As Way Opened

"We joyfully accept the absurd assignment of striving to make Quaker House at once a School of Contemplation and a Hot Bed of Nonviolent Revolutionaries."—John Yungblut

A History of Atlanta Friends Meeting 1943–1997

AS WAY OPENED

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A HISTORY OF ATLANTA FRIENDS 1943–1997

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and
Janet Adams Rinard

1999
Atlanta Friends Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

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FOREWORD

As John Egerton reminds us in his book *Speak Now Against the Day*, there are three kinds of history: what actually happened, what we are told happened, and what we finally come to believe happened. The history of the Atlanta Friends Meeting that follows is a combination of all three. The story doesn't include everything that happened, of course, but in telling the story we have tried to be faithful to facts retrieved from the written records and from the many memories shared verbally with us. Needless to say, history is more than a body of objective facts; thus, the following story reflects the subjective interpretations of those who retrieved the records, those who remembered the events, and those who wrote the narrative.

The focus of the history that follows is on the years between 1943, when a number of individuals calling themselves the Atlanta Quaker Group first gathered in the Central YMCA in Atlanta, and 1991, when the newly completed Atlanta Friends meetinghouse was dedicated. Many events and changes that have occurred through 1997 are also discussed, but in less detail.

We are aware that there are people who were important to the development of the Meeting who are not mentioned by name in the following pages, or who are not given the attention they deserve. It was impossible to mention everyone who was involved. All we can say is that we of the History Committee who wrote this history worked hard to be fair and that we did not intentionally overlook anyone.

Our principal sources for the history included annual reports by John Yungblut while he was program director, state of the meeting reports, minutes of meetings for worship for business,

minutes of the Quaker House board of trustees, various other Meeting committee minutes, and the Meeting newsletters and calendars. Another important source was taped interviews, including those Janet Boyte (later Ferguson) made in 1977 with Emory and Margaret Via, Bob and Patricia Westervelt, and George Hendricks; and an interview in 1981 at the Berea Friends General Conference (FGC) gathering with John Yungblut, Dwight and Irene Ferguson, and Betty Burford. A group of "old-timers" met at Quaker House in 1985 to record reminiscences. These individuals were Don Bender, Emily Calhoun, Dwight Ferguson, Janet Boyte Ferguson, Alvin and Martha Gaines, Elizabeth Hendricks, Peg Kaiser, and Ralph Spillman. In 1988 in Virginia, Perry Treadwell interviewed John Yungblut. In 1993 and 1994 Janet Rinard interviewed several members and attenders, including Don Bender, Mike Mykel, Joan Thompson, Perry Treadwell, and Harriet Treadwell (Unfug).

Principal authors of the history were Janet Boyte Ferguson and Janet Rinard. They relied heavily on help from the History Committee, which included Elizabeth Hendricks, Peg Kaiser, Harry Lefever, and Claudia Stucke. For several years we worked on the Meeting's history, with significant assistance from Perry Treadwell, Mike Mykel, Suzan Kenworthy, Jane Zanca, Paul Edenfield, and Pat Michaelson. Bette Turlington, Elizabeth Siceloff, and June Clark reviewed the manuscript at the committee's request. Margaret Priest, Kathie Klein, Mary Ann Downey, and Renda McCaughan were especially helpful with the financial production or distribution of this history.

The History Committee wishes to thank the many people, named and unnamed, who helped make the writing of this history possible. We trust that reading and discussion of our collective history will help us to learn whence we came, to better understand who we currently are, and to find the illuminated path for the future.

Harry G. Lefever
for the History Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting
Atlanta, 1998

PREFACE

A Quaker Presence in Georgia in the Eighteenth Century

Being a Quaker in the South has never been an easy path to follow. But contemporary Southern Quakers can be reassured that others have walked the path before. In the eighteenth century, Friends of Georgia lived out their testimonies in the context of slavery and revolution and among neighbors who valued personal wealth over a clear conscience.

The earliest Quaker activity in Georgia occurred in 1751 when a settlement was attempted at what became known as Quaker Springs. The Quakers and other settlers had purchased land from local Indians, but were forced to flee in 1754 when hostilities between the Indians and the English broke out.

By the 1760s, the Royal Governor of Georgia, James Wright, spent much of his time trying to secure the frontier west and southwest of Augusta. Creek Indians hunted and adventured all along the frontier and also traded with English merchants in Augusta. These trade activities led to debts which, in turn, led to land concessions in lieu of debt payments. Governor Wright, therefore, had vast land grants to award to the right kind of settlers, people who could get along with the Indians and maintain a loyal English presence on the frontier.

In 1767, North Carolina Friend Joseph Stubbs petitioned for a 12,000-acre tract, possibly in an effort to reestablish the abandoned Quaker Springs settlement. Joseph Maddock and Jonathan Sell also sought communal and personal grants for a Quaker Reserve in the same Little River area. The grants were awarded, and soon settlers began arriving. As the new township took shape, the settlers named it Wrightsborough after the supportive Royal Governor. Families could settle in the reserve upon

providing certificates as proof of their membership in the Religious Society of Friends.

A group of 70 North Carolina Quaker families led the effort to establish a monthly meeting. Their goal was realized when, in 1773, the North Carolina Yearly Meeting formally recognized the Wrightsborough Monthly Meeting. Many, but not all, of the "certified" Quaker families affiliated with the new meeting. Joseph Maddock briefly served as the clerk of the meeting from 1773–75. He, along with Sell, also held the civil posts of Justice of the Peace and Roads Commissioner.

The period 1767 to 1775 was spent building up the economic and social capital of the settlement. When the revolution broke out, most of the Georgia Friends tried to follow the advice of the Yearly Meeting to remain passively loyal to the British government. However, while Joseph Maddock was openly a Loyalist, many of the younger men either slipped away or were forced to join the rebel militia.

The American Revolution devastated the frontier. Trade with Indian tribes and other colonies was suspended. Even subsistence farming was difficult due to roving bands of Whig and Tory militia, shifting claims of governing authority, and hefty taxes imposed by both sides. The fact that most Quaker men would not serve as soldiers led to the imposition of extra tax penalties, virtually ruining the Wrightsborough settlement. Then, after the war, land that had been awarded to the settlement by the British had to be retitled by the new government of the state of Georgia. The claims of perceived Tory sympathizers, such as the Quakers, were favored less than those of Whig "patriots."

Georgia had allowed the introduction of slavery into the colony as early as 1754, when the Crown took control of the colony from James Oglethorpe and his trustees. Although the frontier was settled almost exclusively by small tobacco farmers, some households included one or two slaves who helped with the farming and the required road work. However, with the introduction of cotton and the invention of the cotton gin slavery began to flourish and provided the means whereby many rural landowners became wealthy. By the time the yearly and monthly meetings became clear about the evils of slavery, the Southern states had erected barriers to manumission. The Friends may not have

owned slaves themselves, but they were remarkably tolerant of their slaveholding neighbors.

If one looks at the Wrightsborough settlement through the eyes of their neighbors, the Quakers fit in less as time went on. They had tolerated Indian misbehavior, supported the British colonial government, and even named their community after a British governor. They cornered and held large tracts of valuable land and then nagged each other and their neighbors about using slaves to make the land prosperous.

Thus, for the Quakers, life in the South was becoming increasingly uncomfortable. After only 40 years, they had changed from being a favored, select community to a scattered, powerless, and often-despised minority. Members were being seduced by wealth, and their youth were misbehaving and marrying outside the society. Their traveling ministers, unhappy with these developments, were urging them to reform. Thus, when Ohio entered the Union in 1803 as the first slavery-free state, the temptation to leave Georgia became irresistible. If they were to preserve their identity, they would need to move on.

Large wagon trains collected remnants of the Georgia rural meetings and headed for southern Ohio, where land was cheap and slavery was forbidden. The Wrightsborough Friends left in two waves (in 1790 and 1807) and merged with other Friends from North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia in an exodus from the South.

The present-day Atlanta Friends mark the reestablishment of a Quaker presence in Georgia. Many of these Friends, like their eighteenth-century counterparts, are migrants in pursuit of economic sufficiency and personal fulfillment; and all are exploring how to live in the world but not be worldly. They, like their predecessors, benefit and suffer from others' expectations.

Beginning in the 1940s and continuing until today, those associated with the Atlanta Friends Meeting have been presented with new opportunities to live the peace testimony and to advance in godliness. What follows is their story.

George H. Cox, Jr.

George Cox is Professor of Political Science at Georgia Southern University and Editor of The Southeastern Political Review. *His articles on Wrightsborough Friends were published in* The Southern Friend *in Spring 1988, 1989, and 1990.*

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BEGINNINGS

In a racially segregated city, during a worldwide war, some Quakerly-minded individuals gathered to form a new Friends group. The city was Atlanta, Georgia; the date February 7, 1943.

A newspaper notice the preceding day stated briefly: "The Atlanta Quaker Group (Society of Friends) will meet for supper and a worship program Sunday at 6 P.M. at the Central YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], 145 Luckie St. The public is invited. Professor George Hayes, of Agnes Scott College, will speak on 'The Doctrine of the Inner Light, Shining in the Soul of Man.'"

