

History of the Mount Toby Monthly Meeting

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Preface

When the Northwest Quarterly Meeting was set up at Woodstock, Vermont, in 1959, Arthur Jones, for seven years first clerk of our reunited Yearly Meeting, talked of the phenomenal growth within his lifetime of Connecticut Valley Friends. This was the first new quarterly meeting in New England Yearly Meeting for almost a hundred years. He told of conditions in the Valley as he first knew them. When he entered Yale Divinity School, he said he was one of three Friends who occasionally met together for worship. When he graduated in 1908, he was the only Friend that he knew of in all New Haven. And in New Hampshire, where he served as temporary pastor of a church, there were no Friends; he was assured, however, that there were some over in New York state.

Before following the steps by which our own meeting arrived in its present happy state, it may be interesting to ask about Friends in our area before the arid time remembered by Arthur Jones. Those earliest Friends who came to the inhospitable shore of the Massachusetts Bay Colony three hundred years ago and whose numbers rapidly multiplied in spite of, or perhaps because of savage persecution and even martyrdom, seem not to have settled along the Connecticut River. Yet even in the 1630s, long before George Fox found the answer to his search, Puritans and Pilgrims had started settlements at New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, and other places along the river. I do not know of any record of Friends meetings in our part of New England until near the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th.

The earliest meeting in our section, so far as I know, was not along the river but in northwestern Massachusetts. The town of Adams, first known as East Hoosuck, was settled by a group of Friends in 1769. They came from Smithfield, R.I. and nearby Dartmouth, Mass. The meetings they left are still active today though the meeting they started was laid down in 1842. For more than sixty years, however, Friends exerted an important influence on the town. At first they met for worship in one another's houses; then, in 1782 they built a sturdy meetinghouse which still stands. There are no Friends left in the neighborhood, but a group, proud of their heritage and calling themselves The Adams Society of Friends Descendants, looks after the town-owned building and holds an annual meeting for worship in it on the first Sunday afternoon in September. It is open to the public. The building has not been altered at all in the 182 years since its erection.

The space in front of the meetinghouse is where the early Friends were buried. There is nothing to mark the place, no wall about the plot, no stones in it, nothing to distinguish the individual graves. The historian regrets the absence of markers with names and dates, but for those who lie there that very lack was a witness to their belief that all people are equal before God. It is the belief that made Friends refuse to pay "hat homage" to the great and caused them to use the "thou" and "thee" to all people, high and low.

Returning to the early meetings, south of us in Connecticut, the name of a West Hartford street, Quaker Lane, is a reminder that Friends must have had a thriving meeting on it to justify the choice. Both meetinghouse and Quakers had disappeared a half century and more before the Hartford Friends whom we know built their beautiful meetinghouse on the old site.

Even less evidence remains of the meeting that once existed nearest us. It was in West Pelham, four miles east of Amherst, where a group of Friends from the southeast section of neighboring Worcester county had settled at the beginning of the 19th century and built themselves a meetinghouse. Most of them came from Uxbridge and brought their Uxbridge Meeting name with them which was later changed to the less confusing and more exact Pelham Meeting. Henry Cadbury found for us a revealing glimpse of this small meeting of poor farmers. It comes from a diary kept

by Thomas Scattergood and tells of a journey he made through the wilds of western Massachusetts in 1811, visiting meetings as he went. He notes arriving at E. Cook's in Pelham on October 7 where he met with "a kind reception." The next entry reads: "8th – A rainy day and but few Friends at meeting, and the other part of the company mostly raw looking people – a number of women and girls without bonnets or caps. We set (sic) I believe more than two hours in a very trying, cloudy silence, and being near breaking up E. Cook spoke a few words. . . ."

We meet E. Cook again briefly in an 1898 history of Pelham and Prescott written by C. O. Parmenter. Under the heading "The Quaker Burying Ground" the author writes:

At one time during the early part of the century there was a small body of Quakers or Friends in town, led by Uncle Eseck Cook, whose kindly "thee" and "thou" the writer remembers, and their meeting house was about half a mile east of the West Pelham Methodist church. Here the little band used to gather on Sunday and await in silence for the spirit to move. Out on the plain west of the meetinghouse, which is now used as a barn, the Friends were buried as one after another they finished their earthly course. The space set apart was not large nor was it ever enclosed by fence or wall. Thirty or forty perhaps were buried here. . . . Some of the graves show like low swelling mounds of grassy turf with ordinary stones gathered from the field at the head and feet. Many tenants have occupied the small farm but the plow has never invaded the little burial place upon the plain. No name-inscribed stones are seen, no dates, nothing to indicate who the dead are who lie here. . . .

The barn that once was their meetinghouse has long since disappeared. I remember being shown its foundation stones sometime in the 1920s.

Mr. Parmenter goes on to repeat the almost legendary story of Gulley Potter. It somehow brings those long ago Friends to life. Gulley Potter was a young medical student. He was not a Friend nor were his parents – only his grandparents. When he died there was no objection to his burial in the little graveyard. But when his fellow students supplied a stone for his grave and his father put it up, the Friends quietly removed it. His father replaced it, and again it was removed. That time his father got the point, though nothing was ever said. Stone and body were taken elsewhere.

Although there were probably other early meetings in our general region, I question whether any lasted into the second half of the 19th century. There was a long Quakerless period in our part of New England extending even into our own 20th century. It would be interesting to speculate on why those early meetings died, but we must go on to the renaissance of Quakerism about which Arthur Jones spoke and of which we are a part.

I. The Twenties

Migrations of whole groups of Friends were responsible, as we saw in the preface, for the meetings at Adams and Pelham. However, most of our local meetings came into being by the more common process that Henry Cadbury aptly describes as "sporadic and spontaneous". A Friend moves into the Valley, feels a need not supplied by the local churches for seeking through corporate silence and shared ministry the will of God for him and his fellows and gathers together in his home, or that of another, a group of like-minded people for worship.

It is entirely possible that some such worship groups formed in our valley during that apparently sterile period of Quakerism between about 1850 (the Pelham meeting property was sold in 1853) and the beginning of the first World War. But if there were such groups I have come on no record of them. It was World War I, blessed by most Christian churches as a war to end war and save

democracy, that stung Friends awake. The shock of the war, shame at the unreasoning hatred of all things German let loose in our country, and the needs at the war's end of a devastated Europe bludgeoned Quakers into a realization of their responsibility and drove them to seek out one another. The American Friends Service Committee, organized in 1917, cut across many of the old divisions that had separated Friends. By the end of the war the scattered Friends in the Valley began to seek out one another, but there were no regular meetings among them until the Twenties.

In the fall of 1924 two young Quakers joined the Amherst College faculty, Paul Douglas, now Senator Douglas, and George Taylor, who with his wife Mary Henderson Taylor, are members of our Meeting. Almost immediately they found and gathered other Friends about them and held regular meetings for worship, followed by discussions at the home of Paul Douglas. That Friends from farther down the Valley sometimes came to these meetings is indicated by an entry in the *Line a Day Diary* kept by Alexander Purdy of Hartford Theological Seminary. It read, "April 19, 1925 – Gathering of Friends at Paul Douglas'." Though with the departure of Paul Douglas at the end of the year the Amherst meetings were discontinued for a time, a start had been made in bringing together Friends from up and down the Valley.

That April 1925 meeting may well be regarded as the progenitor of our present Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting. For the next few years Friends from New Haven to Northfield met together for worship, fellowship and discussion once or twice a year until at a meeting in Springfield on April 14, 1929, they informally organized. They called themselves the Connecticut Valley Association of Friends, decided to meet together twice a year and appointed a clerk. Alexander Purdy says he doesn't remember whether he or Walter Miles of New Haven was the first clerk.

This was ten years before any Valley group became a monthly meeting and fifteen years before Jeannette Purdy read the Association's closing minute when, in 1945, the Connecticut Valley Association of Friends together with the independent meetings of Cambridge (Mass.) and Providence joined with the two yearly meetings in New England (they had separated in 1845) to form our present reunited New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Our Connecticut Valley Association then became the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting. Actually it was for another fifteen years quarterly only in name. The two meetings a year with which it had started had been increased to three somewhere along the line and so continued until 1960 when we became in fact as well as in name a quarterly meeting.

Going back again to 1924 we find that date appearing in another connection, this time in South Hadley. Sally Dirks of Montague remembers a meeting of local Friends and students held in 1924 on a Sunday afternoon in Skinner Hall, a recitation building on the Mount Holyoke College campus. Rufus Jones was the magnet. He had preached at the College that morning. The fact that Sally Dirks, who lived more than twenty miles north of South Hadley, received notice of this special meeting of Friends suggests that there was already a list of area Friends used for notifying local Friends of such occasional meetings. Mary Hussey had such a list which, when my sisters came to live with me in 1930, she passed over to one of them. By that time meetings were more frequent and not dependent on special occasions. Notices were sent out monthly during the college year.

Mary Hussey was a professor of Biblical Literature, as the Department of Religion at Mount Holyoke was then called, an erudite scholar and a deeply committed Friend. She was a member of the Haverford (Pa.) Meeting and a personal friend of Rufus Jones. When the time approached for him to come to preach, as he often did, she would write asking if he would hold a meeting for worship with our student and Valley Friends on either Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon according to his convenience. If he chose the latter, as he did when not booked for the Smith College vesper service, the Mount Holyoke students would serve tea at the close of the meeting, welcome refreshment for those who had come from a distance. How often did Rufus Jones come?

Consulting college records, I find that during the Twenties he preached in 1921, 1923, 1924, and 1926, the year his daughter graduated from Mount Holyoke. At that time there were many girls at Mount Holyoke from Quaker schools, for the principals and many of their faculties were great admirers of Mount Holyoke's internationally-minded president, Mary E. Wooley, and tended to steer their students in her direction.

In our immediate area there was another meeting of Friends, perhaps earlier than those mentioned – there is no dated record – one that Ellen Winslow gathered about her in Springfield. She was a teacher in the Classical High School there. The group, a small one, met regularly for years. Frank and Maria Gruen of our Meeting, when they came to Springfield in 1937, joined it and speak of it with warm affection. The group broke up when Ellen Winslow on her retirement went to the Huntington-Dixon Home in Amesbury, Mass., the New England Yearly Meeting home for elderly Friends, now replaced by the Friends Home at Hingham, Mass.

A certain custom started in the Twenties and continued for almost thirty years deserves mention here, for it was dearly loved by Valley Friends. Bernard and Sally Dirks, sometime in the Twenties, invited Valley Friends to hold their June meeting, the last of the college year, at Happy Hill Farm, their home near Montague. The house is on a small plateau well above the road below and protected from the north by a hill rising abruptly behind it. To the south it commands as full and lovely a view of the Valley as can be found anywhere. One can see Mt. Toby and, farther south, the Holyoke range. When the weather favored, as it usually did, we held our meeting for worship outdoors, sitting in a big circle on the ground, sometimes with the children in the center. The freshness of early June would be in the air and all that met the eye seemed to declare the glory of God and show forth His handiwork. Afterwards as we ate our picnic lunches we came to know one another better, for then as now we were widely scattered among the small Valley towns and villages. In the afternoon there might be a speaker or report of Quaker activity followed by discussion and in later years, of course, a business meeting. Attendance was large. Sally Dirks tells of eighty in one of the early years, twenty of them children.

By the end of the Twenties, this Valley group had developed a warm family feeling as we moved up and down our section of the Valley. We had no clerk, no committees, no minutes, just a list of names and a sender-out of notices. We met about six times during the college year, the average attendance was estimated by Mary Hussey as being about fifty. Except for the June meeting, the places where we met varied and were in part by invitation or chosen because of a visiting speaker. The following list is not chronological; some are from the Twenties and others from the early Thirties, but all predate an established monthly meeting. The Hampshire Bookshop in Northampton was founded and owned by a New York Friend, Marion Dodd, who invited us in the early days to hold occasional meetings there. Another interesting place where we met was the Springfield Museum of Fine Arts during the brief period in the early Thirties when Josiah Marvel, a concerned Friend, was director. We met many times in the Jones Library in Amherst, in college buildings on the various college campuses, in the Springfield Y.M.C.A., in the Fleckles's home on the Mount Hermon campus, in the Northfield Congregational Church and in many of our widely scattered private homes. These meetings were always on Sunday afternoon. There was as yet no thought of an established monthly meeting. When that came, it came from an entirely different quarter, independent of this longstanding group of Friends which it ultimately and happily absorbed.

II. Other Group Centers

Before telling the story of the establishment of our Monthly Meeting, unrelated as it was to any of the groups already described, we should speak of three other centers where equally unrelated

groups gathered – South Amherst, Northfield and Greenfield. Some of these overlapped in time the founding of our Monthly Meeting, but the origin of each was completely independent of it.

The home of Robert and Esther (Cadbury) Schoonmaker in South Amherst on South East Street was perhaps the earliest Quaker home in our general vicinity. During their long occupancy their home was often thrown open to Quaker gatherings. Rumor has it that regular meetings were held there in the middle Twenties although the exact dates are not immediately available. We know of regular meetings being held there at a later time during the gas-rationing days of World War II. I remember going to one of these meetings on a day warm enough for us to hold Meeting on the pleasant lawn, but I cannot pinpoint the date.

No such uncertainty clouds the memory of meetings held at another South Amherst home, that of John and Mary Kentfield, for Mary Kentfield herself has written down some of her memories. She and her husband, their two sons and her mother came to South Amherst in 1927. Her mother, Mary Jane Cope, was a rare person whose face held so much of serenity, responsiveness and love that Meeting began in one's heart at sight of her. In their first year, while they had as guests two Lynn (Mass.) Friends, James and Mary Anna Oliver, they invited local Friends to hold a Meeting at their home. Three came from Springfield, Ellen Winslow and Charles and Mary Johnson, and fifteen from Amherst. Mary Kentfield adds that "A pleasant social visit followed with cake, home-made ice cream and strawberries."

For a few years during World War II evening meetings for worship were held at the Kentfields' every other Wednesday evening. Bill Scott started them. Attenders came from Amherst, Pelham, South Hadley, Northampton and Shutesbury – Friends and non-Friends, some of them high school and college students. Occasionally Ted Kentfield, the older son, and his friends from their New Hampshire Civilian Public Service (CPS) camp were able to join them. Mary Kentfield says of these evening meetings, that they were "precious occasions"; the social visits following were rich with shared fellowship, especially appreciated in war time. In season a big brown bowl of red apples from the farm orchard was passed. With everyone contributing, we packed boxes of non-perishable, light-weight foods to send to a family in Germany recommended to us by the American Friends Service Committee. After the meetings discontinued, the Kentfields continued to send food for a while, and to correspond. The mother received her doctor's degree, and they came to America, where she taught in a Friends college.

An earlier relief project under AFSC was that of collecting clothing and toys during the Depression for the hard hit coal miners of West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. The work was done at the Taylors' in Amherst before they moved to Pelham. Mary Taylor has always been concerned with such work and still gives time to it.

