Quiet Helpers: Quaker Service in Postwar Germany  
September 8-30, 2000

During September 2000, the Art Gallery will co-host with Friends Center and Campus Ministry, this exhibition which documents the work of Friends in Germany who mended the wounds of war, aided the victims of violence, and helped to rebuild civil society.

The exhibition was organized by the German Historical Museum in Berlin and opened there in 1996. During the following two years, the exhibit traveled to 21 German cities, and recently, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has brought it to the United States for tour.

Quakers served Germans and those who were victims of the Germans. Major emphasis is given to the main theme: the large-scale Quaker relief and reconciliation programs after World War II and the Quäkerspeisung (Quaker feeding effort), which many Germans still remember today.

The exhibit also explores Quaker work in Germany in the 1920's, when the civilian populace was on the verge of starvation and the country was suffering from the effects of isolation, punishing economic reparations, and world economic crisis. A third theme covers aid and rescue work during the Holocaust era when AFSC and British Friends provided humanitarian assistance to Jews and other persecuted people from a network of Quaker offices throughout Europe.

"Quiet Helpers" uses a mix of artifacts and three-dimensional objects, documents, historical photos, and video to explore the exhibit themes. These straightforward, real-life items put a human face on the aid work and the people who were involved. A 30-minute documentary film, Love Amid the Ruins, uses newsreels and other historical footage, interspersed with interviews of volunteers who worked in Germany as well as people who were helped by Quakers.

The exhibit opened in the Art Gallery atrium on Friday, September 8, with a reception from 4:30-6:30 p.m. On Saturday, September 23, three Guilford College alumni who participated in the Quaker relief efforts in Europe will speak about their experiences at 1:30 p.m. in the main gallery. These events are free and the public is cordially invited.