According to the terse diary that he kept in those days, George Hayes noted for February 7, 1943:

> Our first Quaker meeting in 15 years in the South [presumably the 15 years he had been in the area]—at the Y—about 30 present, including refugees, social workers, Friends, pacifists and curious. Maurice Strickland, Economic Professor at Tech in charge. Also Dick Binford, John Stanley, [Hilda] Weiss of Spelman (Jewish French), [William] Newton (Chem. Engineer at Tech), Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, . . . [Robert] Scharf (Jewish refugee), Inge Probstein, Ann Fisher, Runyons, Studds, Mrs. [Freeda] Johnston. Supper, Mtg. for worship, organization, and I talked on inner light.

The meeting was the outgrowth of a January gathering in the home of Maurice Strickland and his wife, Irma. Maurice was a native of Moultrie, Georgia, and had completed his Ph.D. at New York University. He and his wife had moved to Atlanta in 1940 from Flushing, New York. They were pacifists—an almost treasonable position in the South during World War II—and had hoped to find a Friends meeting, having attended meetings in Flushing and Philadelphia.

At Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), where he taught economics, Maurice found a sympathetic ear in Robert Scharf, a refugee enrolled in one of his evening classes. Scharf, as he seems always to have been called, had first met and admired Quakers engaged in relief work in 1919 at the close of World War I, when he was a student in Germany. He had grown up in Vienna. His parents were musicians, and Scharf was an accomplished pianist. During World War II his mother, who was Jewish, had taken refuge with an aristocratic English family who belonged to the Wider Quaker Fellowship. They helped first Scharf, and then his mother, to come to America, according to George Hendricks (Boyte interview, 1977).

Early Gatherings

Just a month after this February gathering, the new Friends group held a business meeting and chose officers: Maurice Strickland was appointed clerk; George Hayes, assistant clerk; and John Stanley, treasurer. The group immediately almost fell apart over the question of participation by Negroes (the appellation used at the time). Ironically, this same group who disagreed about Negro participation accepted the presence of a Japanese student from Emory, even though the United States was at war with Japan. On February 28, George Hayes made record of several agonizing telephone conversations with the Stricklands, who were interested in improving race relations and wanted to invite acquaintances from the faculty of Morehouse College, a black liberal arts college in Atlanta. The Stricklands' pacifist views also conflicted with the militant anti-Nazi attitude of Robert Scharf.

The would-be Friends were still together on March 21. By then the meeting had shifted to the Central Congregational Church on

Ponce de Leon Avenue at Piedmont, where they met in a room that George Hayes called "a dismal place." George, who had written his Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard on Robert Barclay, was a birthright Quaker from Pennsylvania. He came to Agnes Scott College as an English professor in 1927, and his diary is the principal source of information about the early days of Atlanta Friends. He often brought his French-born wife, Nina, to meetings and frequently was accompanied by his teenage children, as well as by Agnes Scott students.

Meanwhile, Maurice Strickland was made to feel so uncomfortable while teaching at Georgia Tech because of his pacifist views that he resigned and took a job with the War Labor Board. Shortly thereafter, he was called up for service, an event that he believed to be the vindictive act of a local minister who was a member of his draft board. In May, Maurice was sent to a camp in Maryland for conscientious objectors. There, he said, his physical problems and his severe allergies caused him to "suffer much . . . felling trees and working in marshland." After seven months, he was classified 4-F (physically unfit for service) and returned to Atlanta, where he entered Emory University's School of Medicine (Boyte interview, 1977).

During the summer of 1943 attendance at the Friends meetings varied between 12 and 20, with some meetings being held in less "dismal" locations—the homes of Irma Strickland or the Cowherds. Often there were speakers, as George Hayes noted in his diary: Paul Barnhart, a Methodist minister; Dr. Bosworth, the "young Unitarian minister"; "Dr. Scharf on graphology, on which he is writing a book"; Glenn Rainey on Creative Living; and John Stanley on Quakerism and Hinduism. George Hayes recorded once that he "enjoyed [a] visit with John Stanley, who told of shooting leopards and bison."

John Stanley, who served as the group's first treasurer, was a neighbor of the Hayeses, who lived near Agnes Scott College. He and his wife, Phern, were active in the Meeting from the beginning. Historian George Hendricks later described John as a "Kansas Quaker" raised by a stern and moralistic father, and "the farthest from a mystic of any Quaker we've had." John worked for 20 years in India, where he was involved with the YMCA and knew the leaders for Indian independence, Mohandas (Mahatma)

Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a personal friend of Nehru's father.

After John's first wife died, he came to Atlanta to work for the Equitable Life Assurance Company, where he pioneered in helping to channel insurance investments into private housing for black people—a remarkable feat in light of the time and place. In Atlanta he met and married Phern Rockefeller, who was secretary to the president of Spelman College and a relative of John D. Rockefeller.

Atlanta in 1943

In 1943 Atlanta was a provincial city, glaringly segregated by race. There were separate "white" and "colored" restrooms (where restrooms existed at all for people of color) and "white" and "colored" drinking fountains. If black people were permitted in an auditorium, they sat in the most remote corner of the highest balcony. It was illegal as well as socially unthinkable for blacks and whites to eat together in a public place.

Schools for black children were significantly inferior to schools for white children; blacks stepped to the rear of buses and lowered their eyes when passing whites on the street (especially true of black men passing white women). A misinterpreted glance could lead to threats, beatings, or in extreme situations, murder. Lunch counters, restaurants, and hotels in the white community did not serve blacks; downtown stores discriminated against them; and lynchings were not uncommon in rural areas.

Many white people who were otherwise enlightened resisted the idea of black families in their churches. Many held similar resentments and fears toward Jews as well, although discrimination against Jews was generally more subtle.

News of the war filled the headlines. Atlantan Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*, was pushing the sale of war bonds. A new cruiser named *Atlanta* was under construction. Meat and gasoline were in short supply and were strictly rationed. Two- and three-bedroom houses were still selling for $6,000, but a shortage was beginning to develop as construction resources were being diverted into war production. Streetcars ran out

Peachtree to 10th Street; Buckhead was in the suburbs, beyond the city limits. *The Arabian Nights*, in Technicolor, was playing at the Fox Theatre.

Meeting Locations

In May 1944, the Friends group was still meeting at the Congregational Church on Sunday afternoons, and George Hayes noted in his diary, "[Fourteen] present. Mrs. [Freeda] Johnston spoke on the Devil. She is now Clerk. Room was chill and everybody caught cold. Ashton Jones spoke on his seven months in a Federal Penitentiary. Fifty days in solitary confinement (room 6 feet by 9 feet, but could read). Spoke of young Negro there who told a group of 19 Quakers about George Fox. Regular Quaker meeting in Penitentiary. No racial segregation."

Ashton Jones was a quixotic crusader. He traveled about in a station wagon plastered with peace slogans. He often attended Friends meeting when he was in Atlanta. He became something of a celebrity some 15 years later when he was arrested and served a lengthy jail sentence for trying to desegregate Atlanta's First Baptist Church on Peachtree Street.

By June, Friends had moved to the basement of the Unitarian Church on West Peachtree Street, a building that later became The Abbey restaurant, then was demolished to make way for rapid transit lines. The group met there for several years, usually once or twice a month on Sunday afternoons to enable attenders to go to other church services on Sunday mornings.

The format of these meetings was more like that of a discussion group than of a worship group and seemed to focus on Robert Scharf, who attracted many visitors to hear accounts of his experiences in Austria and Germany. He told of hiding under a bed at a friend's house, while German soldiers entered and searched for Jews. He asserted that his hair turned white in that single night of terror as he watched their boots moving about the floor. Later still, he escaped from Austria through Holland, taking with him what George Hendricks described as "probably a million-dollar art collection, including many works by Kathe Kohlwitz." Later still, Scharf donated one of these drawings to Atlanta's High Museum. Both as a raconteur and a pianist, Scharf held his audiences spellbound (Boyte interview, 1977).

Caroline Forman and Agnes Scott Meeting

In the fall of 1945 Atlanta Friends were invigorated by the arrival of Caroline Biddle Lippincott Forman, a Philadelphian and birthright Friend, whose family had been in America for ten generations. Her husband, Henry Chandlee Forman, had come to teach art at Agnes Scott College. Caroline Forman was a vivacious, enthusiastic individual who organized a regular Sunday morning worship group on the Agnes Scott campus. She provided hospitality for Friends, international visitors, and students, with parties, games, and refreshments. On December 14, 1945, George Hayes recorded in his diary: "Quaker party at Formans' in evening. Working out treasure hunt with Henry Forman about Quakerism, but it didn't go off very well—'George Fox in refrigerator'—'Robert Barclay under Persian rug'—'Wm. Penn in Children's Nursery,' etc."

In 1946 a young history professor at Georgia Tech began to attend the small Sunday morning meetings of the Friends group at Agnes Scott College. He was George Hendricks, who had grown up on a farm in Bulloch County, Georgia, and had served in the Army in Europe in World War II. He had earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University with a dissertation focusing on the development of black communities in the Sea Islands during the Civil War. He had a dry sense of humor and a critical but realistic and understanding attitude toward Southern racial prejudices. In November 1947, at Haverford Meeting, he married Elizabeth Whittelsey. A native of New Jersey, Elizabeth had attended the University of London while she and her family were living in England. She and George met while both were teaching at Brooklyn Friends School. After their marriage, Elizabeth moved south with George, and they became active with Atlanta Friends.