Another Valley group, farther north, came together at Northfield where the headquarters of the American Youth Hostels (AYH) was located. Monroe and Isabel Smith, the directors, belonged to the Wider Quaker Fellowship. Three young Quakers, David Elkinton, Peaslee Bond and Bill Brinton joined the AYH staff in 1938. With their arrival a worship group began to form which included among others Elliott and Cherille Fleckles of Mount Hermon where Elliott was librarian, the teacher of French at the school who was a French mystic, and an ex-Catholic priest turned Quaker, Marion Kumin of Athol and Fritz Kaufhold. The latter had escaped from his native Germany in 1937 with the help of an American Friend, a Haverford student and son of a teacher at Mount Hermon. Because Fritz had met Monroe and Isabel Smith four years earlier when they were studying the youth hostel movement in Europe, he was quickly drawn into the work and life at the youth hostel headquarters. This nucleus of people attracted others. Meetings for worship were held at the Northfield hostel, at the Mount Hermon home of the Fleckleses and at the Northfield Congregational Church. In 1930 an English Friend, Ruth Catchpool, with her children, came to this country and made her home at the Northfield staff house. Also in 1940 Allison Kirtland of

Erie, Michigan, came to take a hostel training course. She was not a Friend then nor did she seek membership until sometime after she became Allison Kaufhold.

During the summer, this Northfield worship group joined the Friends who had gathered for worship and social activities at Mary Champney's studio at Sherwood on the west side of Greenfield. These Sunday afternoon meetings had begun in 1934. At that first meeting an attendance of thirty-five was recorded. A staunch pacifist, Mary Champney, though not a Friend at this time, was much in sympathy with the work of the AFSC and in 1939 she went to Holland under its auspices to assist in the dangerous work of helping refugees get out of Germany. She arranged to have the studio kept open during her absence. By the time she returned the CPS camps were in full swing. C.O.'s at the relatively nearby camps at Royalston, Petersham and Ashburnham and later those at the Brattleboro Retreat (Joe Havens was there) flocked to Sherwood when they could get away. There they met a warm welcome and food for mind, body and soul. The war that broke up the Northfield group (by 1943 most of its members were scattered) made the Greenfield group grow to meet the many emergencies. But that is another story and must wait. It is mentioned here only to complete the picture of the many separate groups of Friends in our valley before the establishment of a Monthly Meeting, which grew out of none of them although ultimately it absorbed most of them.

III. A Monthly Meeting at Last

Since membership in the Religious Society of Friends is vested solely in the Monthly Meeting, it is a great advantage to have a Monthly Meeting within reach. For happily there are always those who through attendance at local worship groups or in other ways find themselves so much in sympathy with the faith and practice of Friends that they want both the witness and the support of full membership in the Society. This felt need undoubtedly led Elliott and Cherille Fleckles of Mount Hermon, members of the Northfield worship group, to apply for membership as soon as the establishment of a Monthly Meeting at Northampton became known. Theirs was the first application received. It probably also explains the application of a Hartford couple before the Hartford Friends became a Monthly Meeting, as it did only a few months later than ours. The Northampton group did us all a favor by becoming a Monthly Meeting and those of us already Friends joyfully sent for certificates of removal to it.

During the years preceding 1937, Northampton had developed no Quaker groups as had various other centers in the Valley. There was an occasional Friend here and there; Marjorie Williams of the Smith College Astronomy Department and Esther Harris, a teacher in the Smith College Day School, are the only ones I recall. Certainly in the community no Quaker activity appeared although individual Friends may have served Quaker interests elsewhere, as I know Marjorie Williams did.

The beginning of what became the Northampton Monthly Meeting was not unlike that of some earlier groups. A few Smith College students who had come from Quaker schools missed the worshipful quiet of a Friends Meeting and felt the need of supplying the lack as other students in other colleges have felt and probably some earlier students at Smith also. I was told only recently by a Mount Holyoke alumna who graduated in 1917 that she was one of four Quaker girls who met together weekly for silent worship during at least part of their college course. How many other college students in how many other colleges have formed such groups we have no means of knowing. But these particular Smith students were more fortunate. Their desire for group worship reached the ears of a college chaplain or those of his wife. This chaplain, appointed in 1935, was a sympathetic Congregational clergyman named Burns Chalmers. At that time he was not a Friend, but his wife, Elizabeth Scattergood Chalmers, had been a Friend from birth, though at the moment she, too, was a Congregationalist, having joined the Jonathan Edwards Church of Northampton,

probably in the interest of family solidarity.

Given the Chalmers, it is not surprising that as soon as they heard of the students' desire they invited those girls and any others interested, faculty members as well as students, to their home on a Sunday evening for a meeting for worship after the manner of Friends. This was at the beginning of the second semester in 1937.

At the beginning of the first semester in the fall of 1936, a European Quaker couple had arrived on campus. Walter Kotschnig, an Austrian, came as visiting professor in the Education Department at Smith with his Welsh wife, Elined Prys Kotschnig, who had studied under Carl Gustaf Jung in Zurich, Switzerland, and completed the work in his Institute there. They were members of the Geneva (Switzerland) Friends Meeting and much interested in a gathering such as that at the Chalmers'. A discussion about Friends followed the Meeting for worship. The general interest aroused was such that occasional meetings continued for the rest of the college year, sometimes held at the Chalmers', sometimes in a dormitory. At the semester's end the attenders decided to hold meetings the next college year. For these meetings permission was secured from the College to hold them in what was called the Little Chapel, now no longer in existence but then part of the just remodeled library. There, during the college year of 1937 - 38, the group met for worship every other Sunday evening at eight, the worship period usually followed by a scheduled discussion. Attendance, we are told, averaged about twelve.

Up to this point the Northampton group appeared no different from any of the other groups already described. It had more or less followed the usual pattern of the Valley worship groups: a felt need among a few, occasional meetings for worship, others attracted to them and the group finally meeting regularly for worship, but with no more organization than a list of names and addresses for the purpose of notification.

The difference was there, however, in the person of Elined Kotschnig. The American scene was new to her, her interest in Friends fresh and keen. She visited in and around Philadelphia and soon knew more about the organizational side of Quakerism than most of us. Greatly interested in the little Northampton group, she talked over its problems with members of the American Friends Fellowship Council that had been set up in 1935 with the help of the American Friends Service Committee and like it cut across most Yearly Meeting lines. A large part of its work was to foster small independent meetings and help form new ones. She enlisted their help.

Her desire for a more stable group in Northampton received further support from nearby Easthampton. In 1937 Quaker Daniel Test, a teacher at Williston Academy, married Quaker Mary Conard (to the best of my knowledge always called "Polly") and brought her to Easthampton. They both belonged to old established meetings in Pennsylvania and were well versed in Quaker ways. They soon came to know the Northampton Friends and took an active part in planning for a Monthly Meeting.

The first step came in the fall of 1938 when on Sunday evening, October 23, after the Meeting for Worship, a business meeting was held, officers chosen and minutes recorded. (Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting has these minutes and those for the succeeding twenty-seven years.) Elined Kotschnig was appointed clerk and Pauline Leake, a senior, assistant clerk and treasurer. The business was taken up with care and precision. In a letter about this history Elined Kotschnig writes of the minutes kept that they were "carefully styled according to the Book of Discipline, which I found a delightful exercise!"

From the minutes of the second business meeting we learn that Elined Kotschnig had been invited to speak at the annual meeting of the Friends Fellowship Council on "Problems of a New United Meeting." (A united meeting is one made up of members from different Yearly Meetings.) The group urged her to accept the invitation and to "get into touch with Fellowship Council on its behalf." This request indicates acquaintance with the Council, its function and their hoped-for

relation to it.

But before going on with that relationship I should mention two changes proposed and approved earlier in this same meeting, changes that hindsight views as steps in the building of a regular Friends meeting. They are changes in the frequency of the meetings for worship and in the time at which they are held. The first would seem to have been proposed largely as a matter of convenience. The students suggested meeting every week instead of every other week because they found it hard to remember which Sunday was which. If they met every Sunday there would be no confusion. Evidently this seemed a questionable move to some. Would not attendance fall off? they asked. But the meeting finally agreed to try the experiment and was prepared to have very small meetings, provided those who were present came with a "true desire for worship." The other change required less discussion. It was agreed to alter the meeting time from 8:00 Sunday night to 10:30 Sunday morning. This change may well have been proposed by one of the older members with an eye to Monthly Meeting needs, for as long as the meetings were held at night general participation by Valley Friends could hardly be expected. Both changes would begin after the Christmas holidays – with the new year.

Then came the great decision toward which the group had been slowly moving for over a year. It was introduced by reading letters from two well-known members of Fellowship Council, Barnard Walton and Leslie Shaffer. They encouraged the group to take on Monthly Meeting responsibilities as soon as it felt ready. After so much preparation and encouragement the decision was easy to make. The resultant minute reads:

It has been decided that, after considerable discussion of this step among ourselves and with Albert Martin on his recent visit, we do wish to become a monthly meeting, and will apply to the Fellowship Council for recognition as such.

The last concern of this history-making business meeting dealt with an uneasiness some had felt lest their action, in forming a Monthly Meeting, should be interpreted by the Valley Friends as an act of separation. They ended their minutes:

It was decided to keep them (the Valley Friends) in touch with what we are doing, to invite the cooperation of all who live within reach of Northampton and to make it clear at every point that we have no intention of setting up a rival body of any kind and hope to continue our cooperation with them and to make it the more efficacious for being stronger among ourselves.

This is signed Elined Kotschnig, clerk. The date is December 18, 1938.

The final act took place two months later on February 26, 1939. The opening minute reads: "On this day at our First Day Meeting for Worship, the Northampton Meeting of Friends was established as a Monthly Meeting affiliated to the Fellowship Council..." I regret there is no record of the Meeting for Worship. Doubtless the eight Founding Members received a Quaker blessing from Douglas Steere, who had been sent to represent Fellowship Council. The names of the founders and their local addresses appear under the heading of Founding Members in a book in which all membership records were kept up through 1944, the year the Kotschnigs left Northampton. (How I wish it had been kept up!) The names appear in the following order: I have added the college class of the Smith students. Anne Barus '41, Elined Prys Kotschnig, Walter M. Kotschnig, Pauline Leake '39, Daniel Test, Mary Test, Miriam Usher '41 and, separated by a line, Elizabeth Scattergood Chalmers (assoc. member). (It is interesting to note that in the 1941 list Elizabeth Chalmers is recorded as a full member and in the 1944 list, Burns Chalmers as well.)

The students whose desire, expressed in 1937, for opportunity to worship after the manner of Friends, and who thereby had set into motion what had now become the Northampton Monthly

Meeting of Friends, were no longer in college. Their place was taken by the three student “founders”, not one of whom was a Friend when she entered college. But they all became deeply interested in Friends’ ideas and way of worship as they attended meetings of the group and shared its concerns. Convinced Friends, they joined the Northampton Monthly Meeting on the glad day of its establishment.

We are told that there were from twenty to thirty people at that meeting and that Douglas Steere spoke. Something of what he said was recorded by the clerk. It makes us realize the high level on which the Meeting started and serves as inspiration for us to follow that leading. Mount Toby Monthly Meeting of Friends may well be proud of its heritage.

Our Friend (Douglas Steere) reminded us of the role played in the past by the Franciscan Third Order, and inspired us to bear the same witness to the eternal order within the daily life of society today.

Elined Kotschnig adds, “It was a time of deep dedication.”

IV. War Years, part 1

The year our Monthly Meeting, then the Northampton Independent Meeting of Friends, was established (February 1939) was an epoch-making year in the history of the world. Much had been leading up to crisis. By 1931 Japan was in Manchuria. In 1933 Hitler had become chancellor of Germany; in 1935 - 36 Italy under Mussolini had taken over Ethiopia; the Spanish Civil War began in 1936, and now with France in the saddle, was just ending, thanks to the help of Italy and Germany. In 1938 Germany annexed Austria after some other take-overs. Japan, Italy and Germany had thus openly flouted the terms of the 1929 Kellogg-Briand Pact. The appeasement policy of the 1938 Munich Pact had further emboldened the totalitarian countries. (“Totalitarian” was almost as new a word then as “cybernation” is now, and more menacing). Then on September 1, 1939, Hitler entered Poland. England and France, pledged to aid Poland, immediately declared war. This was the state of world affairs when our little Meeting in Northampton reassembled after what was for many of the students their last unemployed summer vacation. The Second World War had begun, though it was not at first recognized as such. A speedy end to the conflict and a peace settlement built on firmer ground than that of the Versailles Treaty of 1919 occupied much Quaker thought. Yet Friends knew better than many others what was happening overseas, for the American Friends Service Committee together with the Friends Service Council of London had stayed on in Europe after the end of their relief work following the First World War and had developed International Quaker Centers in various cities – Amsterdam, Paris, Geneva, Berlin, Vienna and, until the early 1930s, even in Moscow. Hence Friends had their hands on the European pulse in a rather special way. The work had been largely with students until the rise of dictators created refugee problems which grew to massive proportions. When Hitler came into power, Holland began to fill with refugees and the Quaker center at Amsterdam had its hands full. Our Mary Champney was there in 1939 as director under the AFSC. Her experience in welfare work, her psychiatric training, her linguistic skills, and her personal courage were in constant demand. She was not officially a Friend at that time, but on her return the next year she joined the Meeting. After the war, in 1946, the AFSC sent her back to Holland on a special mission of reconciliation and relief.

In the United States a general and rather strong determination to keep out of the war marked the early fall of 1939. Among Friends there was also a determination to work for the right kind of peace settlement. To that end a New England Peace Conference in Cambridge was scheduled by the AFSC for November. Our first business meeting that fall was chiefly concerned with plans for attendance at that conference. Students were urged to go; the Meeting undertook to provide

transportation and lodging for them. In the weeks before the conference the Meeting formulated a concern to present to it. The resultant mimeographed sheet is headed "Stating a Concern of the Northampton Independent Meeting of Friends." In handwriting across the top is written "Presented to the New England Friends' Conference on War and Peace at Cambridge, Mass., November, 1939." It begins

Beyond 'Keeping America out of the war' or even beyond preaching a gospel of non-cooperation in war and of non-violence, Friends, beginning now and in this country, should make every effort toward the building of a new and better international order by urging upon all nations, governments, and peoples without reservation –

Included in the list of what should be urged are:

... a reaffirmation of the terms of the Kellogg Peace Pact; a reinterpretation of the meaning of national sovereignty in an interdependent world; consideration of any plan for something like an improved League of Nations; and 'the need of clearly stating the principles which are to underlie the next peace before all vestige of reason, sympathy, and understanding have been engulfed in the passions aroused by the present armed conflicts.'

The final paragraph reads:

In pursuance of these ends it is urged that the Society of Friends and its individual members should seek a deeper appreciation of the economic, sociological and psychological factors behind the attitudes of the various nations and their rulers.

External events soon postponed further thinking on peace settlements. Roosevelt, elected that same November to an unprecedented third term as president, was stepping up production in munition plants and in building of planes, ships and submarines. The United States was to serve as arsenal for its allies, aiding them in every way possible, "short of war." Early in 1940 a compulsory military service and training bill was passed, the first such bill in our history to be passed in peace time. The restrictions attached – that service was to be for one year only and only in this country, show how strong the feeling still was then against actual participation in the war. Friends watched helplessly as Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* in the spring of 1940 inevitably altered the general climate of opinion. For in April Hitler occupied Norway and Denmark; in May, Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland; and by June 14 he was in Paris. The close call at Dunkirk was frightening. The fall of France that came soon after left Great Britain fighting alone. The bombing of England and the menace of German submarines continued. These disasters caused our government to announce a state of unlimited national emergency and made the passage in September, 1940, of our Selective Training and Service Act a foregone conclusion.

