Raymond and Helen Binford Collected Papers, 1941-1946, Collection: CDG-A. Swarthmore College:
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/CDG-A-L/binford.htm> ^[19]

L. Hollingsworth Wood Papers, 1903-1953, Ms. Coll. 1175, (81 boxes), Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College:
<http://www.haverford.edu/library/special/aids/wood/fiveyears.php> ^[20].

Guilford College. *The Quaker*. Greensboro, NC : Guilford College. 1920. <https://archive.org/details/quaker1920guil> ^[21] (accessed April 9, 2013).

UNC Libraries Biographical Clippings: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/bio/bibio.html> ^[22]

Directory, By Earlham College: Google ebook. ^[23]

Mennonite Central Committee. "Civilian Public Service Story:" <http://civilianpublicservice.org/> ^[17].

Guilford College. *The Quaker*. Greensboro, NC : Guilford College. 1931. <https://archive.org/details/quaker1931guil> [2] (accessed April 9, 2013).