For a while, the morning meeting continued at Agnes Scott and the afternoon meeting at the Unitarian Church, with a few individuals attending either or both. Elizabeth Hendricks recalls that at one time the combined Friends group held a large dinner for Rachel Davis Dubois, a prominent Quaker from Philadelphia, in the Unitarian Church, after it had moved to a new location on Boulevard at North Avenue. To enlarge their circle, Caroline Forman asked Phern Stanley and Elizabeth to call on persons with former Friends' contacts and invite them to meetings.

Caroline had many interesting friends and Quaker relatives whom she entertained when they came to Atlanta. Lucy and Arthur Morgan from Antioch College were guests, as were Catherine and Arthur Wilder (a brother of author Thornton Wilder), Henry and Lucy Gillett from Oxford Friends Meeting in England, and the Quaker wife of the British ambassador to the United States. Elizabeth described Caroline as "very straightforward, with just no concern whatsoever about titles, which is characteristic of Friends." She and Elizabeth picked up the ambassador's wife at the airport in the Hendrickses' new Jeep, which had been acquired to help plow the fields on their farm near Powder Springs (1985 reminiscences).

The Max Bond Letter

Atlanta Friends wrestled with such controversial issues as peace and race relations and occasionally made efforts to bridge the immense gap between the black and white communities. The landmark Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation did not come until 1954. But the little meeting was catapulted into a crisis in the fall of 1948 by what came to be known as the Max Bond letter.

Max Bond, originally from the West Indies, was a professor at Atlanta University, a historically black academic complex, consisting of several colleges, including Morehouse and Spelman Colleges. He was concerned about the growing alienation of black students there and wrote to the Friends World Committee (FWC) in Philadelphia asking about Friends and the Wider Quaker Fellowship. (FWC later became FWCC, Friends World Committee on Consultation.) The letter was forwarded to Friends in Atlanta, who again had to face the issue of an integrated meeting.

In response to this letter, members of the Atlanta Friends group—all white—held a very crowded and anxious meeting in the home of Eunice Cary, who lived on The Prado in Ansley Park, only two doors from what was the governor's mansion at that time. They decided they must find a location other than the Agnes Scott campus, where an interracial meeting would have been unwelcome. Eunice, who belonged to a Friends meeting in Chicago, was willing to have the group meet at her house, but her

son-in-law, a prominent physician, insisted that such a thing was impossible.

Elizabeth Hendricks, who presided at the meeting, was asked to seek a place where whites and blacks could come together on Sunday mornings for worship and a potluck lunch. She inquired about meeting at many churches, and they rejected the request. But William Parker, director of the YMCA on Luckie Street, agreed to accept such a gathering with the understanding that if problems arose, the decision would be reconsidered.

Move to YMCA

Thus, beginning in the summer of 1949, the Luckie Street YMCA became the home of the Atlanta Friends and remained so until 1958. Max Bond did attend a few times, occasionally bringing students or faculty members with him. The 1951 business meeting minutes record many visitors from Spelman or Morehouse. A bitter reminder of the time, however, is George Hendricks's recollection of Max Bond's statement that the "perfect punishment for Hitler would be to make him black and live in Georgia."

The Meeting cooperated in March 1949 with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in sponsoring a large and memorable peace dinner on the Atlanta University campus, the only place where such an interracial dinner could be held. Kirby Page, a prominent peace activist, was the guest speaker. Caroline Forman helped in making arrangements with Tartt Bell, executive secretary for AFSC, whose regional office at the time was in High Point, North Carolina. She was Tartt's hostess one January weekend and, with her customary enthusiasm, arranged for him to speak to two American Association of University Women (AAUW) groups, to a gathering of local Friends, and finally to audiences at Agnes Scott and at Emory. She commented, "No doubt he was exhausted when I took him to the train Monday morning!"

Early Leaders

At this time, Atlanta Friends were a small, fragile group. Some initial attenders had become less active. The Stricklands left Atlanta about 1950, after Maurice completed his medical train-

ing. George Hayes participated less and less because of other demands and because of his wife's illness. Later Robert Scharf drifted away. The Stanleys and the Hendrickses were still active, but the Hendrickses were also busy with their farm, their jobs, and then with children, who began arriving in 1951. Bruce McDuffie, a chemistry professor at Emory, became a leader. So did Emory Via, an Emory University alumnus, who married Margaret Johnson in a Quaker-style wedding in the chapel of the theology school at Emory.

Because there was as yet no official Meeting, Emory's and Margaret's fathers, both Methodist ministers, officiated at the beginning and end of the service, with the young couple exchanging vows in the Quaker tradition during the ceremony. Several black friends were among the guests, and the wedding was so unusual that it was covered by a local press photographer. Anne Hayes, daughter of George and Nina, also had a Quaker wedding about this time, held outdoors on the Agnes Scott campus, with a clergyman signing the certificate. The problem with the legality of these early Friends' marriages was solved only after the Meeting became an official entity. Lawyers Tad Moore, from the Meeting, and James Mackay, a friend of the Meeting, eventually learned that Friends' wedding ceremonies were legal when under the care of an official meeting.

Emily Calhoun became active in the Friends group, and her recollections of this period became a valuable source of information for this history. At the time, Emily worked at Southern Regional Council. This organization, founded in 1944, was concerned with civil rights, education, religion, business, labor, the community, and the professions. It was especially interested in improving race relations and combating poverty in the South. She had become acquainted with Friends through an article in *The Atlanta Journal*'s magazine about Nona Rust and AFSC work camps. Pursuing this interest, she met Caroline Forman, "the first live Quaker lady" she had ever encountered, and then participated in two AFSC work camps in Mexico (1985 Reminiscences).

According to the Vias, during the early meetings at the YMCA sometimes only two or three persons were present, especially during the summer. Elizabeth Taylor, who was to become Elizabeth Taylor Siceloff, was an attender in those days. On one

occasion, Phern Stanley was the only attender present until a sociology professor arrived with a group of his students who had come to see how a Quaker meeting functioned. John Stanley spoke at meeting for worship every Sunday he was present, and he was rarely absent.

"The Y seemed like a very bleak building," said Margaret Via. "We had a long, narrow room right on Luckie Street. Trucks stopped and shifted gears at the nearby traffic light. Occasionally there would be an accident in the middle of meeting, and everyone would wonder if we should break meeting, or was it being taken care of? When the windows were open, we were interrupted by the hymns from the Baptist Tabernacle across the street. Emory and I were custodians of the library, which was in a large, deep box that we brought each Sunday and put on the table" (Boyte interview, 1977).

Recalling the climate of the period, Emory added, "The times were indeed different, and the Meeting did represent one small place that was on the cutting edge. If you look back, it's not surprising that an enterprising sociology teacher wanted to expose his class to something different from what was going on in the society around them, so that they ended up at Luckie Street with Phern Stanley. . . . The Meeting did have a liveliness about it, and it had a substantial spirit of both younger and older people who thought that the society about them should be better than it was" (Boyte interview, 1977).

Community Outreach Projects

Seeking to implement their concerns with community outreach, the group began collecting soap, which hotels were dumping out each day, and shipping it to AFSC for distribution in Europe, where wartime shortages still prevailed. Clothes were also collected for AFSC. Phern Stanley was aware of deplorable housing conditions for blacks around Sam's Crossing in Decatur (DeKalb County), and Friends involved themselves in trying to improve the situation. They provided a work crew to help a small black church convert its basement into a daycare center. They also collected clothing for a black orphanage that had been ravaged by a fire.

Such projects helped to knit Friends together as they moved toward becoming an official meeting. Emory Via recalled, "We had

in our group those who ranged from being fundamentalist all the way to agnostic, and we sat ourselves down, eyeballed one another, and said, 'OK, what is it we can say together?' We didn't share each other's social action views, we clearly didn't share each other's theological views, and yet for either historical reasons or respect and sentiment, or because of what we had actually done together, we decided to take that step to bind ourselves together in a more formal way." Emily Calhoun recalled that one regular attender observed, "Sometimes I wonder what we all have in common except that we got tired of being hollered at on Sunday morning!" (Boyte interview, 1977).

Throughout the spring of 1951 Friends were discussing the formation of an official meeting and examining the queries of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice.* Frequently, visitors were present on Sundays: traveling Friends; attenders from Spelman and Morehouse Colleges; sympathetic individuals from the University of Georgia at Athens; or guests from Macedonia community in north Georgia, where the Atlanta Friends group had established contacts. Business meetings regularly took place in private homes, often with Caroline Forman, with the Vias, or with Bruce and Winnie McDuffie.

Becoming a Friends Meeting

The Atlanta Friends group asked the American Friends Fellowship Council (later absorbed by Friends World Committee) in Philadelphia to help establish a Friends meeting in Atlanta. The council agreed to send someone for special meetings for worship and business the second weekend in May 1951 to discuss procedures. Among those who signed the register on that eventful weekend were (in the order of the signatures): Caroline Forman, Bruce and Winifred McDuffie, Ernest and Claudia Ferguson, Elizabeth and George Hendricks, Emily Calhoun, John and Phern Stanley, Emory and Margaret Via, Robert Scharf, Bill Houston, O. M. Hadley, Betty Shouse, David Hoble, Roy and Elva Berg, Dorothy Chew, Fannie Ruth Gilbert, H. D. and Adaline Lawson, Lawrence Forman, Joe Watkins, B. J. Marbut, and John Eaves. Caroline Forman, who had been such a leader in the Atlanta Friends group since 1945, moved back north with her husband and children in June.