So when in the fall of 1940 a somewhat diminished number of college students reassembled at Smith and elsewhere, it was to a different, more sober world. An item in the diary kept by a young and radiant teacher at Smith named Teresina Rowell (now Teresina Havens) gives us an idea of the impact on sensitive young pacifists of what was happening. It reads: "October 16, 1940. Registration Day for Conscription. Peace Team along with F.O.R. members over the country fasted all day in penitence and protest, meeting for worship and silence in the Little Chapel every meal time." The Peace Team was made up largely, Teresina tells us, of students who met in the Little Chapel with one or two adult members of our Meeting every Friday morning before classes for a period of silent supplication. Terry Rowell, a Smith A.B. and Yale Ph.D., had joined the Smith faculty in 1939 and had been active in the Quaker group from the beginning, although she did not become a Friend officially until December, 1940.

December, 1940, was when Civilian Public Service camps were set up for the conscientious objectors (C.O.s) who chose alternative service, as most of them did. Non-combatant military service (1-A-O) and for the absolutist, prison were the other two choices. The historic peace churches, the Mennonites, the Brethren and the Quakers, had recognized early the possibility that their young people might again have to face the problem of conscription and in January, 1940, they had presented their case to Roosevelt. During the following summer the AFSC had conferred with various officials in key positions. A representative meeting of Friends from different parts of the country was held in Richmond, Indiana, in July to consider their responsibilities should a draft law be enacted. As a result of these conferences, when the September Act came, it made provision for those who "by reason of religious training and belief were conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." The arrangement was that the government would provide equipment and supervision for work to be done in this country in services such as forestry, soil conservation and national parks. It would provide lodging, cots and bedding for the C.O.s in some of the barracks that had been used by the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) during the Depression. The AFSC would be responsible for running expenses and camp administration. The other Peace churches took on similar burdens for their camps. In a yearly budget for our Meeting (1942) \$600 was allocated to Civilian Public Service Camps and \$100 more for "special aid to Royalston and Petersham C.P.S. Camps." \$400 more in this budget was for relief and refugee work and \$50 for AFSC. Walter Kotschnig, who was treasurer when this budget was made up, wrote in his report presenting it, "As many of our members feel unable to contribute to causes to which millions of people in this country are giving more generously than ever before, it is but right that our Meeting should make a special effort this year to further the work of charity and reconstruction which is the heritage of the Society of Friends."

The relation of our Meeting to the CPS camps was much more than financial. In a list of eight concerns (our Meeting was given to stating its special concerns for each year as a new clerk took over), the first is for the CPS camps "in our vicinity." Besides the two mentioned above, there was one at Ashburnham and one at Warren, both relatively near. These four Massachusetts camps ranged in distance from Northampton from about thirty to sixty miles. "These camps" the concern goes on to say, "would welcome visitors, entertainment, invitations to meals, books (especially light fiction), comfortable chairs, possible food, and certainly continuing friendly interest in them and their affairs." Our Meeting tried to act on most of these suggestions. Terry's diary reflects one form of response. She speaks of the older members of the Meeting providing normal social life by inviting C.O.s to Northampton and helping the students entertain them at square dances and in other ways. Groups were made up to visit the camps and small libraries installed from books we all donated. The Meeting, at the suggestion of one camp, paid for the gas and oil for any of the men who with that help could attend our meetings for worship and perhaps stay for a family meal with some member of the Meeting.

Gas rationing unfortunately soon put an end to such pleasant practices. Some of us continued to make an occasional visit to the camps, coasting down every slight incline and welcoming real hills on which enough power was generated coasting downhill to take us halfway up the other side. The number of local camps was later reduced and the men sent to one at Campton, N.H. For many men, there was a good deal of shifting from camp to camp.

During the summer of 1941 the Wilsons, Eugene (Bill) and Louise, were directors of the CPS camp at Patapsco, MD. As Bill was clerk of our meeting that year we felt close to the work; they shared their experiences with us. The AFSC had agreed to take all objectors sent them and not just Friends. I don't know whether that was because not all Friends of draft age refused service as did all Mennonites and Brethren. (Actually more than half of our young men enlisted.) The Wilsons had in their camp, besides Friends, men paroled from prison, Jehovah's

Witnesses, political objectors and others, a difficult but interesting group. Even in that first year there was the beginning of restlessness and discontent in the camps, largely because much of the work they were set to do seemed unimportant in face of a world at war. I remember hearing the men in one of our nearby camps complain that the water holes they were set to dig would soon fill up and anyway could wait until after the war. The frustration of not being used to their full capacity grew with the years. After institutions for the mentally ill were allowed to use C.O.s, those fortunate enough to be employed were able to do important, constructive work. Those who had the opportunity to volunteer for research and "guinea pig" projects also had the satisfaction of making real contributions. Among these men were two connected with our Meeting. Theodore Kentfield was in the small group that volunteered for some experimentation with lice. They called themselves the "Lyceum." Fritz Kaufhold left the Colorado camp where he had been for the duration to join a group in Philadelphia being experimented on for jaundice. As a German known to have a near relative in the German army he had had, generally, a more difficult time than most. In 1943 he was on trial in Springfield for the purpose of changing the "1A" assignment he had been given to the C.O. "4E." Burns Chalmers attended the trial and told the Meeting of the pride he felt in Fritz's stand and statement.

Much correspondence went forward between members of the Meeting and a nonresident member whose discontent with his camp and disbelief in the whole system so increased that he finally deserted camp. Our Meeting kept in touch with him during his prison days and parole to hospital work in California that followed, but we have since lost track of him. Another case in which our Meeting had part was that of David Fawcett, son of Clifford and Florence Fawcett, who had been refused 4E classification by his draft board in New Mexico.

In all these matters Bill Wilson was a big help. Throughout the war he served as advisor to the AFSC's Committee on CPS Camps. In the summer of 1943 he gave weekly local broadcasts on work being done by Friends. He also traveled about with William Sourrier (now chaplain at Wesleyan) explaining the position of the conscientious objector to church groups, Rotary clubs and any others interested enough to listen.

For many, perhaps for most, the CPS experience was a frustrating one and worse than frustrating for those whose own resources had been used up, for C.O.s, of course, had no opportunity to earn any money. In 1943 the director of the Campton, NY, CPS wrote our Meeting for money and warm clothes for some of his men. As the years went on and the C.O.s married and had families, the problem of dependents became an increasingly serious one. Congress had twice refused to make any government allotment to dependents of C.O.s, although Selective Service officials as well as church leaders recommended it. One Senator when he understood what the situation really was, is quoted by Clarence Pickett as saying, "You are treating these fellows worse than the Japs." Even the money for the farm work to which some of the C.O.s had been assigned and which the farmers paid into the government was not made available.

At the October 1944 Quarterly Meeting held in South Hadley this problem of caring for the dependents of C.O.s in camps and prisons was one of two matters that concerned the meeting. The other was the threat of peacetime conscription. Our monthly newsletter that reported on this Quarterly Meeting said that it was a matter of record that there had never been a Friend on public welfare. (I wonder whether with the changed attitude toward public welfare since that time this is still true). Always in Disciplines, it was said, there was some query on this question such as the one in the Discipline then being considered: "Are Friends who are in need of material assistance duly relieved as their cases require? Are they helped in securing education for their children?" This obligation was put fully and clearly before us in that newsletter. How the needed money was raised is not mentioned, though raised it must have been since the matter does not appear again in newsletters or minutes.

At last in March, 1946, half a year after the end of the war with Japan, AFSC gave up its CPS camps. The Mennonites and Brethren continued theirs another year until Selective Service ended them in March, 1947. Some of the men now in our Meeting spent years of their lives in CPS camps; Fritz Kaufhold four years before he joined the jaundice unit; the last of Joe Havens' four years of C.O. service was at the Brattleboro Retreat where there was real need for what he could give. Curtis Johnson was less fortunate. He was in four different CPS camps spending in all four and a half years. The recovery of civil rights for C.O.s is another and long story in which the Meeting had no part.

One could go on telling of the various ways our Meeting was involved, both through individuals and as a meeting, in this important matter of conscientious objectors; some of them in little ways like Christmas boxes, letters to those in prison, CPS certificates and stamps; but we must go on to other effects of the war on our Meeting, for it wrought some long-lasting changes in its structure as well as change of name.

V. War Years, part 2

Whatever may be said against war, and Friends have testified against it for more than three hundred years, it must be admitted that war acts as a powerful stimulant on both those who believe in its necessity and efficacy and those who think it an unmitigated and cancerous evil. All are involved; all are more active, feel more alive.

The zest of rising to emergencies certainly animated the Northampton Meeting members and attenders. They were well informed on what was happening, for in that first year Walter Kotschnig with his Austrian background, political knowledge and Quaker convictions was in charge of the after-meeting weekly discussions. Also during the war years and their immediate aftermath we Valley Friends had more opportunity to hear and talk with concerned and "weighty" Friends than in any other period of our history. Some of these Friends had recently visited Quaker centers in Europe where work for refugees was going on. All were in touch with one or more special phases of Quaker thought or activity. A partial list of those who visited us during those years includes Clarence Pickett, Albert Martin, Paul Comly French, Augustus Murray, Howard Kershner, Thomas Kelly, Homer Morris, George Selleck, Robert Leach, Frederick Libby, Douglas Steere, Walter Miles, Henry Cadbury, Raymond Newton, Guy Solt, Bernard Waring, Jesse Holmes, and Rufus Jones. Terry quotes in her diary a provocative Rufus remark: "We specialize in the wholly impossible. If you have a divine idea, go ahead and work it out."

Our Meeting's earliest concern, and a concern that is still with us, was that for refugees. Many agencies were working at this task. The need was great and the time short. President Neilson of Smith was deeply concerned. By the fall of 1938, in part through his influence, a refugee scholar was on each of the faculties at Smith, Mount Holyoke and Amherst respectively and a few refugee students were enrolled in each college. At Smith \$4000 was raised for them. At Mount Holyoke the College assigned two of its foreign student scholarships to them. I do not know how many refugee students Amherst was able to take at this time – two at least, for the Wilsons brought two sometimes to Meeting. (When one of them applied for membership, the husband and wife appointed to visit him gave a divided report. The husband felt that the root of the matter was not in the applicant; the wife contended that even if true, as it might well be, the applicant needed our help which could best be given by making him one of us. The Meeting accepted him. In the end both were proved right. The Meeting was able to help the youth during his college years; long after he had left this section of the country, he resigned his membership.)

Late in 1938 when Albert Martin as a representative of Fellowship Council talked to the Northampton group about organizing a monthly meeting, he also spoke as a representative of

AFSC to the larger group gathered in South Hadley about the refugee problem, presenting vividly the plight of Jews in Germany and Austria (Italy was not yet in the picture) and the pressing need to find employment and housing for them so that our government would allow them to come to this country before it was too late. He called our attention also to those young people whose education had been cut short because of their Jewish inheritance and the need to make places for more than the handful already accepted. His talk made a deep impression and local Friends began to consider sponsoring some family recommended by AFSC. I say began because from that time on, all through the Forties and on into the Fifties, we seemed always to be considering one family or another whose papers had been sent us by AFSC. But always caution, supported by an occasional account of an experience some sponsor had had – like that of heavy medical expenses or job difficulties or psychiatric troubles – held us back.

Though the seed sown at that meeting brought no family to us, it nonetheless produced fruit, thanks to our Meeting, though the Meeting never knew it. It grew in the mind and heart of Mary Hussey, a Mount Holyoke professor who had taken her doctor's degree in Germany and loved the country and the people. Her devotion to what she felt was the real Germany made her want to help as many victims of an insane despot as possible. On a Sunday after Albert Martin's talk in South Hadley, while Mary Hussey and I were driving back from Meeting, she told me that in the quiet of Meeting she had become convinced of what must be done in order to increase the number of student refugees at Mount Holyoke. She said I must present the general idea at faculty meeting the very next night and ask that a committee be appointed to find ways and means for taking more refugee students. There was a reason, valid to both, why she could not propose the idea herself. So I did as she suggested. The proposal was accepted and a committee provided for.

The hard-working committee found homes among faculty and townspeople where students could have bed and breakfast and it conducted a fund-raising campaign so that the students could have lunch and dinner in the dormitories. Textbooks and pocket-money were also provided by this fund. The College gave full tuition and remitted all laboratory and other fees. Student cooperation was generous and imaginative: class and club dues were remitted, subscriptions given to student publications and everything possible done to make the girls feel an integral part of the college. With a single exception the students taken at this time were selected for us by the Institute of International Education in New York City, girls who had already had two years of university work in Europe, thus making it possible for us to double the number of students we could rescue, for rescue it was. When the first group graduated we took on a second. Excellent students all of them; three went on to their Ph.D.'s.

This is a considerable digression from the history of our Meeting. It is included not just because of the Meeting's unknown share in it, but also because it is such a good illustration, really a case history of the spear-heading function of Friends. Such things must happen in many meetings. The insight that comes out of the silence is shared either in Meeting or later. When it reaches a wider public and is acted on, its origin no longer matters and is quite properly forgotten.

The part the deep silence of a meeting for worship plays cannot be overemphasized. I had an illustration of it myself only a few years later. It will be remembered that after Pearl Harbor and our entrance into the war (December 1941), our government set up so-called relocation camps for Japanese and Japanese-Americans, nisei, who lived on the Pacific coast. There were, naturally, young people among them who had been students in coastal colleges and universities near their homes. Moved to the interior, they could no longer continue their education. It was about one of them that I received a letter in the spring of 1942 from a person unknown to me asking if Mount Holyoke could find a place for the student whose excellent academic record was enclosed. I took the letter to our Board of Admissions, learned that the ranks for the fall were already full and the waiting list prohibitively long. I was sorry, of course, but there seemed to be nothing more I

could do. I wrote a letter to the inquirer explaining the situation. What became of that student I don't know. So far as I was aware I never gave the matter another thought until in the fall of that year (1942) soon after the colleges had opened as I sat in the profound silence of our Northampton Meeting there suddenly came to me, complete and whole, the recognition that students in our relocation camps, except for the fact that their lives were not in danger, were in the same situation as those German, Austrian and Italian students about whose education we had been so much concerned. This sudden illumination startled and shocked me. It seemed impossible that I or any of my colleagues should have failed to recognize the parallel. The idea when I presented it at our next faculty meeting met a less enthusiastic response than had the first. However, a somewhat similar plan was adopted, though on a modified scale, and a small number of nisei were enrolled. Like the European students they proved to be a distinguished group, an honor to the college.

Returning to our Meeting and its wartime activities as recorded in our minutes, we come on the item of a hundred dollars given to the Cummington Hostel for Refugees. When we first heard of this hostel we had asked Bill Wilson, our clerk at the time, to find out if we could help in any way. He did so and told us that though the residents had planted a subsistence garden and were promised a small subsidy they needed to become self-supporting. We might help them, he thought, because several had craft skills but no tools. They needed what they called a toymaking machine. Our money went for its purchase. The place became known as the Cummington Craft Hostel. Our minutes speak of arrangements to be made for the students to visit the hostel and become acquainted with its residents.