In July 1951, Friends received a letter from the Fellowship Council authorizing them to organize as the Atlanta Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. They held lengthy discussions regarding membership and began to formulate their own statement of Faith and Practice. Various individuals wrote different sections. Those involved gathered at members' homes to discuss and revise their statement. It was completed soon after the Meeting was formally organized. Later, the Meeting adopted the *Faith and Practice* statement of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Still later, when Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) published its own *Faith and Practice* statement, Atlanta Friends adopted it.

Although the formation of Atlanta Monthly Meeting can be dated from May 12 and 13, 1951, it was September 30 when the official organization was finalized. The following notice appeared in *The Atlanta Constitution* on Saturday, September 29, 1951:

> The Society of Friends (Quakers) Sunday will organize a monthly meeting in Atlanta at a session slated for 10:30 A.M. at the YMCA. The meeting marks the first affiliation of local Friends group with the larger body of the Society of Friends.
>
> Six persons are expected to become members and two persons are to become affiliate members on Sunday. The meeting will follow the traditional Quaker method of silent worship. There is no planned service and no minister. Any member who feels that he has a message of value to the group speaks briefly on that subject.
>
> Emily Calhoun, chairman of the organizational committee, announces the Atlanta Monthly Meeting group will continue to welcome persons of all races and creeds to its meetings for worship. The meetings are to be held at 11 A.M. each Sunday at the YMCA.

A biographical sketch of Meeting members written in 1958 names Emory and Margaret Via, John and Phern Stanley, Bill Houston, and Ernest Ferguson as charter members. Ernest Ferguson transferred his membership from High Point, North Carolina, however, and the transfer may have arrived somewhat later. Elizabeth Hendricks, who held dual membership in Atlanta and Haverford Meetings, was another charter member, as was Emily Calhoun. George Hendricks was an affiliate member.

In the fall of 1951, Emily Calhoun, serving as recording clerk, temporarily replaced Bruce McDuffie, the Meeting's first clerk, who left Atlanta in September for a position at New York University. At the end of the year, Emory Via became clerk of the fledgling Meeting (expecting, however, that he would be leaving the following September to be on the faculty of the Labor Education Division of Roosevelt College, in Chicago).

That autumn, another young couple, who were to become some of the Meeting's most active and loyal members, moved to Decatur. They were John (Jack) and Margaret (Peg) Kaiser, who, with their children, moved to the area from Chicago. Peg was a birthright Friend from McNabb, Illinois, whose forebears had come to America on the staunch little ship *Welcome* about 1682.

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CREATING A FRIENDS CENTER

In 1951, the Friends Meeting, which had been so enthusiastically made a reality with the May meeting and then officially organized in September, felt acutely the departures of the Formans and the McDuffies. However, the Stanleys, the Vias, Emily Calhoun, Bill Houston, and Ernest Ferguson helped to keep things going. The Kaisers, although newcomers, immediately became active. The Hendrickses continued to participate. Private homes continued to provide the setting for meeting for business each month, although meeting for worship was held at the Luckie Street YMCA.

Contacts Beyond Meeting

In its social outreach, the Meeting was still involved with DeKalb County's neglected black community. Carolyn Clark, the county's director of public welfare, was not a Friend, but she became much interested in slum conditions uncovered by Friends. She made extensive use of a set of photographs provided by the Meeting to publicize miserable housing conditions around the Decatur community of Sam's Crossing. The Meeting explored with AFSC the possibility of setting up a mobile unit, in cooperation with the

DeKalb Public Health Department, to demonstrate rural sanitation practices, such as door and window screens to keep out vermin, and the construction of privies. However, the project was never implemented.

Contacts with wider Quaker groups were important to these early Friends. James Walker, of the American Friends Fellowship Council in Philadelphia, visited from time to time. J. Barnard Walton, executive secretary of Friends General Conference (FGC), stayed with the Kaisers each year on his way to Florida. In September 1952 several local Friends participated in a Peace Conference sponsored by AFSC at the Atlanta YWCA.

Atlanta Friends collaborated whenever possible with local groups that shared concerns about peace, race relations, merit employment, and other social issues. They cherished their contacts with people such as George Mitchell, executive director of the Southern Regional Council, and his successor, Harold Fleming; Grace Hamilton, secretary of the Urban League; and the Hungry Club at the Butler Street YMCA. Phern Stanley served on the board of the Atlanta Council on Human Relations, as did future Meeting members Nan Pendergrast and Harry and Janet Boyte. The Meeting joined the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, a long-established affiliation of ministers and churches.

A First Day school was started in June 1952 with a discussion group for adults preceding meeting for worship. A class for children began. Peg Kaiser remembered carrying "a big brown box" with First Day school materials to meeting each Sunday at the YMCA. Well into adulthood Kaiser and Hendricks children and others still remembered "Uncle John" Stanley and the butterscotch candies he always had for them in his vest pocket.

In these early years, William Shields, business manager at Gammon Theological Seminary (which later became the Interdenominational Theological Center), discovered the Meeting. Bill saw the Meeting's ad in the *Atlanta Daily World* asserting "Everyone Welcome." He said to his wife, Senono, "Surely these people know this is a Negro paper," but he decided to investigate. With some trepidation, he went to the YMCA one Sunday morning, hesitating briefly outside the door where Friends were meeting. He was warmly welcomed and later said he knew it was all right "when they put me on a committee." Bill was the Meeting's first

black member. He remained active for years until he moved to Maryland, then Philadelphia. His children also attended the Meeting, as did Senono part of the time.

Emory and Margaret Via left Atlanta in fall 1952. Phern Stanley became clerk of the Meeting in January 1953. Emily Calhoun continued as recording clerk, and John Stanley was treasurer. Emily left Atlanta in 1953 for a job at Pendle Hill, the Quaker retreat center in Pennsylvania, although she returned several years later, as did the Vias.

Interns in Industry Project

Through its High Point, North Carolina, office, AFSC arranged Interns in Industry projects in Atlanta during the summers of 1953 and 1954. Ann Queen, AFSC secretary for college programs, was in charge of these internships, which enlisted college students in local service projects. The students found nearby employment and shared their experiences with one another. Atlanta Friends were marginally involved in these programs, which were housed on the Morehouse College campus until 1955. That year, Ann Queen, seeking a local director, asked Alvin Gaines of Atlanta Friends Meeting to direct the program with her.

Alvin was a native white Southerner whose outlook on race had been influenced by his mother's work as a secretary at the YMCA and her contacts with people from all parts of the world. Alvin was a supervisor of radio education for the Atlanta Public Schools. He first encountered Friends through a BBC tape recording called *The Man in Leather Breeches*, which introduced him to George Fox. He was so moved by the zeal and sense of brotherhood among early Quakers that he began to search for a Friends meeting in Atlanta. Although Friends at first seemed to him utterly "invisible," in summer 1952 he finally discovered the group meeting at the YMCA. He and his wife, Martha, began to attend regularly.

In 1955 the Interns in Industry project was to be based again at Morehouse College; and Alvin felt sure that his boss, Ira Jarrell, superintendent of Atlanta schools, would veto his participation in an interracial program on a black campus. However, she told him, "Well, Alvin, it's your summer vacation; you do what you want to do. Just don't noise it about." So Alvin and Martha, with

their daughter, Terry, moved to the Morehouse campus for the summer and lived with the students in one of the dormitories. "We took a cue from our daughter, who started immediately playing with one of the daughters of a Morehouse professor," Alvin explained. The composition of the summertime group was diverse: a Japanese, a young French woman from Paris, two Southerners, and others from the North and the West.

Because of Atlanta's rigid segregation laws, the Interns in Industry group was isolated from the larger community. In July they decided to go on an outing to Stone Mountain, then owned by the Venable family, and the site of an annual Ku Klux Klan rally. (James Venable was for many years the head of the Klan in Georgia. The family later deeded the property to the state to create Stone Mountain Park and its Civil War memorial.)

Alvin tried to dissuade the students, to no avail, then tried to charter a bus, but was turned down everywhere. He finally managed to rent a flatbed truck for the expedition. Leaving the truck at the base of Stone Mountain, the young people happily climbed to the top. Passersby were shocked to see an interracial group. Alvin and Martha heard someone whisper, "Did you see them? He was holding her hand!" Alvin was sure that they were in trouble; and when they returned to the foot of the mountain, they found a sheriff and his deputies holding back a large, hostile crowd. The sheriff angrily demanded to know who was in charge.

Fully aware of the problem, Alvin asked innocently, "Sheriff, what's the matter?" In recounting the episode many years later, Alvin said that the sheriff's face "just fell, because out of my mouth poured this grits-and-gravy Southern accent. His whole case just blew up in his face." Alvin believed that the officer had assumed that only a Yankee would be seen socializing in public —and especially on Stone Mountain—with black people. Alvin persuaded the sheriff to hold off the crowd long enough for him to get the students into the truck and drive off. As they left, the young people began singing, "Marching through Georgia," a song of Sherman's Union troops (1985 reminiscences).

Atlanta Friends continued to meet at the YMCA, paying an annual rent of $60 for the space used. Friends wrestled with their concerns for better human relations. Phern Stanley began serving on the Southeastern Regional Executive Committee of AFSC and was a member of its Working Party on Race Relations. At that

time, blacks were seeking the right to vote in elections from which intimidation and various literacy tests barred them.

At the national level, Friends voiced opposition to universal military training and to the McCarran Act, which restricted immigration, especially for Asians. Letters from Atlanta Friends expressing such sentiments went to Georgia Senators Walter George and Richard Russell, as well as to Georgia congressmen.

Supreme Court Ruling on Segregation

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision (*Brown* vs. *Board of Education*), banning segregation in the public schools. This ruling plunged the states with separate schools into a maelstrom of controversy. Governor Marvin Griffin of Georgia pledged, "Come hell or high water, races will not be mixed in Georgia schools." The Georgia Board of Education adopted a resolution to revoke the licenses of any teacher supporting or teaching mixed classes. However, Dr. Rufus B. Clement of Atlanta University was elected to the Atlanta Board of Education, and a suit was filed in the U.S. District Court to desegregate Atlanta schools.

By 1957 Atlanta Friends were giving deep consideration to a home of their own. The Atlanta Monthly Meeting on March 17 approved an annual budget of $1,325, with $1,000 of the amount earmarked for a building fund. Ernest and Claudia Ferguson donated to the Meeting a lot they owned on Niles Avenue for use as a meetinghouse site or for sale, with proceeds to go toward the building fund. At this time David Hawk served as treasurer of the Meeting, and Martha Gaines was recording clerk.

David and Eloise Hawk, Elliott (Tad) and Ann Moore, and Anna Watson had become active in the Meeting. In fall 1957 Robert and Patricia Westervelt, artists and potters, came to Agnes Scott College and to the Meeting. Patricia Perry Westervelt was from a long line of Quakers. Her ancestor, Edward Perry, arrived in Massachusetts in 1639 and later became the first clerk of the first Friends monthly meeting in the North American colonies. The Perry family lived for generations in Westerly, Rhode Island, where Patricia grew up. Isobel Cerney, who came to Atlanta with her husband, Edwin, an art teacher at Spelman, also became active in the Meeting.

Isobel Cerney's request for membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting caused a bit of hesitation, for she was rumored to be "pink," a hue close to "red," meaning Communist. In the late 1950s, at the height of the Cold War, during Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigations, this was a dangerous position. The House Committee on Un-American Activities, aided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, vigorously hunted for citizens with known Communist sympathies, presuming that they might be traitors to the United States. Some in Atlanta Meeting were concerned about Isobel's leftist political leanings.

On the evening of a specially called meeting to discuss Isobel Cerney's membership, the issue came down to the question, Does she believe in God? Isobel, who was present, was asked to go upstairs out of hearing while the group weighed the decision. It was pointed out that there are broad interpretations of God. It quickly became apparent that neither Isobel's political nor religious stance should become impediments, and her request for membership was approved. She became a member of the Atlanta Friends Meeting in 1960.

Isobel Cerney was later remembered precisely and gratefully by Frank Wilkinson, a California activist. His association with Atlanta civil rights activists, who were at the time being secretly investigated by the FBI for suspected communist connections, led to his arrest in Atlanta's Biltmore Hotel in 1958. Eventually, his case was tried by the U.S. Supreme Court (*Wilkinson* vs. *The United States*) in 1961. He lost (the vote was five to four) and was returned to Atlanta to enter the Fulton County jail on May 1, 1961.

Isobel Cerney, who had followed Frank Wilkinson's case, wanted to show her support of him. On the day he was taken to jail, she put a dozen red roses and a copy of *The Journal of George Fox* in a sack for the jailer to give to him. The jailer warned her, "You can't give a man flowers," but he allowed the book. In defiance, Isobel impulsively ripped off the head of one of the roses and tossed it into the sack with the book.

In recounting the incident to Janet Rinard in 1993, Frank Wilkinson credited this small gesture with possibly saving his life. He had been thrown into a cell with 15 local white criminals who had heard of this white man's association with Martin Luther King, Jr.; they were obviously hostile. When the jailer brought

Isobel's sack, the inmates grabbed it and rummaged inside. They threw aside the book but kept the bedraggled red rose. They propped that rose up on the edge of a tobacco can, added water from the bathroom, and kept it there for the 11 days Frank Wilkinson stayed with them. The rose bonded the men with Wilkinson, and they never bothered him. As for *The Journal of George Fox*, Wilkinson read it over and over until the pages became tattered (Rinard interviews).

A Women's Group formed and met with some regularity between 1957 and 1961. Assembling in the homes of members, they read Bible passages and various inspirational selections, such as Kalil Gibran's *The Prophet* and Quaker materials. Anna Watson, Peg Kaiser, Claudia Ferguson, Phern Stanley, Patricia Westervelt, and Isobel Cerney consistently took part in the group. For some time they were involved in the work of the Churchwomen United of Atlanta, until it was decided that they were not eligible because the Meeting did not belong to the National Council of Churches.

The Women's Group made bandages for a hospital and raised money for a gift to the Polio Foundation in recognition of Lucy Ferguson Avery, daughter of Claudia and Ernest Ferguson, who was a polio victim confined to an iron lung, a primitive type of respirator. Until Jonas Salk's development of a vaccine in 1953, thousands of young people annually contracted polio. The Women's Group dissolved in 1961 because its members found it difficult to attend evening meetings, but the dissolution was not permanent.

Establishing a Friends Center

Pursuing the idea of a meetinghouse, Atlanta Friends in February 1958 appointed a building committee, consisting of Jack Kaiser, Elliott (Tad) Moore, Alvin Gaines, Bill Shields, Joe Parker, and Tom Raaen. There was profound disagreement as to the type of building required. Some members favored a simple, quiet place in the country; others insisted that it was important to be in the city, where the Meeting could concern itself directly in urban and racial issues. Joe Parker proposed a Quonset hut or a prefabricated building as an economical solution; but others wanted to buy a house, possibly along Ponce de Leon Avenue, where many

large old homes were being sold and converted to other uses as people moved to the suburbs.

Added pressure came in November 1958 when Friends found that they must leave their meeting place at the YMCA on Luckie Street, due to extensive renovations to the building. Through the hospitality of Harry Richardson, president of Gammon Theological Seminary, Bill Shields arranged for Friends to meet each Sunday morning on the Gammon campus at 9 McDonough Boulevard, Atlanta.

As the Meeting was struggling over the issues concerning a meetinghouse, the discussions took on new dimensions. Phern and John Stanley proposed a Friends Center in Atlanta—a homelike place open to all—that would house the Meeting and perhaps would play a significant role as the community faced present and future problems. In February 1958 Phern invited Jean Fairfax of the AFSC Community Relations Committee to come from Philadelphia to explore this idea with the Meeting. Atlanta Friends responded quickly to the suggestion.

A Committee on the Friends Center Proposal submitted a report signed by Phern and John Stanley, Margaret and Emory Via (then back in Atlanta), Patricia and Robert Westervelt, Alvin Gaines, and William Shields. They recommended acquiring a house in the "white" area of the city. In her memorandum dated June 10, 1958, Margaret Via, as chair of the committee, stated: "We have been challenged by the possibility of a larger vision—a Friends Center in Atlanta as a key city of the South, concerned not only with a customary local program, but also, augmented by national assistance, with a witness for thoughtful action in the wider community."

At the end of June, Phern Stanley and Bill Shields attended the Friends General Conference (FGC) at Cape May, New Jersey, and were encouraged by the widespread interest and support they encountered for an Atlanta center as Southern witness to Friends' concerns, especially in the burgeoning struggle for human rights and better race relations. Spurred on by such encouragement, Atlanta Friends at their meeting for business July 5, 1958, set up a center committee consisting of Tad Moore, Bill Shields, John Stanley, Bob Westervelt, and Alvin Gaines. Its stated purpose was to establish a Friends Center approved by the Meeting and to plan a fund-raising campaign, to incorporate as a

nonprofit religious body, to receive and to disburse funds, to locate and to purchase property, to set up both local and national advisory committees, and to hire a staff for the center's program.

This ambitious project was implemented in September 1958, when the Atlanta Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Inc., was officially incorporated by Ben W. Fortson, Jr., Secretary of State for the State of Georgia. The corporation was authorized for 35 years, with the right of renewal and the stated purpose "to engage in religious, charitable, and educational work, including without limitation the historic religious, charitable, and educational testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends."

The Articles of Incorporation set up a board of nine members in three groups, with periods of service for one, two, and three years, respectively. These trustees were Emory Via, Joseph W. Parker, and Phern Stanley, Group One; John W. Stanley, David B. Hawk, and Robert F. Westervelt, Group Two; and William A. Shields, John (Jack) Kaiser, and Alvin M. Gaines, Group Three. They drew up bylaws concerning their responsibilities and the duties of the three offices of president, secretary, and treasurer, defining their relationship with the Atlanta Friends Meeting. They affirmed: "[We] do hereby lay upon ourselves and our successors that the board of trustees give expression to the wishes of the Atlanta Friends Meeting for Business in all matters which concern the Corporation and its activities."