Another project for refugees was less fortunate. It was to establish a small eating-house on the Berkshire Trail at Cummington and put a certain Austrian couple in charge. Again Bill Wilson was asked to investigate. His report highlights the anti-Semitism that was growing as the number of refugees from the European totalitarian countries increased. He learned through the local minister, who was himself sympathetic to the project, that the Cummington townspeople would not take kindly to more refugees in their community.

This spreading miasma of prejudice caused our Meeting to organize a committee, the twofold purpose of which was first to inform ourselves about the Jewish faith and how very much we had in common with it and also about the great contributions the American Jews had made to our country. Armed with this ammunition we would then be better able to proceed to our second and main purpose, that of combatting the prejudice. Rabbi Fishman, one of our speakers, helped us here. There was some outspoken and more underground objection in our college communities to the appointment of refugee scholars to our faculties. Their families, too, were not always welcome. In South Hadley one of these professors was unable to buy land in a desirable building development, and the treatment his children received from other children in the public school caused him to send them to a private school in another town. Our Meeting was fortunate in having almost from the beginning two Jewish attenders from whom we learned much. One of them joined the Meeting; the other has remained a devout Jew while continuing her fellowship with us. Only lack of transportation keeps her from worshipping with us more often.

After our own country had entered the War our Meeting had to deal with another racial prejudice, that against anyone of Japanese extraction. It did not outlast the War, but during the War it flourished under the pretext of a security measure. Colleges that took in Japanese-American students were suspect. A no less body than the U. S. Navy stipulated that those colleges acting as hosts to the Waves, (Mount Holyoke was one of them) should not take any more students of Japanese origin. Our Meeting appointed a committee made up of a representative from each of our colleges to consider what sort of a protest should be made and to keep an eye out for further evidence of this prejudice. Though I was on that committee I do not remember what, if anything, we did, and the minutes record nothing. The end of the War and the absence of any defection

of Japanese in the detention camps or elsewhere seem to have wiped out that prejudice. But while the War lasted it was virulent in some quarters. In our valley the Northampton Post of the American Legion was busy spreading it. Legion members stirred up a small tempest in the town when President Davis, who had succeeded Neilson at Smith, refused to dismiss a Japanese national, a professor on the Smith faculty. Some of the townspeople widened their protest, objecting to the number of foreign students on the campus and criticizing the College for allowing a pacifist group like Quakers to assemble on its campus. President Davis in telling about it said we should be proud of their condemnation. Smith College handled the whole matter so well that after considerable discussion the Meeting decided against any action on its part.

The Greenfield and some of the Northampton members worked in perhaps the only refugee field not open to the criticism of prejudice. Much of what they did, though usually reported in our minutes, was sponsored by the Netherlands Aid Society. Mary Champney knew from her AFSC work in Amsterdam some of the many Dutch refugees stranded in New York City because they could bring so little money with them when they fled from Holland. She determined that their children should have a summer holiday in the country away from the hot city. So for the summer of 1941 she, Florence Fawcett, Mildred Raible and Elined Kotschnig undertook to find homes in the Greenfield and Northampton areas for the children the Netherlands Aid Society sent them and some others as well. The minutes say they found homes for 45 children that summer. On the list of Meeting concerns for 1942 the second one reads, "A concern for the summer vacations of refugees living in our large cities. Last year we were able to place over forty children in homes in our Connecticut Valley." Yet in a report on the Dutch children Mary Champney lists only 24. She said that they all benefited and that one child gained thirty pounds.

For the summer of 1942 another plan was tried. Someone made a large house in Heath available. Heath is high and cool, a much better place for a summer holiday than the Valley, and camp life would be more of a change. The children came in small groups and for a shorter time. Our Allison Kaufhold in the first year of her marriage had charge of one of these groups. When her group went back to the city, another group came and another leader took over.

It is no longer possible to recall all the individual enterprises that stemmed from the Meeting's constant concern to serve during these years. Terry in her diary speaks of a group that husked corn for a Polish widow. The minutes tell of fifteen dollars given to Marion Kumin to buy yarn for a group of Athol women she had interested in knitting for the AFSC and of the fine array of knitted garments they produced. Smaller sums were given for the same purpose to groups of women in Northampton and South Hadley. Food packages went in ever-increasing number across the ocean. At one time our Newsletter carried the query, "Have you sent a food package lately?" Massive clothing collections were also characteristic of the time. Centers for clothing collections were in Greenfield, Amherst and South Hadley. Apparently no record was kept of the total amount shipped.

After Pearl Harbor we experienced the restrictions usual to a country at war, such as food, gas and oil rationing, travel limitation and lack of domestic service. Students filled in gaps in domestic service at the college. To conserve fuel Christmas vacations were extended. In the summer many students took jobs in factories and chemical plants. Others studied all summer in order to graduate a year earlier. Mount Holyoke was one of the colleges that held a full summer session for those who wanted to accelerate. Looking back I have the feeling that I was always putting on academic robes for commencement processions. We must have graduated students three or four times a year. It was a breathless sort of life. Everything was geared to the War.

The disruption of college faculties and staffs was another characteristic of the time. This person or that would be requisitioned by some agency connected with the government and an occasional individual would leave in response to a call for relief work. Our Meeting suffered crippling losses

from both the above sources, especially in the Northampton area. As early as 1940 Burns Chalmers asked for and received a leave of absence to work for the AFSC in unoccupied France. In Terry's diary under the date of December 9, 1940 we read that a letter from Burns Chalmers in Toulouse had been read in chapel that morning. She goes on to speak of his influence even when absent. His work with the AFSC evidently colored his thinking, for in 1944 he became a full member of the Meeting. Up to that time he was listed as an associate member, retaining his membership in the Congregational church. Burns' action in joining the Meeting and his known devotion to the AFSC work somewhat prepared us for his decision to leave us for Philadelphia and a permanent position with AFSC. Though the Chalmers did not actually leave Northampton until the end of 1946, Burns was away a good deal and the knowledge of their imminent departure was a double loss.

We had earlier suffered two other double losses. One of them was probably independent of the war, for Dan Test would doubtless have left Williston Academy for Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, war or no war. He and Polly had both come from the general Philadelphia area. They would be near their families and old friends. From Penn Charter Dan went to Westtown where he has been principal for many years. Though the Tests left us in 1943, Dan retained membership in our Meeting until after the merger in which, as representative of our Northampton Meeting, he had taken great interest. Dan and Polly's Quaker background and knowledge of Quaker ways had been a steadying influence during the infancy of our Meeting.

The other double loss came the year after the Tests left in 1944. Walter Kotschnig was called to Washington by the State Department to work on political planning. He is still there. Elined Kotschnig, more than anyone else, had been responsible for starting our Meeting and had worked for it unceasingly. She was our first clerk and gave the Meeting direction along lines of spiritual enrichment, education in Quaker testimonies and practices, and public service. Thus within six years the Meeting had lost all its charter members; the three students had, of course, graduated and gone away.

Meeting losses were not limited to charter members nor can they all be charged to the War. In 1944, among other changes, Terry went to Chester, Pennsylvania, working also at Pendle Hill; Elliott Fleckles became a chaplain in the U.S. Army; the Raibles went to Dallas, Texas where they still are; Bill Scott left Amherst to teach in a junior college at Deep Springs, California; and the Elkintons left Northfield for Philadelphia. Fortunately there were gains as well as losses. While Northampton was losing those who had formed and bulwarked our Meeting, South Hadley was receiving reinforcements. Two appointments to the faculty of Mount Holyoke brought two strong Quaker families to South Hadley, Manford and Agnes Kuhn with their five children and David and Margaret Holden. Agnes and Margaret came of Quaker stock; Manford and David were sturdy convinced Quakers. Both families joined our Meeting and took an active part in its work.

Far-reaching as these changes were, the biggest change that the War brought to our Meeting was caused by gas rationing. The majority of us were on the most restricted ration, the so-called A-ration. Consequently those living at a distance from Northampton could not attend Meetings every week. We saved our gas for the monthly business meeting which moved about from center to center, but always followed the same pattern: a Meeting for Worship in the morning, eating together the lunches we had brought, and then the meeting for business in the afternoon. On the intervening Sundays there developed in some of the communities small worship meetings held in the homes of members. In the annual mimeographed account of the year just past addressed to "Members and Friends of the Northampton Monthly Meeting, near and far" and sent early in 1944 we read that "Our meetings are necessarily smaller in size this year because of gas rationing, but we are glad that small groups have been meeting independently in Amherst, Greenfield and South Hadley." A little later in the year the following item appeared in the just-started bi-monthly Newsletter: "Friends

are holding meetings of their own these days. Meetings at South Hadley are held every Sunday morning at 9:30 in Mary Hussey's home; those at Amherst are held every other Tuesday ... at the Kentfields' in South Amherst. (Transportation furnished – call one of the clerks)" During the summer of 1944, as in previous summers, no meetings were held in Northampton, but the June 29 Newsletter announced that "Regular meetings are held every Sunday except business meeting days at 10:30 in Helen Griffith's home in South Hadley; every Thursday at 10 a.m. in Greenfield and every other week at the Kentfields' in South Amherst. (Call the clerk for day and time.)" From the January 1945 Newsletter we learn that "The Amherst Friends are now meeting each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Louise and Eugene Wilson, 50 Woodside Ave. Transportation difficulties have forced this change." In the very next newsletter, February-March 1945, for the first time the three worship meetings, Northampton, Amherst and South Hadley, appear at the top of the newsletter with the time and place of their meetings. Because Mary Champney's studio was then not heated, Greenfield meetings were only in the summer except business meetings for which Lucia Russell opened her lovely home.

The matter of a change in name for our Meeting followed naturally from the diversity of regular meeting places. Discussion of it first appears in the minutes of the August 1944 meeting. "There was some discussion of the problem of the name of our Monthly Meeting in connection with our shifting center of activity. This concern was referred to future meetings." The result of these "future meetings" appears nearly a year later in the heading of the June-July Newsletter for 1945, "Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends." The letter itself begins as follows: "Your attention is called to the change in name of the Monthly Meeting. The suggestion of a change in name was approved in April. In June at the business meeting held at Happy Hill Farm in Montague, it was adopted as indicated above. This change was made to avoid confusion with the names of the various groups which go to make up the Monthly Meeting." The new name marked the change that had taken place in the shape and organization of our Meeting. We followed the new pattern for fourteen years until in 1959 we tried what we thought was a daring experiment, "consolidation."

In looking back over the material in this chapter on our Meeting and the War, I realize that I should have included mention of the letter we wrote President Roosevelt at our March 1943 business meeting protesting the food blockade and also the 125 word telegram drafted by Walter Kotschnig and sent the President at our May meeting of the same year. The telegram dealt with the crisis of the coal strike and "humbly" suggested that the deadlock in negotiations might be broken by the temporary addition of three justices from the Supreme Court to the War Labor Board "to adjudicate together with regular members of the Board the conflict between the miners and their employers." True to Quaker tradition our little Meeting never hesitated to speak its mind to those in power. In this connection I might have mentioned a pamphlet widely read in Quaker circles, *A Call to Peace Now* by Dorothy Hutchinson. Our Meeting supplied all its members with copies so that they might take part in the after-Meeting discussions of it. This was in 1943 in the middle of the War when feelings ran high. A point of view more unpopular with the general public than that expressed in the pamphlet would be hard to find.

It must not be supposed, however, that all our thoughts and activities in these war years centered in the War or were affected by it. The next chapter will deal with Quaker concerns, events and activities unconnected with the contest that was being so violently waged. When that chapter is written we can at long last move into the late Forties and early Fifties. Please have patience with your prolix and laggardly historian! The end, if not in sight, is just over the horizon.

VI. Concerning Matters Domestic (1939 - 1949)

Our Northampton Monthly Meeting was one of a growing number of so-called United Monthly Meetings, a term already defined in Chapter III as a meeting made up of members from different Yearly Meetings. Perhaps it would be more exact to say from yearly meetings operating under different disciplines, for all the Yearly Meetings that belong to what was formerly called the Five Years Meeting (the name was changed in 1965 to Friends United Meeting) were in substantial agreement on statements of doctrine in their respective disciplines. But the disciplines (more often called *Faith and Practice*) that stemmed from the unfortunate nineteenth century divisions among American Quakers tended to perpetuate their differences.

The rise in the twentieth century of United Meetings like ours testified to the fact that for many Friends the old disrupting differences did not too much matter. They did not touch the heart of Quaker faith. The Friends in these United Meetings found that they could work happily together and, without knowing it, were part of the groundswell of union among Friends that was beginning to be felt and that is still bringing together some of the groups severed in the nineteenth century, though as yet by no means all.

The Northampton Meeting, not being connected with any Yearly Meeting, was an independent meeting sponsored by Friends General Conference. It was free to make its own decisions in matters of church government, free to pick and choose from the various disciplines with which the members were most familiar, free to form their own queries if they so desired. Making such decisions provided a liberal education in Quaker ideas and practices for our Meeting in its early years. For instance, the pros and cons of birthright membership were considered at length. Some felt that just as children are members of the family into which they have been born, so as children of God they are members of the religious group to which their parents belong. Others felt that birthright membership was contrary to the spirit of Friends as making for exclusiveness, giving the child a sense of special privilege. Though the word "birthright" was retained for a time, the decision agreed upon altered its usage. Indeed it was very similar to the one recently approved for our revised New England Yearly Meeting discipline, *Faith and Practice*. If the parents of a child, at least one of them a member of the Meeting and the other concurring, ask that the child be enrolled as a member, the child shall be so enrolled during childhood and early youth, but when he arrives at maturity must decide whether to join the Meeting in the regular way or to be removed from the list of members. Of course there was the inevitable discussion as to what the age of maturity might be; it differs so with the individual. Twenty-one was spoken of as an outside limit, but no decision was reached other than the general principle. Up until 1945, when our Meeting joined with other groups to form the united New England Yearly Meeting of Friends and adopted a common nomenclature, these young people were loosely referred to by our Meeting as "birthright" members though in the membership lists they appear separately as "Children of Members."

The term the New England Yearly Meeting had used for this group, "associate members," was one that the Northampton Meeting had used for a very different type of membership, a term used by us especially during the war years for those who wanted to be identified with Friends without breaking off connections with their own church. Actually Rufus Jones in 1929 had devised an organization without officers or regular meetings, a fellowship of those interested in keeping in touch with certain Quaker ideas and ideals, the Wider Quaker Fellowship (WQF). It includes seekers as well as members of other churches. For the seekers it has been a sort of halfway house on the road to membership in the Society of Friends. A small fee covers the sending of timely material, often a recent Pendle Hill pamphlet. A sponsoring committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting selects and sends the material and answers any questions the members may ask. During the twenty years that Emma Cadbury was chairman she carried on an enormous correspondence with the seekers

among its members, a source of strength to many. In our most recent meeting directory (1965) there are three WQF members listed; two of them are in everything but name active members of the Meeting; the third lives at too great a distance to be with us. But earlier, judging by a list of WQF members for 1942 - 43 appearing by itself in the back of a membership record book, the nineteen listed had no connection with our Meeting. Those who wanted connection with our Meeting but not full membership are listed in that same record book as associate members. At first their membership was for one year only. Each year each associate member was approached. Occasionally the associates felt ready to make application for full membership, occasionally they dropped out entirely, but most often they continued as associate members. There were Friends, too, who preferred this category, wanting to keep their membership in the meeting from which they had come. Marion Dodd, a New York Friend, founder and owner of the Hampshire Bookshop, was one of these. We occasionally held meetings for worship in her bookshop, but otherwise saw little of her. Yet she kept her associate membership with us till her death. The practice of yearly inquiry as to the associate's wish for the coming year gradually fell into disuse though no decision to drop it appears in the minutes. This type of membership is recognized in our revised (1966) New England Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice* under the equally accurate title of "affiliated membership."