The board was considered a separate entity from Atlanta Friends Meeting. It was recognized that widespread national interest and support must supplement the efforts of the tiny local meeting. In 1958 the clerk reported 25 Meeting members over the age of 18 and nine adult Meeting attenders, although the brochure developed for the fund-raising referred to "25 families."

Events proceeded rapidly. Early in November John Stanley made an exploratory visit to Philadelphia, where Jean Fairfax and Barbara Moffett, also of the Community Relations Committee at AFSC, arranged for him to meet with many "weighty Friends" and executive staff personnel. Possible sources of support included several Quaker foundations that might make contributions. John returned home, reporting that Friends in the Philadelphia area were enthusiastic in their response to his presentation. Jean Fairfax wrote to Atlanta following the visit that "the sympathetic reception which he received was due very much to the cause

which he was representing and to the fact that everyone recognized the courage which it must take for a small group to accept responsibility for launching such an important venture as a Center."

Raising Funds Nationwide for the Friends Center

Early in 1959 Paul J. Furnas became chairman, and Margaret E. Jones secretary (with a small monthly stipend), of a National Advisory Committee to promote the fund campaign. Called Friends of Atlanta Center, it enlisted Quakers in many parts of the country, printed letterheads, prepared a brochure, and undertook systematic solicitation from individuals, meetings, and Friends' foundations. The campaign goal was set at $70,000, with $50,000 allocated to the purchase of a building and $20,000 for an initial two-year program. In December 1958 the drive had been bolstered by an anonymous gift of oil stock amounting to $10,000, arranged through Frank Loescher, a Philadelphia Friend, and Harold Fleming of the Southern Regional Council.

Meanwhile, Atlanta's troubles deepened. The Temple, Atlanta's Reform synagogue on Peachtree Street, was bombed in 1958. Statewide hearings began to sound out public opinion on the possibility of closing all public schools to avoid desegregation.

For the Friends national fund appeal, it was helpful to have endorsements from such individuals as Benjamin E. Mays, president of Morehouse College; Grace T. Hamilton, executive director of the Atlanta Urban League; Ralph McGill, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution;* and Harold C. Fleming, executive director of the Southern Regional Council, as well as such distinguished Friends as Henry J. Cadbury, all of whom were quoted in a flier sent out with the fund-raising brochure. Margaret Jones quoted AFSC's Clarence Pickett as saying to her of Atlanta Friends, "I think the hand of the Lord is laid on them."

The campaign proceeded vigorously. In helping to promote interest, the Stanleys attended Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in March and New York Yearly Meeting in July, while the Westervelts attended North Carolina Yearly Meeting and Baltimore Yearly Meeting during the summer. One Friend from England sent 30 shillings. The Meetinghouse Fund contributed $3,000. Other grants from Friends foundations came from the Danforth Fund,

the Ivy Fund, the Aaron Norman Fund, and the Stern Family Fund. In the fall Friends learned that the Anna H. and Elizabeth M. Chace Fund had donated $20,000. From her vacation spot in the Virgin Islands, that tireless supporter, Jean Fairfax, wrote on October 30: "The good news about the Chace gift reached me as I relaxed on a terrace overlooking the Caribbean. My shout for joy really startled some people nearby, but how could I even try to explain to them my burst of happiness?"

Partly due to the untimely death of Paul Furnas, only $52,000 of the $70,000 goal was actually raised. Foundation grants from Friends organizations and donations from approximately 300 Friends throughout the country, as well as those in Atlanta, contributed to this total. Meeting Minutes for February 1960 state that the clerk, Phern Stanley, "announced that the Meeting has given close to $5,000 to the new home."

Quaker House Acquired

Meanwhile the dream of an Atlanta Friends meetinghouse that would also house the Friends Center was rapidly becoming a reality. On short notice, Friends learned that the large brick-and-half-timber house at 1384 Fairview Road, N.E., at the corner of Oakdale Road, was available for purchase. Trustees looked at it and thought that it met their requirements perfectly. However, another church group was also interested, and John Stanley urged Paul Furnas, only months before his death, to fly down from Philadelphia to give immediate approval to the transaction. The owner, Bessie Criswell, had Quaker ancestors and wanted Friends to have the property. Everyone was enthusiastic about the well-built, comfortable house with its tile roof, spacious rooms, and pleasant, wooded grounds. On behalf of the trustees, John Stanley signed the contract for the house on October 9, 1959, for $45,000, with a down payment of $15,000, followed on November 30 by an additional payment of $10,000. At the end of 1959, a total of $43,957.52 in cash contributions had been received for property and program, with additional pledges of $5,200 outstanding.

A formal meeting of the trustees on November 9, 1959, gave official approval to the purchase of the property, which became known as Quaker House. David B. Hawk was named vice presi-

dent of the board, after an amendment to the bylaws added that office. Alvin Gaines was experiencing pressures in his career, so in September Phern Stanley replaced him as president. Ernest Ferguson and Elizabeth Hendricks were added to the board to replace Joe Parker, who had resigned, and Emory Via, who had taken a position at the University of Wisconsin.

Friends held their last worship service and potluck meal at Gammon Theological Seminary on November 8. Several guests attended, including Henry and Lydia Cadbury of Haverford, Pennsylvania. The following Sunday, November 15, 1959, Atlanta Friends met for the first time in their new home. The newsletter, edited by Senono Shields, reported: "The building was entirely without furniture, but each worshiper carried a chair from home, and suitable equipment was provided for the children." Looking back, Peg Kaiser recalled, "The house looked huge in those days, and never did we think we would fill it. We came with our chairs and sat in the meeting room, which was on the porch in those days, and the children sat with us. Eloise Hawk and I started the First Day school in the living room upstairs. With that and two little rooms and a bath, we thought we were just in heaven! We bought secondhand furniture and kindergarten furniture, and got supplies. Then we had to begin to furnish the kitchen. With very little money, we bought some utensils, and Bill Shields brought glasses from Gammon to continue our potlucks. We needed to furnish the house, but there was no consensus on anything. How does one furnish a meetinghouse? Keep it simple? Furnish it lavishly?" (1985 reminiscences)

Elizabeth Hendricks chaired the Furnishing and Decorating Committee. The services of an interior decorator, Carolyn Becknell (Mann), at a cost of $250, were employed to coordinate plans. At this time, four multipurpose square tables with matching chairs were ordered. These proved useful in the dining room/library. Soon after, long, wooden schoolhouse benches for the meeting room were acquired from Spelman College, where they had been stored in an attic. While on a redecorating job at Spelman, Carolyn discovered the benches, which had originally been sent south by the John D. Rockefeller family, oil magnates and founders of Spelman College. She called Bob Westervelt, saying, "I've got something wonderful. Get a truck!" (Rinard interview, May 1994) A few benches for which there was no space in the

meeting room were stored in the attic at Quaker House. Some were used at the Pub (described in Chapter Seven), and some at Horizons School after Quaker House was sold in 1989. All eventually reached the new meetinghouse in Decatur in 1991.

Friends spent long, devoted hours of work in painting, scrubbing, repairing, and other efforts to make the building just what they had dreamed of having and to meet every requirement of building inspectors and fire marshals. Not least of their pleasures were the big magnolia trees on the lawn and the roses in the garden. For a number of years, meeting for worship continued to be held on the enclosed sunporch adjacent to the living room.

Outside groups almost immediately began making use of the new, desegregated facility at Quaker House. By March 1960 an interracial group of YMCA college students had held a conference there, an interracial group of philosophy professors chaired by Richard Hocking of the Emory faculty had met and dined there, and an integrated study group on world politics was holding regular meetings.

Meeting Members in 1959–60

A list of Meeting members dated December 31, 1959, gives the following names of persons in the Atlanta area: Annelle Easlic, Ernest and Claudia Ferguson, Alvin and Martha Gaines, David and Eloise Hawk, George and Elizabeth Hendricks, Jack and Peg Kaiser, Elliott and Ann Moore, Joseph and Dorothy Parker, Ruth Pendergrast, Enid Raaen, Chilton Ryan, William and Senono Shields, John and Phern Stanley, Anna Watson, Robert and Patricia Westervelt, and William and Beatrice Roosa. Out-of-town individuals on the list are John and Helen Bross, Talladega, Alabama; Robert and Frances Brown, Colorado Springs, Colorado; William and Gay Houston, Northfield, Minnesota; Helen F. Topping, Peace School, Japan; Marinus Van Weele, Princeton, New Jersey; Emory and Margaret Via, Madison, Wisconsin; and Emily Calhoun Wilson, Purcellville, Virginia. First Day School members listed at this time were Terry Gaines; Tommy Hawk; Lisa and Charles Hendricks; Michael, Kirk, and Jeffrey Kaiser; Martha Jane and Millie Sue Parker; Elizabeth, Willexia, and Billie Shields; Gerry Thielman; and Julie, Sarah, and Clayton Westervelt.

Funds from all over the country had been raised with the avowed intention of employing a program director, and this was yet to be done. Friends tended to rely heavily on AFSC in this, as in many other ways. Visiting the Meeting in February 1960, Margaret Jones, who had worked so hard and faithfully on the fund campaign, stressed the importance of having the Meeting take more responsibility.

Further impetus for plans for Quaker House occurred April 22, 1960, when the Meeting and Quaker House trustees hosted a gathering from AFSC that included Colin Bell, national executive secretary, and Barbara Moffett, both from Philadelphia, and Wilton Hartzler, executive secretary for AFSC's Southeastern Regional Office in High Point, North Carolina. Local guests from the Atlanta community were Leslie Dunbar, director of the Southern Regional Council; Robert Thompson, director of the Atlanta Urban League; and M. Carl Holman from Clark College. They agreed on the importance of finding a suitable director and helped to draw up a job description.

Yungblut Becomes Program Director

Late in May an application for program director of Quaker House came from John Yungblut, a former Episcopal priest and Harvard alumnus. He was working on a special assignment from AFSC, seeking out and visiting "isolated liberals" in Mississippi and Louisiana. John met informally with Meeting members and Quaker House trustees for several days, and his fiancée, June Warner, flew down from Nashville so that Friends could become acquainted with her as well. On the evening of June 3, the trustees formally invited John to accept the position of program director. They approved his appointment on June 26, 1960, with a salary of $6,000 and furnished living quarters, including utilities, at Quaker House. He was initially employed for an 18-month period beginning in October 1960; was to receive a two-month vacation with pay each summer for "study, writing, and reflection"; and was "to be granted time periodically to keep alive the contacts made with individuals and/or organizations in Louisiana and Mississippi." John and June, each of whom had been previously married and divorced, were married before coming to Atlanta and

arrived that autumn to take up the challenge of the new Friends Center.

An interesting description of John was written in 1965 in a letter to Bill Shields regarding some Quaker House program plans. Jan de Hartog, Dutch Quaker and author of *The Peaceable Kingdom* and other novels, wrote: "John Yungblut . . . is, in my delighted opinion, one of the world's smoothest and most gentle violators of virtually anything connected with bureaucracy. I can never hope to match either his brazen courage, nor the breathtaking innocuousness of his style, which make sheer rebellion sound like a revival meeting of the Southern Baptist Church."

3

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

Few decades have been so turbulent as the sixties. Students participated in sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters, and protest marches and demonstrations on both sides of the racial question flared across the South. Frustrated police herded hundreds of defiant blacks with their white sympathizers into local prisons.

Ironically, while the pressure to change focused on the South, race riots erupted in Northern and Western cities, with angry crowds burning and looting ghetto areas. America's youngest president ever, John F. Kennedy, took a stand against Russian missile installations in Cuba, and for days the world held its breath, teetering on the brink of nuclear war. Fighting escalated in Vietnam, a country most Americans had never heard of; and as the draft began to take young lives, college students burned their draft cards and disrupted college campuses across the nation. Before the close of the decade, three of the nation's leaders—President Kennedy, his brother Robert, and Martin Luther King, Jr.—were assassinated. And near the end of this extraordinary decade, the United States put a man on the moon.

John Yungblut's tenure at Quaker House coincided closely with the ascendancy of Martin Luther King, Jr., as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and leader of

the civil rights movement. As John recalled later, "We came with Dr. King, and we left with him. It seemed like the whole world had been overturned in the interim. It was so exciting . . . because we really had the impression that something was happening that would not be lost." (Atlanta Friends, along with other supporters of SCLC, referred to King by his doctoral title to show respect, even though the use of titles is not a Quaker custom. Martin Luther King, Sr., pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, was affectionately called "Daddy King.") (Berea tape)

This was the setting in which John took over the new Quaker House program. Elizabeth Hendricks said that John was "a gift from heaven. He took hold quickly, immediately reaching out to the community, finding like-minded people who had skills." The vision that he held consisted always of both an inward and an outward approach to the Friends Meeting and to social action. His 1964 annual report states: "The plumbline by which we have been guided in all our planning [is] the conviction that the genius of Quakerism at its best has been a delicate balance between the cultivation of the inwardness of religious experience and a wise implementation of a deep passion for social reform." Spiritually, John was a mystic. He often insisted that without spiritual sustenance, a person would "grow weary in well-doing."

By this time, in the face of strong opposition, a suit to desegregate Atlanta public schools had been making its way slowly through the courts. Under court order, in 1961, ten black students in the 11th and 12th grades were admitted to four all-white high schools, with desegregation scheduled to work down one grade each year. Citizens owed much to an ad hoc organization, HOPE (an acronym for Help Our Public Education). Opponents of desegregation threatened to shut down the statewide school system. HOPE fought energetically and lobbied to keep it open. A number of Meeting members and attenders were active in this organization. Elizabeth (Betty) Harris, HOPE's executive secretary, suggested to John Yungblut that Quaker House might be used as a meeting place for students facing school desegregation.

Desegregation Programs

It is not surprising that some of the first programs of the Yungblut years were concerned with race relations and desegregation. In

mid-February 1961 Paul Rilling of the Southern Regional Council began a seminar on the issues involved in school desegregation. The following month Martin Luther King, Jr., began a ten-week seminar at Quaker House on "The Philosophy and Practice of Nonviolence." This was King's first series of talks to an integrated audience in Atlanta. He personally conducted half of the programs, sending his assistant Wyatt T. Walker and others to substitute for him when he was out of town.

A summer program was offered at Quaker House to help prepare high school students for the beginning of desegregation that fall. Fifty young blacks who had endured the first elimination in the transfer process and approximately thirty selected white students were invited to two initial meetings. Betty Harris had arranged for Lillian Smith, a Southern author, to address the first group. Smith, who had pioneered the cause of better race relations, both in her books and at a girls' camp she ran in north Georgia, aroused the enthusiasm and interest of the students. At the second gathering, Rev. Samuel Williams, a philosophy professor at Morehouse College and president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), spoke and was equally well received.

Following these meetings, the ten black students finally chosen for transfer were brought to two special meetings with selected white students. Parents also were invited to the meetings. As John Yungblut pointed out, the students "were full of anxiety whether they would be received and accepted or rejected, and what the shift in their schools might mean with regard to their academic productivity and performance. So we wanted to build friendships that would be supportive." At one of the meetings, Rual Stephens, assistant school superintendent, spoke and answered questions. His presence was considered a significant breakthrough for the school administration. (Berea tape)

Two final meetings of the high school groups were held. At one, Benjamin Mays, president of Morehouse College and one of President Kennedy's appointees to the Peace Corps Commission, spoke about the Peace Corps to the fascinated young people. At the second gathering the Atlanta Theater Group performed four sociodramas, which led to free and eager discussions.

These were not the only efforts to promote interracial understanding among young people during that eventful summer. The

high school students at the two initial meetings had set up a committee with adult advisers to organize five seminars during the summer. "We offered what they wanted," John Yungblut explained. "They chose philosophy and music and advanced things of this kind. June [Yungblut] made an immense contribution in helping to teach these courses and in helping me gather the staff. . . . We had no difficulty getting the best teachers . . . because these teachers, black and white, wanted to make a contribution, too, so they were volunteers." (Berea tape) Professors from Georgia State, Emory, Agnes Scott, and Morehouse led the classes. At the same time, Quaker House introduced an integrated program for younger children, seven to 11 years of age, in drawing, painting, and creative movement. About a dozen youngsters in each group met for two hours, one afternoon a week, during the summer.

Other Quaker House Programs

John Yungblut continued to emphasize both the outward and the inward dimensions of his mission at Quaker House. While the young people's programs were going on, a spring seminar on "Classics of Religious Devotional Literature" was conducted by Claude Thompson of Emory's Candler School of Theology and Richard Hocking, also from Emory. On July 1, the first of the "Quiet Days" that John introduced was held under the leadership of Richard Gregg, author of *The Power of Nonviolence*. In the fall, another Quiet Day followed, and Alvin Gaines, Meeting Clerk and by then director of Visual Education for the Atlanta Schools, conducted a seminar on "Quaker Faith and Practice." Subsequent seminars included such topics as "The Mystical Element in Religion," led by Walter Stace, professor emeritus from Princeton, and "Rufus Jones: Twentieth-Century Mystic," led by John. Mary Hoxie Jones, daughter of Rufus Jones, attended one of these sessions, and reminiscenced about her father. John regularly led a small group of "seekers" of various religious backgrounds, exploring such themes as "A Lover's Quarrel with the Church" and "Changing Theological Patterns," which examined writings of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Merton. Guest speakers were often called upon to contribute their thinking on these topics. Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farms, Georgia, conducted a Quiet

Day in 1965, reading some of his *Cotton Patch* translations of the New Testament.

Other innovations in the Quaker House program included an international student group that began to meet regularly and a group of ministerial students from Emory's Candler School of Theology, Columbia Seminary, and Interdenominational (formerly Gammon) Theological Seminary. It was John's hope that these ministerial students, especially those from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, might help to promote interracial understanding in their communities.

At that time, Leslie Dunbar of the Southern Regional Council gave a seminar on "Civil Liberties and Civil Rights." George and Elizabeth Hendricks presented a course on "Parent-Child Relationships," in which they enlisted the participation of Robert Coles, the young psychiatrist who was then in Atlanta to study the effect of desegregation on black transfer students. Coles also used Quaker House as a place to interview transfer students.