Two other forms of membership were adopted in the early days, dual membership and sojourning membership. The question of dual membership came up when an associate member who was pastor of a Unitarian church in the Valley and his wife applied for full membership. The wife had been working with Friends in the summer vacation placement in the Greenfield area of refugee children from New York City. They were both ardent pacifists. Naturally belief in pacifism was not considered sufficient grounds for accepting them as members. But when at the October 1943 Monthly Meeting the husband read a statement of their faith, doubts were resolved and they were warmly welcomed into full membership. They left the next year for a Unitarian church in Texas. It may be that the knowledge they might be going to new territory made them the more anxious to have a membership that would show where they stood on various controversial matters.

So far as our Meeting went, our action established recognition of dual membership. A few years later it was applied for by a woman, head of one of our Valley schools and, again, by an ordained Congregational minister who until his retirement taught in the department of religion in one of our colleges. His name remains on our list. But there can be no others, for the New England Yearly Meeting discipline, *Faith and Practice*, under which we operate, does not recognize dual membership.

Sojourning membership, however, it does recognize, describing it in this way:

A Monthly Meeting may accept as a sojourning member a person maintaining membership in another Friends Meeting who wishes to be associated with the local Monthly Meeting while residing temporarily within its limits. His wishes in this connection should be set forth by a minute from the home Meeting. Such membership should not be counted in statistical reports, and ceases when the member leaves the limits of the Meeting.

At first the Northampton Meeting made use of this membership. In the 1940 list of members one Mount Holyoke student is so listed. She helped with the first small First Day School. In the next year's list the names of two Smith girls are added to hers. But since that time this potentially useful membership has been generally overlooked.

Perhaps at first the overlooking was because there was no felt need for the category. Any student could become an associate member of the Meeting. The students played an important part. Of the eight founding members three were Smith College students; of the three original officers – clerk, assistant clerk, and treasurer – one, the assistant clerk, was a student. When

the young Meeting formed a committee – they formed committees only as need arose – there was usually at least one student on it. The need for a committee to handle membership was recognized early. Within a year the eight founding members had accepted fourteen into Monthly Meeting membership. Some of these were seasoned Friends from groups across the river, happy to have a Monthly Meeting within reach; three were students joining the Meeting by conviction. On this first membership committee there were three students, representing Smith, Mount Holyoke and Amherst. They were appointed to keep in touch with interested students in their respective colleges. No pressure was to be exerted – quite the contrary. We learn from the minutes that while students were welcomed as associate members, they could not apply for full membership until their senior year. It was not a move to be made hastily or without considerable knowledge of what it was they were joining. That this regulation seemed too rigid to the students and to some of the adults as well is not surprising. The matter was taken up at the February-March 1945 Monthly Meeting and a committee appointed with student and adult membership to consider it further and to bring in recommendations.

Unfortunately we find no minute of the report made by this committee nor of recommendations presented and presumably acted upon. Such lapses which occasionally occur in our records are doubtless due to the many different writers, some unfamiliar with minute-taking, and drafted, for the day only, in the absence of the recording clerk. Even the name of the scribe is sometimes omitted. So though we do not know how this particular matter was settled, we do know that the membership committee had a busy time.

Many of the new members were Friends from across the river living in different communities. For instance, the Fleckles family from Mount Hermon joined the Meeting in 1939, the Wilsons from Amherst, Mary Champney from Greenfield and Helen Griffith from South Hadley became members in 1940. All had been active in the Meeting before actually joining it. Thus we were faced, as we still are, with the problem of geographic spread. Another problem we still struggle with was with us early – how to combine a student-centered meeting with a family-centered one. At the very beginning the Northampton Meeting was local to Northampton, the Tests from Easthampton the only ones not living in the town and, except for the Tests, all members were connected with Smith College. It was primarily a college meeting, student-centered. In the first year as an established Monthly Meeting (1939 - 1940) it considered the needs of these two so different groups. Both should be able to take part in the important Meeting for Business. It had been held every other month except for the summer when the colleges were closed. So the Meeting devised a schedule for 1940 - 41 to answer both needs. The regular every other month meetings were peripatetic, rotating among the communities involved, giving each a meeting for business in its area, a pattern that was extended and proved very useful later when gas was rationed. Since the students could rarely attend these faraway meetings, brief business meetings were held on Sunday after the meeting for worship on the in-between months. This enabled the students to take part and to learn the Quaker way of conducting business. The schedule the Meeting made out for 1940 - 41 follows: October, Mount Hermon at the Fleckleses'; November, Smith College faculty room; December, Amherst at the Wilsons'; January, Smith College faculty room; February, South Hadley at Helen Griffith's; March, Smith College faculty room; April, Easthampton at Williston Academy with the Tests; May, Smith College faculty room; June, Montague at the Dirkses' Happy Hill Farm together with the Connecticut Valley Association. The minutes of 1940 - 41 show that some changes were made, but the schedule proposed for the next year was followed exactly.

Another effect of the growth of the Meeting was the formation of the Oversight Committee, a committee with duties similar to and even more extended than those of our present Meeting on Ministry and Counsel which later took its place. At first our Meeting felt no need for a special group to look after its welfare, spiritual and material. All members, it was decided, should consider

themselves Meeting Overseers and bring any matter that needed attention before the Meeting as a whole. But with the rapid growth in numbers it became apparent that what was everybody's business was nobody's business. Responsibility must be localized in a smaller group. So at the beginning of the college year in 1941 it was agreed that a committee to oversee the Meeting be set up. Also its make-up was determined, two men and two women, and the term of service, four years except for the first appointees whose terms should be staggered so that in the future only one new member would come on the committee a year, thus ensuring continuity. Three were named to bring nominations for the new and so important committee. The one stumbling block, on which there was no agreement, was what to call it.

At a special meeting the very next week the committee was organized, but it remained nameless until the December 1941 meeting, when "Oversight Committee" was agreed upon as being closer to the original idea of Overseers while not excluding the functions of the more specialized Ministry and Worship or Ministry and Counsel, names usually introduced by the words "Meeting of" or "Meeting on" instead of "Committee of," and its chairman called a "clerk." Our Meeting, however, continued to use the name Oversight Committee for nearly ten years after we had become part of the reunited New England Yearly Meeting of Friends which used "Meeting on Ministry and Counsel."

Why we were so slow in conforming to the usage of the Yearly Meeting we were part of I have no idea. Perhaps it was a gesture to indicate our cherished freedom of choice; perhaps it was just habit and not having our attention called to the use of "Ministry and Counsel" in both our Yearly and Quarterly Meetings.

Returning to the early development of our Oversight Committee, we find that at that same name-choosing session the clerk of the Meeting was made an *ex officio* member, a time-saving addition since the clerk needs to know both the thinking and the decisions of the committee. When gas rationing in World War II prevented us from meeting all together more than once a month, the Oversight Committee was reconstituted on the basis of a representative from each sectional worship group – Northampton, Greenfield, Amherst, South Hadley, Springfield (briefly) and later Great Barrington. Two more years and it was decided that the senior member of the committee should act automatically as chairman. Actually our Oversight Committee soon either forgot about its senior-member ruling or else found it impractical in a meeting where there is such a rapid change of personnel as in ours. Another early decision which might have worked had it not been lost sight of as time went on was to give the duties of the nominating committee to the Oversight Committee as being the group that knew more members of the Meeting and more about them than any other.

Perusing the minutes one notices that many organizational details that had been thoughtfully developed were short-lived. The reason is not far to seek. Inaccessibility of records, for they had to be kept in a bank to ensure safety; frequency in change of clerks, many appointments were for one year only; and our fluctuating membership, a condition inevitable in our school and college environment, all contributed. A clerk of our Meeting in the early Fifties, who as Meeting recorder had access to the minutes of previous years, began his term of office by going through earlier minutes to find out just what policies had been adopted and later forgotten. As a result of his investigation the Meeting decided to keep carbons of all minutes for ready reference. But that was before we had a meetinghouse or any other central place to store the duplicates. In theory they were to be passed on from clerk to clerk, but in practice the plan didn't work and this practice too was discontinued.

Such experiences as these may have made us aware of the value of Yearly Meeting disciplines, determined as they are by the consensus of all the constituent monthly meetings. It is good to be able to find sections on marriage procedure, funeral and memorial services as well as those on organization and business procedure. Our Meeting certainly would have welcomed a discipline of

its own when in its second year it was asked by a Pennsylvania meeting to take charge of the wedding of one of that Meeting's members, David Elkinton, residing at the time in our area and attending our Meeting. He and his bride, Mary Dunham, were both connected with the Youth Hostel in Northfield. We followed the procedure of the discipline recommended to us by our guide and sponsor, the Friends General Conference. We learned of the care and time involved in the conduct of a Friends' wedding – the letters written, the interviews held separately and together with the two concerned, the committees to look after various details like preparation of the marriage certificate, arrangements for the Meeting for Worship at which the marriage would take place.

This first marriage, though under the care of our Meeting, was not held in Northampton. The next year one of our members, Reba Jane Tyson, was married under the care of the groom's meeting, the meeting at Haddonfield, New Jersey where the couple planned to live. The third wedding was the first Friends' wedding held in the little chapel of the Smith College library where our regular meetings for worship were held. The bride, Elizabeth Polk, was a member of the Smith College Italian department. She had joined our Meeting by conviction preparatory to her marriage. The groom, Russell Freeman, was a member of the Syracuse Meeting.

All marriages of members were recorded and letters sent to the couples from the Meeting welcoming them into the new life they were entering upon and assuring them of the Meeting's warm interest in their welfare. Whoever wrote those letters was kept busy in the early days. Four weddings were recorded for 1942 including that of Fritz Kaufhold married in Erie, Michigan, to Allison Kirtland, her Presbyterian minister officiating. Another member who had joined our Meeting in her student days was married that same summer by a justice of the peace. A still different pattern was that of a Quaker-Episcopal wedding held at Mary Champney's beautiful Sherwood. It is not in our records, for neither bride nor groom was a Meeting member or even a Friend. The bride was a niece of the Dirkses who were in charge of the wedding. The service was a combination of Episcopal and Quaker, the officiating clergyman also a member of Wider Quaker Fellowship.

In later years, especially after Russell Brooks moved into our area, a Friends pastor might participate in the service, but we have no record of such in the earlier years. That is probably because the Northampton Meeting was oriented toward Philadelphia rather than toward New England.

Though we were careful to follow the established forms in the marriage ceremony, always a part of a Meeting for Worship, we enjoyed considerable eclecticism in some other matters. What our austere 17th century Quaker ancestors would have thought of the special services we held at Easter and Christmas is easy to imagine. One of our founding members, brought up in the Anglican church, felt that the Society of Friends tended to close its mind to the beauty and spiritual possibilities of special services on special days. She pointed out their special value for our children. When Easter approached, the Meeting therefore decided to open our service with some of the triumphant Easter hymns before centering down to our communal silence. On Christmas Sunday of that same year, 1940, the service centered on the two new babies of the year, the older children singing to them and giving them flowers. A minute about it reads: "The Meeting welcomed them into religious fellowship and the spirit of the babe of Bethlehem was over all." So long as the one who felt strongly about having special services at the Easter and Christmas Meetings for Worship was with us, the practice was continued. I know the children enjoyed the services and I think most of us did, too. But with her departure no one volunteered to carry on the work and the custom died a natural death.

In the period we are considering another activity no longer indulged in concerned us, a study of queries and an attempt to formulate some that might fit the special needs of our Meeting. Our Quaker forebears were sound psychologists. They knew how much more evocative a question is than a statement. The question arouses the mind; a statement may leave it inert. We studied the

queries in various disciplines and in other collections, surprised at the range of human life they covered. Here is a practical, searching one from an 1819 Ohio Yearly Meeting discipline:

Are Friends careful to live within the bounds of their circumstances, and to avoid involving themselves in business beyond their ability to manage? Are they just in their dealings, and punctual in complying with their engagements? And where any give reasonable grounds for fear in these respects, is due care extended to them?

To get an idea of the range, contrast that with this modern one by Gilbert Kilpack.

Are Friends as sensitive to the awful spiritual sickness of our world as they are to its social disorders?

We collected and discussed queries that certain United Monthly Meetings had adopted. In our library vertical file are some of those collected at that time, leaflets or pamphlets printed by meetings at Hartford, Madison, Radnor and others. We also tried to formulate some queries of our own. This one is as timely today as it was then:

Do we have sympathy and understanding for those about us who hold opinions very different from our own?

When we began, we had talked of assembling and printing a set of queries for our own use as the meetings mentioned above had done, but as time went on and talk about the union of all New England Friends in a single Yearly Meeting grew, the need for our own collection seemed less evident; that is, if we decided to join any such merger. The story of how the Northampton Meeting attacked that question will be told in the next chapter.

VII. After a Hundred Years

The religious ferment of the 19th century spelled disaster for American Friends by so emphasizing doctrinal differences among them that they broke up into various groups. British Friends, though shaken by the same divisive storms, somehow managed to weather them and with only one or two minor breaks continued as a single Yearly Meeting, the meeting called London Yearly Meeting, though it included Friends from all parts of England.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, on the other hand, failed to apply the Quaker belief in waiting till a reconciling understanding could be developed. The controversy was between the evangelistic movement that was sweeping the country, eloquently supported among Quakers by the preaching and writing of a British Friend, Joseph John Gurney, and the Quaker doctrine of the Inward Light, eloquently supported by an American Friend, Elias Hicks. Howard Brinton describes the opposition as that between the outward and the inward elements in religion, the Bible, the final word of God, an outward authority as compared to God's ever-continuing revelation, the Inward Light. There were other disagreements – the assumption of the evangelical city elders that they could control what was said in Yearly Meeting and by whom, was naturally resented. The break, when it came, centered about a person, as it did in New England fourteen years later. Elias Hicks was prevented from speaking at their meeting, though he came with a proper minute from his own meeting. He was a kindly Long Island Friend, 79 years old at the time, a powerful itinerant preacher with a large following. What he preached was first, last, and always the authority of the Inward Light.

The action of the Philadelphia elders was opposed by the majority of the members not so much for the doctrine involved as for the right of free speech in Meeting. They resented the authoritarian attitude of the elders in presuming to dictate. Instead of trying to find a basis for reconciliation, the objecting two-thirds withdrew and formed a second Yearly Meeting. Both called themselves

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; the third that remained, the evangelical city group, assumed the label “Orthodox,” thus putting the dispute on theological grounds. The dissenting two-thirds, largely living in small towns and on outlying farms, were called “Hicksites.” It is ironic that so kindly and peace-loving a man should have his name associated with such an unquakerly affair as the tragic separation of 1827 - 1828.

In New England the break centered on two persons, John Wilbur, a plain Rhode Island Friend, and the brilliant English Friend already mentioned, Joseph John Gurney. Gurney had spent three years (1837 - 1840) in this country visiting meetings everywhere and had gathered a great following. The majority of the New England Yearly Meeting’s six thousand members belonged in it. It is easy to imagine how they felt when in the 1842 Yearly Meeting John Wilbur openly denounced Gurney’s ideas about the final authority of the Bible, the necessity of conversion, and other matters as he had been doing in New England at large and even in England itself. Members were greatly disturbed and wanted to have him disowned. Such a procedure seemed impossible at first, for his Monthly Meeting upheld him. Various committees were formed to deal with the situation. Finally his Monthly Meeting was dissolved by the Quarterly Meeting to which it belonged. Its members were then transferred to another Monthly Meeting which in 1843 disowned John Wilbur. But the desired harmony did not result. Factions developed. In one Meeting two clerks were appointed since neither side was willing to accept the clerk of the other side.

By 1845 the factions that held with Wilbur’s ideas withdrew and formed a second Yearly Meeting. Thus Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) receiving two Epistles from New England Yearly Meeting was puzzled as to which to recognize. They discussed the question for two hours and then agreed to delay decision till the next year! In New England the question as to which was the original one that went back to 1661 wound up in the law courts where the larger Gurney meeting won. The reference to them by size was natural, for there were six thousand Gurneyites as compared to about five hundred Wilburites. Most of the meetings in the larger body became pastoral. In 1902 it allied itself with yearly meetings in the South and Midwest to form the Five Years Meeting, now called Friends United Meeting.

As time went on a third group, already described as independent meetings, began to spring up. The Friends Meeting at Cambridge was one of these, the Providence Friends Fellowship Monthly Meeting another and the three Monthly Meetings in our Connecticut Valley Association – Northampton, Hartford and New Haven.

The idea of uniting all these groups was no sudden inspiration. It had been a slow growth and was at first viewed with caution, if not suspicion. The founding of the American Friends Service Committee in 1917 during the First World War with a staff that cut across Yearly Meeting lines brought Friends together through relief work in the various centers. There was an All Friends New England Conference in 1921 and another the next year organized by the Boston branch of the AFSC.

In 1929 the Young Friends, always a dynamic group, had held an Atlantic Seaboard Conference. I have been told by two who in their youth attended it that young Friends there deplored the many divisions among Friends. The present organization of Young Friends of North America probably represents in its membership a more complete spectrum of Friends than any other Quaker organization – young people from fundamentalist groups to the most radical liberals. How many good things begin in youth groups!

Among adults, as early as 1925, a concern was expressed in the smaller Yearly Meeting that the two Yearly Meetings might ultimately be reunited. And in 1932 there was what has been described as “a cautious exchange of letters” between the two. In the 1933 Yearly Meeting at Westerly a letter was read from the larger body suggesting closer connection. A Committee on Relations with Other Meetings was appointed as a result of that letter.

By 1939 when our Northampton Monthly Meeting was organized, talk was general about New England Friends coming closer together. Our Meeting took the matter seriously. Getting acquainted with the two Yearly Meetings and with some Quarterly Meetings seemed a good beginning. In our first year as an established Monthly Meeting, 1939 - 1940, we appointed representatives to attend the two Yearly Meetings, Elined Kotschnig to the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England held at Ocean Park, Maine, and Eugene Wilson to the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends at Westerly, Rhode Island. They shared their experiences with us in their reports at our October 1940 business meeting. We were all urged to attend at least one Quarterly Meeting and given a list of their times and places. The Meeting even volunteered to help out on expenses. How many availed themselves of this privilege I do not remember and there is no record in our minutes, but I do remember the lively discussions about the wisdom of joining a larger, older, well-established body. The students in particular feared the loss of what they called our "bubbling quality" and some older members were wary lest we be involved in too much machinery and overhead. Various "weighty" Friends who had no fears about such a move came to take over the pros and cons with the Meeting as a whole and with smaller groups of us. Rufus Jones, Henry Perry, Millicent Foster, Robert Leach, Lindley Binford are among the names mentioned in our minutes. Gradually, as the vision of a united body of Friends in New England pulling together in loving fellowship became clear, we caught fire.

The independent meetings held a conference on "Closer Union of Friends in New England" at Providence in March 1942. As independent meetings they had experienced within their own organizations no difficulty in working with Friends holding different theological beliefs and were therefore predisposed to the thought of union.

It was at this point, when all those concerned seemed interested in the idea of Friends in New England drawing closer together, that our Connecticut Valley Association wrote a letter which gave the needed push to set machinery for union into motion. At our May 1942 CVA meeting in Hartford Alexander Purdy proposed sending a letter to the two Yearly Meetings telling them about the growth of Friends in the Connecticut Valley and suggesting some sort of fellowship with them. His proposal was enthusiastically taken up, the letter drafted, approved and sent. Here are its last three paragraphs:

Would some closer bond between all Friends in New England prove helpful? The question has concerned us for some time. We feel that there is life and promise in our small meetings and we would welcome the inspiration and guidance that might come through contact with older and larger bodies of Friends. At the same time we are concerned to avoid any considerable increase of overhead organization or prolonged consideration of merely formal matters.

Are there ways in which our united testimonies as Friends might be more effectively voiced in New England? We have considered the possibility of an annual conference of all Friends in New England and other suggestions for closer association. Would you be willing to appoint a small committee to consider these and other questions?

We trust that this letter will not seem presumptuous. It is written out of a living concern that the way of life we profess may be proclaimed effectively and from the conviction that we must express in our fellowship the spiritual unity which we propose as the remedy for the world's ills.

On behalf of the Connecticut Valley Association of Friends,

Jeannette H. Purdy, Recording Clerk

This letter Marjorie Williams of our Meeting heard read at the Ocean Park 1942 Yearly Meeting. She told us how warmly it was received and that the suggestion was referred to a standing

committee for further study and also how Rufus Jones in speaking about it had pointed out that inasmuch as Quakers landed first in New England, it would be appropriate for New England Quakers to lead in the work of reunion. He also stressed, she said, the fact that unity did not mean uniformity. The smaller group whose Yearly Meeting came later was equally friendly to our letter and accorded it similar treatment.

Things began to move. At a meeting of representatives of the five groups concerned – the two Yearly Meetings, the Cambridge Meeting, the Providence Friends Fellowship Monthly Meeting and our CVA with its three Monthly Meetings – a committee was formed called “Joint Committee on Closer Cooperation of Friends in New England.” Our Dan Test was chairman until he moved to Philadelphia the summer of 1943.

This committee began with a conference at Westerly in October 1942. It drew up a tentative plan for union and appointed a smaller committee of its members called the Continuation Committee to give the plan further study and make recommendations. A two-day conference in Boston and Cambridge followed in December. Recommendations were formulated and sent to all monthly meetings in New England for their consideration. Because of the length of the document Dan Test had copies made for each member of our Meeting in time for us to discuss it in detail at our April meeting. Other representatives may have done the same for their meetings.

The next step was a large general meeting at Lynn. About four hundred Friends gathered to discuss the scheme and to ask questions of the Committee. Dan Test in reporting the affair to us at our March 1943 meeting seemed very happy. All that remained, he said, was for the five groups to give their official approval and our dream of a reunited, consolidated Yearly Meeting would become a reality.

Of course, effecting such a union was not as simple as it sounded. The recommendations included various things that must be done first and that took time. Certain meetings were asked to join together forming a single Monthly Meeting belonging to a particular Quarterly Meeting of the old larger Yearly Meeting. The existing quarterly meeting structure was disturbed as little as possible. One was added, our own. In Providence, as the Providence Friends Fellowship Monthly Meeting put in its concluding minute, “. . . we now cease as a separate organization and join the stream of our activities and worship with that of Providence and Nantucket Monthly Meeting. . . .” The meeting at Cambridge, not a monthly meeting, apparently, united with the Boston Monthly Meeting, or rather its members did, and the Boston Meeting took over the name of “Friends Meeting at Cambridge.” The only change our Connecticut Valley Association had to make was to transform itself into a quarterly meeting to be known as the “Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting.” The greatest sacrifice was that of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. It gave up its status as a Yearly Meeting, transforming itself into a Quarterly Meeting. The most time-taking change was the change of name for the larger Yearly Meeting. The change had to be carefully guarded to make clear that the final united meeting was a continuation of the original 1661 Yearly Meeting, said to be the oldest in the world. Transfer of property in the three states where it had been held under the old name made for legal complications.

There were also some decisions all of us had to make. Naturally the larger meeting did not want to give up its membership in the Five Years Meeting of which it had been one of the founders. Most of the independent meetings had been fostered by Friends Fellowship Council, an arm of Friends General Conference. They would have been glad to continue their relationship with it, but numbers were against them. The future, though, was on their side, for in 1959 the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends keeping its membership in the Five Years Meeting, also affiliated with Friends General Conference.

Then there was the thorny question of choosing a common discipline under which to operate. Our meeting liked better the one the Westerly Friends were using. There were, however, valid

reasons for accepting the one used by the larger Yearly Meeting, put out by the Five Years Meeting. Not till we heard that a revision of the whole was to be made, for which our comments and suggestions would be welcome, did our Meeting feel easy about the choice. We went over the current edition with care, picking out the parts that in our opinion needed revision. These we parceled out among some of us. The assignments are listed in our minutes. We hopefully worked on them and sent them off. No further mention appears in our minutes and not much was done about them. We were disappointed but now, considering that six years of hard work were spent on our fine new discipline, *Faith and Practice* (1966), I realize that then we had neither the time nor knowledge to produce a proper discipline.

The December 1943 conference in Cambridge at which Florence Fawcett and Marjorie Williams were our representatives began making plans for an organization meeting to be held in the fall of 1944. It soon developed that this meeting would have to be postponed, partly because of legal difficulties connected with land transfer and partly because the Office of Defense Occupancy was loath to give permission in war time for large assemblies of people. This objection caused considerable merriment among Friends since not long before there had been at the Narragansett Racecourse a crowd large enough to place bets amounting to a million dollars. One Quaker wag suggested that if we were refused we might ask permission to hold our meeting at the racecourse. When the laughter died down it was decided to postpone the organization meeting till 1945 combining it with the first united Yearly Meeting.

So it was not till the December 1944 meeting of the Committee, again at Cambridge and with the same personnel present, that final decisions were made and plans laid. The reunited, consolidated Yearly Meeting was given the name formerly held by the smaller Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Time and place were chosen – the third week of June, 1945, probably at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

Much space in this history has been given to details dealing with the union of Friends in New England after a century of separation. That is because of the large part the union played in the life of our Meeting during the union's gestational years. But at last the great moment of birth arrived. We assembled in the large auditorium of Phillips Academy on the twenty-first day of June, 1945, for the first meeting of the reunited, consolidated Yearly Meeting, the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, which was also the 285th annual meeting of Friends in New England. It was a great experience as well as an historic occasion.

After a period of deep silence, Alfred Osborne, Dan Test's successor as chairman of the Joint Committee for the Union of All Friends in New England, acting for the Committee, proposed the name of Rufus M. Jones as Temporary Presiding Clerk and that of Millicent Foster as Temporary Recording Clerk. The Meeting approving their names, they took their places on the platform and proceeded to the business of organization. The clerks of the five composing bodies then read in turn their respective concluding minutes in which each organization declared its decision to join in forming a united Yearly Meeting and described the steps each body had taken to that end. Some of these minutes were of considerable interest, but I shall quote only from the one in which we had a part, the minute finally adopted on May 18, 1944:

Meeting in final session as the Connecticut Valley Association of Friends, we propose to unite with the Yearly Meeting of Friends, the Friends Meeting at Cambridge and the Providence Friends Fellowship Monthly Meeting to constitute with these bodies a single Yearly Meeting in New England, having the name 'New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.' To that end we further unite in changing our name from the Connecticut Valley Association of Friends to the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting of Friends. We are agreed that our records shall be continued with the appropriate change of name and that our form of organization shall continue until the need for change arises.

Since the first decade of the twentieth century Friends meetings have been held in various centers in the Connecticut Valley, some of them with considerable regularity. Our minutes show that the first definite steps toward uniting these meetings in one organization were taken at a meeting of Friends held on Fifth Mo. 5th, 1943, and that we have met regularly since that date. The vitality of the local meetings has been the center of our life and our Association has served to stimulate and encourage the local meetings and to relate them to the larger concerns of Friends. The Friends Fellowship Council and many Friends from other groups have fostered our growth and service.

We remember that George Fox wrote in his Journal nearly three centuries ago, "The Lord opened unto me and let me see a great people in white raiment by a river side coming to the Lord. . . ." Living in a day of elaborate organization, we have no desire to rival either the complexity or rigidity of human forms of association. It is rather a vision of many seekers to be gathered in New England as Fox saw them in Old England that has drawn us closer to Friends everywhere.

Jeannette Purdy, Clerk

When all the concluding minutes had been read, Henry H. Perry, acting for the Joint Committee made the official statement that:

Pursuant to appropriate legal action, taken in the states of Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, in each case the body therein originally incorporated under the name of the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England now continues under the name of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.

In view, therefore, of the presence of Representatives from these five meeting-groups of Friends, of the reading of minutes from each of these bodies declaring their intention of joining in the union and of reports on the change of name satisfying all requirements for effecting the union of the five meeting-groups into a single united Yearly Meeting, this assembly now gathered at Andover, Massachusetts, this 21st day of Sixth Mo., 1945, constituted New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, originally begun in 1661, now meeting in its two hundred and eighty-fifth session.

The ensuing silence brought us together in a mood of united thankfulness. Rufus Jones rose from his chair and addressed us briefly, his voice showing how deeply moved he was. Here is part of what he said, taken from the stenographic report as given in our June-July 1945 Newsletter:

. . . I expressed a profound concern that I might be able to live until all Friends in New England were brought into a single Yearly Meeting body. That has happened and we are here, and have consummated the union . . . and we need to be reminded that we cannot suppress our deep and fundamental traits of life and that from now on we must live together in a spirit of gentle respect for the deep-seated way of life of each one of us, and in a generous spirit of give and take

I wish our forerunners might have learned how to keep the faith in their souls and to work and live together as we now propose to do, but this trait comes more naturally now than it did 100 years ago, and each of us must be careful never to assume that our particular way is the high way, and that diverse ways are low ways We are one body in Christ, and dearly beloved we are met here in the presence of God.

Rufus Jones then returned to his chair and as Temporary Clerk turned to the usual opening business of a Yearly Meeting, the roll call of representatives from all the Quarterly Meetings. Of the eighty-five appointed, seventy-one responded to their names, a high proportion in any case

considering the reach from northern Maine to southern Connecticut. The six from our Connecticut Valley Quarter were all present, though the two from our Meeting originally appointed, Manford Kuhn and Florence Fawcett, were both ill. Their places were filled by our alternates, Mary Hussey and Helen Griffith. After the roll call the representatives retired to prepare a slate of permanent officers for the Meeting.

While they were gone, the minutes of visiting Friends were read and the Friends welcomed. Some of them spoke. Other visitors were also recognized and greetings read from absent members. By this time the representatives had returned with their nominations which received Meeting approval. They were Clerk, Arthur Jones; Recording Clerk, Millicent Foster; Assistant Recording Clerk, Philip Gifford; Reading Clerks, Marjorie Williams and Russell Brooks. (I think this was my first sight of Russell Brooks. He was at that time pastor of the Meeting in Gonic, N.H. and had been active in the affairs of the larger Yearly Meeting).

When the new officers had taken their places on the platform, Arthur Jones, in a few telling words, made us feel the far-reaching significance of what we had done and the possibilities that lay before us in our great adventure. Arthur and Rufus Jones were not related, but they shared the gift of being able to produce a pertinent anecdote, as the fog of discussion thickened, that cleared the atmosphere by causing laughter and lending perspective. During the five days of the Meeting, Arthur Jones from the platform and Rufus Jones from the floor were quick to relieve the tensions inevitable in the coming together of such diverse groups. They often would pass the ball from one to the other. Everyone made great efforts, but the strain was apparent. I overheard a scrap of conversation that illustrates the effort. "You know," said one Friend to another, "they like a lot of silence. We must remember." And some of us at our half-hour early morning worship group in an upstairs classroom would be regaled by the lusty gospel hymns that surged up to us from a worship group on the first floor.

To return to that first session on the morning of June 21st, after Arthur Jones' opening words we listened to the report of the Joint Committee on Correspondence. What they reported on were the Epistles received from Yearly Meetings all over the world. Both the summaries and the excerpts read from nine of the Epistles gave us a sense of belonging to a great company dedicated to finding a better way of life and united in efforts to bring healing to a war-torn world. At the end of the report came adjournment till afternoon. The first session of the reunited, consolidated Yearly Meeting of Friends in New England, the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, was over. The union of all Friends in New England was an accomplished fact.

In the June-July, 1945 number of our Newsletter, the first, by the way, to carry our new name, "Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends," we read:

Our Monthly Meeting and full members of it are now members of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, by way of the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting. The calendar of the Yearly Meeting advises that this was the 285th session of that body. Although it was in effect a union of all Friends, it was in fact merely a reunion of all Friends. For the past 100 years there have been several groups, meeting in separatism. Previous to that there were 185 years of joint meeting. So in spirit this was the 285th session of Friends in New England.

In concluding this chapter I want to quote from the Yearly Meeting Epistle of this reunion year. Times were not too different then from ours today. When it was written, though Germany had surrendered, the horror of Hiroshima was still to come. The Epistle was addressed, as always, "To Friends Everywhere" and sent to Yearly Meetings the world over:

... We have been profoundly moved in our spirits by the appalling wastage of the world's assets, by the lowered estimate of human life, and by the mounting waves of

hate that are rolling over the world in the wake of armies and bombing forces. We desire once more in the midst of this tornado of war to raise our testimony to the fact there is another way of life more potent for the victory of truth and justice than the way of violence, and to call loudly to Friends everywhere to set their minds and spirits to the creative business of promoting a positive experiment in life and action of this better and more powerful way. There is no hope of preserving spiritual values if the world is to stagger on from one war to another. There must be at least a remnant of Christ's followers who will not take that way of violence, but who, whatever it means of suffering and sacrifice, will persevere in the maintenance of the experiment of practicing the better way, which is beyond question Christ's way.

VIII. Part 1: Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology

With our membership in the reunited and consolidated **New England Yearly Meeting of Friends** and our change of name for our Monthly Meeting from **Northampton Monthly Meeting of Friends** to the more accurate but lengthy **Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends** our Meeting entered a second phase of its history. However, before we go into that interesting period we should return briefly to record a little-known connection that our Meeting had with what is now known as **Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology**.

Though the relation between religion and psychology had been much discussed, especially in the light of modern psychological findings, the thinking and discussions that developed into what was first called **Friends Conference on the Nature and Laws of the Spiritual Life** developed in the minds of two of our Meeting members, Mary Champney and Elined Kotschnig. They both happened to be in Florida in the early months of 1941. They had much in common both as convinced Friends and as psychologists. Elined Kotschnig was a graduate of Jung's school in Zurich and Mary Champney had served as a psychiatric social worker in a U. S. Base hospital during World War I. They felt a need for studying the relationship between their two major interests. They reflected on the part religion plays in mental health, on Friends pioneer work with the mentally ill, work that has continued to the present, on the relation group meditation in meeting bears to the individual. In these and other matters they felt that psychologists, psychiatrists and Friends had much to offer one another. Some sort of conference seemed indicated.

This concern Elined Kotschnig took to our June 1942 Monthly Meeting held at the Dirkses' Happy Hill Farm. The meeting was interested and appointed Elined Kotschnig and Mary Champney to investigate the possibility of such a conference and suggested that the concern be presented to the Connecticut Valley Association. Mary Champney's involvement in AFSC work with the Dutch and later her illness prevented her from having further part in this venture. However Elined Kotschnig's vision, organizing ability and drive, which had played so large a part in establishing our Monthly Meeting, were now turned to organizing a conference of Friends interested in exploring what religion, especially Quakerism, and psychology had to say to one another.

She reported to our Monthly Meeting that both Hartford and New Haven, the other two Monthly Meetings in the Connecticut Valley Association at the time, were sympathetic to the idea. She had also found other groups and individuals that had been thinking along similar lines. It looked as though such a conference would have a wide appeal.

At our December 1942 Monthly Meeting Elined Kotschnig brought a draft she had prepared of a letter to be sent to possible attenders of the projected conference. It was to be held over the Easter weekend at the John Woolman House in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, a place that could accommodate from twenty to twenty-five. Our Meeting approved the draft though regretting that the proposed location put attendance for most of us out of our reach. Woolman Hill was some twelve years in

the future. Not that Woolman Hill would have helped had we had it, for the conference had to be moved to the big old meetinghouse in Haddonfield, New Jersey, where there was room for the fifty-four attenders who gathered. Twenty-one Friends meetings were represented. It was clear that the Conference met a real need, as it continues to do. Financially that first year it was in the red for the travel expenses of the speakers. We therefore at our May Monthly Meeting appropriated twenty dollars to help with the deficit.

And that was the last of our Meeting's connection as a Meeting with **Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology**, a connection that even the Conference is not aware of, judging by a history of it written at the end of the first fifteen years. With Elined Kotschnig's removal to Washington, D.C. we seemed to lose touch altogether with the Conference, at least as a Meeting, although Sally Dirks and possibly some others kept up their interest. In the summer of 1947 the Executive Committee of the Conference held a seminar at Sally's Happy Hill Farm and again in October 1952 she offered the place for a retreat. Also one of the in-between groups of the Conference was held at Northampton under the leadership of Florence Grossman, again without any reference to our Meeting.

The Conference found rich nourishment elsewhere; it grew and flourished in the soil around Philadelphia. The second Conference, held at Pendle Hill, registered seventy attenders. At one time it was given office space by the 15th and Race Street Meeting, at another by the AFSC. The *Inward Light*, which began as a mimeographed sheet at a Friends World Conference, had been expanded into magazine format. It gave generous space to the Conference programs and now is sponsored by the Conference with Elined Kotschnig its editor. A semi-annual publication, it "seeks to be an organ of expression and intercommunication among those concerned with cultivating the inner life and relating it to the problems of our times."

Looking at its account of that first Conference, the only one in which our Meeting was in any way involved, we can understand its continued success. Douglas Steere led a discussion on the Quaker Heritage in Group Religious Life; Teresina Rowell (not yet Havens) was one of five on a panel about the inner life of the individual; Howard Brinton spoke on the pastoral function of the Meeting, pointing out that Friends did not lack pastors, but they had no laity. There were other speakers and subjects, a rich, perhaps an overrich, program. Now in its twenty-fourth year the usefulness of the Conference has been well tested. It filled a real need and continues to do so. It keeps Quakers on their toes and in touch with findings that concern them. Our Meeting may be proud that it had even a small share in the beginning of such an enterprise.

VIII. Part 2. The Meeting Newsletter

Surely no meeting needs the lifeline of a newsletter so much as one made up, as ours is, of members and attenders coming from widely-scattered communities. Many of us do not see one another during the week; some live so far away that only occasionally can they worship with us. Our Monthly Meeting during its relatively brief life (established in 1939) has drawn people from as many as seventeen different communities. At various times they have come from as far north as Spofford, NH and Putney, VT, as far west as Ashfield and Great Barrington, as far south as Springfield and Southwick, on the east only from Pelham and Ware, which don't seem far at all. Strangely enough no one has ever come from Holyoke. Northampton, South Hadley, Amherst and Greenfield are the centers from which the majority of our members come. They form the core of our Meeting, but even the core extends ten miles east and west and thirty miles north and south.

We all know that a good meeting depends in part at least on our knowing one another well enough to feel like members of a big family sharing one another's burdens, rejoicing in one another's good fortune, understanding, or trying to understand and respect, one another's various and dif-

ferent opinions and, finally and above all, learning to love one another. Distance creates a barrier which we must try in all possible ways to overcome. The Meeting Newsletter, providing it is read, is one of those ways, one of the most important. The need for it was felt early.

In the beginning when some of the Smith College charter members of the Meeting graduated and left Northampton they were kept apprized at the end of each year of what had gone on in the little Monthly Meeting they had helped to bring into being. This letter went to more than the charter members and one such letter was sent to the entire membership. It has survived and appears both in the 1943 minutes and in the bound volume of newsletters where it is misplaced as the second letter. The letter is addressed: "To Members and Friends of Northampton Monthly Meeting, near and far," a form adapted from yearly meeting epistles. The non-resident members received with the letter a copy of that useful booklet published each year, *Directory of Meetings in the United States and Canada*, and an accompanying note expressing the hope that "You will find somewhere near a meeting which you can attend, if only occasionally. We unite with you in the belief that the meeting for worship should be the well-spring of the Quaker way of life and hope that the list may be of value."

The Meeting had a closeness of relation and a tenderness of concern for its non-resident members that it has somehow lost with the years, a loss that is perhaps inevitable in a meeting where the turnover of members is as rapid as it is in college communities like ours. In the newsletters and minutes I have been reading for this history I have come across many once familiar names and have wondered how the Quaker faith of those non-resident members, especially of former students who joined the Meeting while they were with us, has stood the test of time and whether we might have helped them more than we did after they left our area.

To return to our history, though Meeting minutes have been carefully kept, the idea of keeping newsletters did not occur to us for the first twenty-two years of our life as a meeting. When in 1962 we broadcast our desire to collect as many back numbers as possible, we received a goodly number, but there were plenty of gaps and no letters from the earliest years. Fortunately the minutes have helped us out as to the beginning of our newsletter. In those for May 1942 we read that Elliott Fleckles was asked to include certain information about CPS (Civilian Public Service) in the "current newsletter." From this it would seem that he was the first editor and that the newsletter was already an accepted means of communication. Elliott Fleckles was away for a few years after this. Perhaps the newsletter was discontinued, for in the May 1943 Monthly Meeting the clerk and recording clerk were asked to assume responsibility for writing "a monthly, mimeographed bulletin of Meeting news and information about events in the world of Friends." That this was done we gather from a minute of the November Meeting noting that "It was decided that news about CPS, relief work and other items of interest from the Service Committee be sent out in the monthly bulletin." If any copies of this bulletin appeared, none so far has been recovered. But in 1944 the new clerks (in those early years the officers served for one year only), Florence Fawcett and William Scott, without remark or discussion, fell into the role of editors. This may be another indication that such a bulletin was issued. Only one 1944 number has William Scott's name attached as editor. The others were probably joint productions. Both editors lived in Amherst at the time. In the November 1944 issue after making a strong plea for funds to help the men in CPS camps, especially those with dependents, they write:

In sending these newsletters we hope to keep all informed about individuals, their problems and their particular interests. We could not be bound together with a deep sense of spiritual and personal welfare unless we shared our Meeting concerns. Some of you are on our mailing list because you have been interested in our way of life at one time or another... some of you are in the armed services or closely connected with them. But we are all members of that great brotherhood that longs for a world social

order that precludes wars and attendant suffering. This is why we felt free to bring this matter up.

The need for funds to help dependents of men in CPS camps was “this matter.”

During 1944 up through the August number Florence Fawcett and William Scott collaborated, the former as clerk supplying much of the material and the latter doing most of the writing. With William Scott’s departure for his California position Florence Fawcett took over; she finished the 1944 issues and carried on through 1945. Then beginning with 1946 the former collaborators did a neat job of dovetailing. The Fawcetts left for the second semester just as the Scotts returned to our valley, this time to Northampton and a position at Smith College for Bill. He at once took hold of the newsletter and announced in the January 1946 number “This letter will come out every month, Deo volente.” And it did appear through 1946 and a few numbers in 1947, but after the July 1947 issue there is the longest gap in our collection.

With nothing for the rest of 1947, all of 1948, 1949 and 1950, I had assumed that no one in our small meeting had felt able to handle the publication for those years. The assumption was natural but wrong. The minutes for those years make it clear that publication was never discontinued and that the editor was Katherine Williams, daughter of Paul Williams of the Mount Holyoke College faculty mentioned earlier in this history. She had joined the Poughkeepsie, NY Friends Meeting while she was a student at Oakwood, a Quaker preparatory boarding school in Poughkeepsie. When she came to Mount Holyoke for her college work she had her membership transferred to our Meeting and was active in it for several years before she graduated in 1951 and left the area. At one time she was both editor of the newsletter and, briefly, recording clerk. The Meeting has reason to be grateful to her. Unfortunately, neither she nor anyone else seems to have saved a single newsletter from those years.

We have, however, in our collection a few scattered issues from the next three years. There is only one from 1951, unsigned, really only a report of the 1950 Peace Conference at Richmond, Indiana, referred to in an earlier chapter. The names of Louise Wilson and Helen Griffith appear as the editors of the two numbers recovered from 1952 and of two of the three 1953 numbers. Louise Wilson’s name stands alone for the third, the December 1953 number. Helen Griffith was at home only in the summer and as Louise Wilson had obligations that kept her from attending Meeting, she soon resigned her work on the newsletter. Our newsletter was in a bad way during these years. The August 1952 number is of value because of the informing memorial to one of our most distinguished members, Mary Hussey, who had died at Yearly Meeting earlier that year. Her scholarship and her devotion to her Quaker heritage were valuable elements in our Meeting. She had built up a strong group of students in South Hadley. Another newsletter, the March 1955 number, may well become a collector’s item. Other Quaker newsletters in other parts of the world have doubtless been illustrated, but surely none has ever featured three happy-looking young men wearing respectively army, navy and air-force caps. The explanation? A simple one really. The issue was put out by a commercial firm in Greenfield at the time of Greenfield’s two-hundredth anniversary celebration. The illustrators knew nothing about Quakers but were full of good will. They wanted to make attractive the two brief pages given them. They read the text with care to see what they could do. Wedding bells adorn the notice of Deborah Taylor’s marriage. By the notice of Fosdick’s anthology, *Rufus Jones Speaks to Our Times*, is a painstaking drawing of the book, complete with title and editor. The military picture is quite properly opposite the report of Rex Wilson’s return from Korea. The issue created considerable merriment among us.

1954 was a better year with seven issues listed in our index, though on examination three of them turn out to be one-page announcements of special meetings, no editor mentioned or needed. Lucia Russell had been appointed to fill Louise Wilson’s place when the latter resigned. She was sole editor until the summer when Helen Griffith came home. Then after collaborating on a June

through August newsletter, they both bow themselves out and Philip Woodbridge, acting clerk, takes over. For the December 1954 number he drafted Inez Fuller as co-editor. It was a happy choice for the Meeting because she found the work sufficiently congenial to accept appointment as editor. Her years of serving as secretary to Ray Stannard Baker while he was writing the many-volume life of Woodrow Wilson stood her in good stead. Beginning with the June 1955 issue Inez Fuller took over full editorship and during the five years of her service developed our newsletter into the excellent paper it has become. She even received fan mail on it. One editor of a Quaker publication wrote that of the many meeting newsletters coming into his office, ours was the one he read in its entirety. He sometimes used material from it.

Caroline Schroder became our next editor and a good one, working first with Helen Griffith and then with Dorothy Schalk from the September 1960 number through that of June 1961. When both Caroline and Dorothy asked to be relieved, Robert and Gladys Myers filled the breach and for five peaceful years edited our newsletter with quiet competence.

Though the editorial management has passed through thirteen different hands, there is one task connected with getting out our newsletter that has been faithfully performed through the years by one person, Mary Kentfield. She has addressed the envelopes in which the newsletters are mailed as well as those containing other items like the meeting directory, special reports and notices. The newsletter goes to more than just our members and attenders. It is sent to the various meetings in our Quarter, to our New England Yearly Meeting office, to various Quaker publications and to occasional individuals who have asked for it, like former members who have transferred their membership but still want to keep in touch with their parent meeting. Sometimes an inquirer chooses the newsletter as a way to learn about us. The list of those to whom it is sent is well over 150. We are all grateful to Mary Kentfield for doing this tedious work month after month and year after year so faithfully.

But all those connected with the work of publishing and mailing our newsletter – and they are many – deserve to be thanked individually were that possible. Unfortunately only a few lists of these workers have been kept. Different kinds of work are involved: getting supplies, keeping the mailing list up to date, cutting the stencils from copy provided by the editor, mimeographing the required number, arranging the sheets in order, folding and sometimes stapling them, putting them in envelopes and, finally, stamping those that go overseas, and mailing them. Scattered as we are, we also find transportation something to be reckoned with.

All the above tasks must be differently arranged at different times according to the time and skills at the disposal of our shifting membership. At first, Meeting members connected with school or college were sometimes able to make use of their school facilities. When that was not feasible, or no one had time to undertake the work, the newsletter has been published commercially, an arrangement unsatisfactory on two counts: the almost prohibitive cost and the odd blunders in text that occasionally appear when the one who cuts the stencils is unfamiliar with the material. A compromise in use at the moment seems to be working fairly well, for the stencils are cut by a Meeting member and a commercial firm produces the mimeographed copies. A happy time was when Elizabeth Quigley (now Elizabeth Russell) cut the stencils on an electric typewriter she had the use of and Francis Holmes did the mimeographing. Either then or earlier he and Becky Holmes, getting the envelopes from Mary Kentfield, managed the mailing end as well. Perhaps some day the Meeting may have an electric typewriter and a mimeograph of its own.

In addition to the services just mentioned and growing out of them, Francis Holmes for five years organized and was in charge of everything connected with the manufacture and distribution end of our paper. In one of his reports to the Meeting he estimated that the time involved by all concerned with that side of the work was from forty-one to fifty-eight hours an issue.

The work of the editor or editors, however, cannot be estimated in hours. Like all creative

work, it begins in the unmeasurable regions of the mind. It takes imagination to think of what would be of value and interest to the various groups of readers – to those active members who faithfully attend the Monthly Meeting for business, to those others who do not or cannot attend and so need to know something of the thinking that determined the decisions recorded in our minutes, to the non-resident members who want to know something of the Meeting's activities as well as news of friends. And they often need reminders of Meeting finances. Then there is that large and ever-changing group of attenders interested in the Quaker way of life and needing nourishment for it – as who of us does not! Two of our editors were concerned with yet another group – our children. One of them developed what she called the Children's Corner, sometimes written by the children, sometimes for them. Rachel Anderson at one time voyaged each winter to faraway lands keeping her eyes open for what might interest children and on her return writing short sketches for them.

Besides imagination our editors need the ability to delegate much of the writing to others. That takes time and planning. Different editors have naturally put the emphasis differently. Some editors have done more than others with various Meeting reports, especially the annual committee reports, reports on clothing collections, etc., thereby making easier the life of anyone attempting to write chapters of our Meeting's history. Others have specialized in reports of Quaker affairs, always with the names of all attenders from our Meeting. Quarterly and Yearly Meetings come into this list; so do those at Cape May and the Avon Institutes and conferences like those on race problems, on war and peace, et al. Each year has its quota. Such reports written by one of our number who attended keep us in personal touch with the wider Quaker world.

Now that our Meeting library has such a fine display shelf full of Quaker periodicals, the newsletter might perform still another service by delegating different people to be responsible to note through the newsletter articles of special interest on subjects that concern us like religious education, the meeting for worship, the problem of reconciliation. Such a list would serve as a sort of limited Reader's Guide for Quakers. Our newsletter has often performed a similar service for certain books.

But what we find in every newsletter and depend on are the calendar for First Day and for the succeeding week which we consult for the what, where and when, announcements of coming events and the news notes about one another that give us the much needed family feeling. Usually also there has been either at the beginning or at the end of the newsletter some thought-provoking or spirit-raising quotation to lift the level of our thoughts and nourish us. And very occasionally some of our members and attenders have let us print some of the verses they have written, Dorothy Schalk, David Clark and Mary Kentfield among others. Such sharing is another means of helping us to know one another.

In its quarter century of life our Newsletter (spoken of first as a bulletin and then as a monthly newsletter of the Northampton Meeting of Friends, next as the newsletter of the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends and now as the newsletter of the Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting of Friends) has played an important part in giving us, scattered as we are, that sense of unity, of belonging together that we so much need. But that sense becomes increasingly difficult to establish and keep, not because of our welcome and steady growth in numbers, but because of our rapidly changing personnel, due in part to the many changes in the faculties of our surrounding colleges. It is clear then that our newsletter can never rest on its well-earned laurels but must constantly be meeting new conditions and new needs.

The Making of a Meetinghouse, by John Zahradnik

While a new meetinghouse by itself is a significant structure from the viewpoint of function and esthetic values, the purpose of this account is to set forth the significance or the worth of a building to the spiritual growth of a meeting.

Historical Background

One does not have to go back too far into historical developments in what was formerly the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting in order to trace the origin of the inspiration for a meetinghouse. Previous to 1959 the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting was constituted of preparative meetings in Amherst, Greenfield, Northampton and South Hadley. These preparative meetings, while spiritually vital, were too small to provide a First Day School and a comprehensive religious education program. Only one of the outlying meetings, Greenfield, had the use of a meetinghouse. The remainder of the preparative meetings met in various homes or college, university and church buildings. Once a month these five preparative meetings met for worship, business and fellowship, each time at a different location.

At these monthly meetings a First Day School eventually developed, fellowship luncheons were held and adult discussions, with activities for the young, took place in the afternoons. As a result of these monthly gatherings, the various preparative meetings became increasingly aware of the value of a religious education program to its younger members, of the inherent spiritual values developing within the entire membership, and of the pressure upon the membership participating in parallel efforts of preparative and Monthly Meeting committee structure.

However, during this period, there was great concern over the care of some of the preparative meetings for worship on the day of the Monthly Meeting when the majority of the preparative meeting members were at the Monthly Meeting. Some of the preparative meetings had struggled over the years with small numbers, problems of finding meeting for worship space, communication with potential attenders, and were concerned lest their hard won meeting should suffer a setback in the absence of the members who were attending Monthly Meeting.

Experiment in Meeting Consolidation

Under these circumstances, the decision to experiment with a consolidated meeting for worship each First Day came only after months of soul searching. A by-product of the effort was an intensification of meeting relationships, the development of some tensions and, eventually, happily, reconciliation and a stronger sense of fellowship. In August, 1959, the five preparative meetings agreed to meet each First Day at a central location and took immediate steps to form a comprehensive religious education program, for this would be the first time in several years that enough members and enough children could meet regularly enough in enough space to hold forth in worship and fellowship as they had been inspired to do.

During this period of experimental consolidation, some of the preparative meetings continued to hold forth, particularly with the student attendance, coming to the consolidated Monthly Meetings once a month. Ultimately the Meeting realized that it was first a family-centered Meeting but with potential for student outreach to the surrounding academic communities. The Meeting was reassured of its nature by a poll of student attenders who indicated no desire for a student or a campus centered meeting – they came because of the family centeredness of the Meeting.

After approximately three years of renting the meeting facilities of a local Grange in what was formerly a Methodist Church, members were on the whole pleased with the progress towards a stronger meeting for worship and a total Meeting program. However, facilities for the First

Day School were lacking and there was difficulty in achieving a satisfactory separation between the silence of the meeting for worship and the sounds of First Day School. Furthermore, business minded Friends felt the rent money might just as well go towards land and a building of our own.

Location of Meetinghouse a Problem

With the experience of consolidation came a more venturesome move with the appointment of a planning committee to consider the possibility of undertaking construction of a meetinghouse. This committee considered what took several years to resolve and in retrospect was the most trying time in the making of our meetinghouse. During this period the Meeting considered what seemed like a broad and endless spectrum of reasons for one particular location or another. The center of gravity of the entire Meeting residence area was determined in what appeared to be an objective approach to solve this issue. Other sites were deemed best because of nearness to college and university campuses or because of a beautiful country location, easily accessible by auto. The matter of location was finally resolved in 1963 when a generous Friend offered to contribute three acres of lovely land near Mt. Toby as a site for the meetinghouse.

Meeting Design Reflects Membership on Vital Issues

A building committee was named and authorized to engage an architect after first considering and then dismissing the idea of design and construction of the meetinghouse with the help of Meeting members. Our Meeting lacks members in the building trades with time to participate in extensive construction. However, before the completion of our new meetinghouse, considerable productive labor was produced by our membership. The Building Committee asked all standing committees of the Meeting for their facilities requirements and integrated these functional specifications with the help of an architect chosen after interviewing about a half dozen architects. We were most fortunate in our choice of architect Elroy Webber who, although not a Friend, and although never having designed a meetinghouse, was able to capture the essence of Quaker functional simplicity and express it in a meetinghouse of contemporary design.

Of particular interest and concern in the design was the question of a fireplace, window size and location, and seating arrangements. Because our Meeting believed in the importance of the “gathered” meeting from within itself, the fireplace in the meeting for worship room was eliminated and windows were placed above eye level. The fireplace was located in the fellowship room which serves as a place, when divided by folding partitions, for the First Day School and, when the partitions are folded back, a place for luncheons. Because of a strong belief in the egalitarian principle, the room for worship has no facing benches; instead the arrangement of benches is circular. These instances illustrate but a few ways in which the meetinghouse uniquely expresses our particular Monthly Meeting.

Decision Based on Faith

And so the design, and finally the construction, begun in October, 1963, went. Each Monthly Meeting for business seemed to be devoting more and more time to what seemed to be endless considerations, but they were necessary if the meetinghouse was to express the group. Concern was expressed that the Monthly Meeting was spending too much time and effort on itself at the expense of its outreach, but in the process the Meeting had come to find and to know itself. It had learned to face decisions about matters over which it had full control and also would have to pay the consequences. More important, the Meeting had learned to make the all important decision to go ahead with the venture, and that decision was an act of faith.

A Brief History for the 25th Anniversary Newsletter (9/24/89), by Georgana Foster

On September 27, 1964, an open house was held at the new meetinghouse of the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends (which, with the opening became renamed Mt. Toby Meeting). It was attended by nearly 200 Friends and visitors who held two meetings for worship, simultaneously, one in the Fellowship Room.

For the 25 active family units who then made up the Meeting, the idea of building a meetinghouse had grown out of the decision they made in 1959 to have what they called a "consolidated" Meeting. At that time meetings for worship of the Monthly Meeting were held in Greenfield, at the Sherwood Friends Center on Silver Street (which was to be taken by the new road, Route 91); in South Hadley, in members' homes; in Northampton, in the Helen Hills Hills Chapel, both of the latter meetings being held during the school year chiefly for students at Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges; and in Amherst, in various public locations which this newest worship group, started anew in 1954, found year by year. There was also a worship group in Great Barrington, at Gould Farm. This group belonged to MCVMM and decades later became South Berkshire Meeting.

All of these worship groups, several of which were Preparative Meetings, met once a month for business at Sherwood Friends Center, or in Friends' homes for picnics in summer.

The growth of the University of Massachusetts brought at least 15 families with Quaker connections to Amherst in the second half of the 1950s. In 1950s fashion, Friends had large families, and the need for a weekly First Day School was keenly felt. The Amherst Meeting found it could rent a building owned by the Amherst Grange, which was formerly the Methodist Church, at the corner of North Whitney and Main Streets. At the August 1959 Monthly Meeting it was agreed to start meeting together for worship every First Day at the Grange Hall, starting in October. The plan was "a common meeting place for weekly worship together. . . , this arrangement to make possible a weekly First Day School. . . which is what determined us to try this experiment of consolidating. . . [F]or the adults the gains can be great, too" wrote Helen Griffith, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel.

In the Spring of 1960 in a draft of the State of Society report, "We evaluated our experience and found unexpected gains over and above the First Day School. Far from sacrificing ourselves for our children, we had experienced a deeper spiritual life in our meetings for worship." Some Friends felt deeply that we should not discontinue our ministry to students, and some type of student meetings continued, but the Meeting soon agreed to start looking for its own building. Four years of exploring possibilities began, of looking at houses in the Amherst area and ultimately buying a lot on the corner of Fearing Street and Sunset Avenue in Amherst, "which looks west across the Valley." At that time the Southwest dormitory complex was in the planning stages and 22-story buildings were not believable. When this became real to the Meeting members, it was decided we would not have enough room for parking, etc. and we sold the land and accepted one of the offers of land from members, that of Ethel Dubois, on her farm on Long Plain Road, Route 63, in Leverett.

We had already been given a loan of \$4000 and a grant of \$2000 from the Meetinghouse Fund of the Friends General Conference. In May, 1963, meeting for business accepted the land from Ethel; the August newsletter featured a drawing of the proposed Meetinghouse by architect Elroy Webber, with whom a committee had been working all during the period. All committees had been asked to write a summary of what they saw as their needs in a building. One of the big concerns was to have a light, warm and well-supplied nursery, as we had had a cold, cigar-butt strewn storage room for the nursery at the Grange Hall.

And, of course, there was the matter of money. How could about 25 active family units support an \$80,000 mortgage? Greenfield's Sherwood Friends Center was taken for Route 91 sooner than

expected. Although money from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts went legally to the Greenfield group, some of this money was lent to Mt. Toby Meeting and a mortgage was obtained from the Amherst Savings Bank for the rest. At every juncture when we faltered, a few Friends quietly assured us of their aid, and the goal of the Meetinghouse went forward.

On October 1963, in the field where the Meetinghouse now stands, we held a groundbreaking. After sitting on the ground for meeting for worship, the children set to work with shovels in the corn stubble. Construction began that winter.

And when the building was opened, Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting shed the long name and became Mt. Toby Meeting, its Meetinghouse lying in the Valley below Mt. Toby. The name had been agreed upon, after consideration of a long list, as highly appropriate.