Still another new program was "Evening with the Arts." This became a regular cultural series, usually facilitated by June Yungblut and drawing upon the leadership of such creative individuals as Robert Westervelt of the Meeting and Agnes Scott; Chappell White from the Music Department at Emory; Frank Wittow of the Academy Theater; Dulcie Barlow, Meeting member and harpist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; Carolyn Gold of Contemporary Dance; and Jan de Hartog, noted novelist and Friend. These lively Evening with the Arts programs continued through the Yungblut years, usually on Sunday evenings. They were very much in accord with June's interests.

A slender, vibrant, intense, dark-haired woman, June wrote poetry, rode horseback, played tennis, and worked on her doctoral thesis at Emory. Her dissertation on Samuel Beckett combined literature and philosophy. Despite her helpfulness at Quaker House, June was a rather private person and found the constant comings and goings at Quaker House somewhat difficult. Reminiscing with Perry Treadwell in 1988, John recalled, "June found this community aspect a little trying, but she was a very good sport about it and lent herself to it as much as she could." (Treadwell interview)

June made another contribution through the gourmet breakfasts that she prepared for clergy of different faiths whom John

gathered once a month at Quaker House to discuss involvement in civil rights and to share theological perspectives. "These breakfasts were very sumptuous meals," said John. In addition to the clerical breakfasts, for about a year the Yungbluts had small prayer groups with Vincent and Rosemary Harding, Andrew and Jean Young, and Staughton and Alice Lynd. The meetings were significant to all of them. (Berea tape)

New Members' Activities

During 1961 new members of the Atlanta Friends Meeting were becoming increasingly active. Among them were Dwight and Irene Ferguson, who were to be outstanding leaders for the ensuing 20 years. Both a social work administrator and divinity school alumnus, Dwight came to Atlanta as director of the Federal Children's Bureau for six Southeastern states and consistently assumed program leadership roles in the Meeting and on the Quaker House board of trustees. Irene came from a Mennonite background in rural Iowa and was a quiet, caring presence in Meeting affairs, remarkable for her skill in greeting and remembering newcomers and welcoming them to Sunday evening suppers at the Ferguson home. Noyes Collinson, with his wife Nancy (who took back her maiden name of Wilder following their divorce a few years later) arrived in December 1961. Noyes came to Atlanta with AFSC as director of a new merit employment program. He had directed several Community Chest campaigns in California and New England and was a man of wide cultural interests, proud of his Princeton degree. Both Noyes and Nancy became influential in the Meeting.

The coming and going of black and white strangers on quiet, tree-lined Fairview Road was not without its effect upon neighbors of Quaker House. At one point they tried to have city officials invalidate both the Friends' use permit and their parking privileges along the street. Jack Kaiser attended a hearing at city hall on the issue and managed to convince authorities that Friends were harmless to the neighborhood. The use permit had already been authorized, and parking for 50 cars was approved. Friends discussed the possibility of constructing a parking lot behind the building, but this was never done. An open house and tea to

which neighbors were invited seemed to ease somewhat their suspicions about the mysterious and unfamiliar activities in their midst.

All of this activity essentially stemmed from the Friends Meeting. Meeting for worship was held every First Day, with some variation in time and scheduling. The burgeoning Quaker House programs infused much vigor into messages as well as participation by members and attenders. At times, some of those present felt that messages tended to be too political or to emphasize social action rather than spiritual growth. Noyes Collinson once was eldered for repeated messages on political and social issues, and as a result refused for a year to speak during meeting. There were occasions when meeting for business questioned actions by the Quaker House board of trustees as being too independent. However, the trustees consistently invited all Friends to attend their meetings and reported regularly each month to meeting for business.

In October 1962 Friends began to hold regular Faith and Practice suppers, studying the Faith and Practice testimonies of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. These gatherings often led to discussions and recommendations regarding the Meeting in general. For example, John Barlow had urged Friends to keep permanent records, and in 1963 the Faith and Practice group formally recommended that the Meeting build a storage vault in the basement of Quaker House for these records. Discussion of recordkeeping continued for some time, including the possibility of microfilm, which was considered too expensive. In March 1964 meeting for business set up a committee to carry out this responsibility of recordkeeping. Nothing came of it, although a fireproof locked filing cabinet finally was obtained in 1976. It was invaded more than once, and some records were scattered and even lost through the years.

First Day school was an ongoing concern. In the fall of 1962 Joseph Vlaskamp, assistant secretary of Friends General Conference, conducted in-depth weekend discussions of First Day school and its objectives. Securing teachers always was a problem, as was caring for young children during meeting for worship. A woman was employed to take care of the nursery during meeting, an arrangement that proved fairly satisfactory. Materials for use in First Day school were also a problem. Some Friends

wanted Bible study and a curriculum suggested by Friends General Conference, while others considered this approach much too doctrinaire and restrictive.

In November 1962, 25 or 30 Meeting members and attenders gathered around a fire in the fireplace at Quaker House to examine past accomplishments and new directions. George Hendricks presided. He invited Phern and John Stanley to review the Meeting's history and their own hard work and vision in bringing about a Friends Center, leading to the acquisition of Quaker House in 1959. John Stanley concluded by affirming, "Our purpose for the House has not been to have crowds, but to have a place where men and women of all creeds and races and concerns could feel perfectly at home. There is nowhere else in Atlanta where people can meet on such a basis—the House is a real demonstration center."

Elizabeth Hendricks then reviewed the "Meeting Today," commenting on its surprising growth and the need for "more sharing and communication." She was followed by Dwight Ferguson, who analyzed what the Meeting had meant to him. He mentioned silent worship, the belief of that of God in everyone, individual responsibility for ministry, emphasis on consensus, a positive approach to problems, and building relationships among Friends. Following lunch together, John Yungblut described his own spiritual journey and how he had become a Quaker. He stressed the importance of "speaking truth with love."

At the time of this meeting, there were already some signs of discord between the Meeting and the Stanleys, who had served the Meeting so diligently, especially in bringing the Friends Center into being.

Rift with the Stanleys

In 1961 Alvin Gaines served as "presiding clerk" and Phern Stanley as "working clerk." By 1962 and 1963 the tragic rift between the Meeting and the Stanleys grew deeper. For years they had been deeply involved in all Meeting and Quaker House affairs. John Stanley kept firm control of fund-raising, and Phern had been clerk or "working clerk" since 1952. She spent part of almost every day at Quaker House, even arranging and rearranging

contents of cabinets. Then, as corresponding clerk she carried on a voluminous correspondence with Friends in many parts of the country.

There were both overt and underlying reasons for the break with the Stanleys. One problem was a matter of style. To John Stanley, John Yungblut did not demonstrate Quaker simplicity, but exhibited patrician tastes. Bob Westervelt described John Stanley as "a stubborn, strong-willed guy." (1994 reminiscences)

A source of disagreement was a monthly contribution from the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. When John Yungblut had been working for AFSC, visiting isolated liberals in Mississippi and Louisiana, this fund had contributed regularly to his work. When he moved to Quaker House, this contribution was shifted to him there, with an understanding that he might on occasion still help AFSC in those states. The contribution of $300 a month was to be divided between John and secretarial service. John Stanley insisted that trustees had known nothing about this contribution when they offered John his $6,000 a year salary and living quarters, and that the contribution amounted to having a second employer.

John Yungblut felt that the arrangement had been understood all along and asked Allan Knight Chalmers, president of the fund, to write Phern Stanley as clerk, explaining the situation. Chalmers stated that through AFSC, John Yungblut might still be asked to help in Louisiana and Mississippi under special circumstances, but explained, "We use Mr. Yungblut only in those matters which are equally important to the Friends. . . . We have a mutually advantageous arrangement, which helps your local work to be stronger, and makes effective state and area-wide values when emergencies arise."

At an acrimonious meeting of the board of trustees on December 16, 1962, Chalmers's letter was discussed in detail. The Stanleys were highly critical of John Yungblut's acceptance of this contribution, although by this time, most fund-raising was carried on through his efforts. After heated discussion the trustees agreed that John Yungblut could accept the contribution from the NAACP fund, channeled through Chalmers, and could continue the work with AFSC "so long as no strings were attached."

Underlying all this hard feeling may have been a festering, yet perhaps unrecognized, resentment on the part of the Stanleys

that Quaker House was slipping out of their control after they had dedicated so much of themselves to its creation. As early as 1960 Margaret Jones, who had helped greatly with the original fundraising, expressed concern that the Stanleys' work was too much for them to carry. She wrote to the Westervelts from her home in Moorestown, New Jersey, following a visit to Atlanta: "She [Phern] and John [Stanley] want to really keep as much control as they can. . . . They just can't carry so much responsibility in justice to themselves and to the Meeting. It's a hard job for all of you to firmly insist on far more sharing of responsibilities."

Bob Westervelt remembered Phern in the early days of their acquaintance as "a marvelously warm and gentle spirit." (1994 reminiscences) Whether due to illness or stress, she seemed hostile to many Meeting members, and hard feelings continued to grow. At the April 1963 meeting for business, matters had reached such an impasse that "Dwight Ferguson laid upon the hearts of members the urgency of resolving the crisis situation confronting them." Those attending this meeting were John and Dulcie Barlow, Noyes and Nancy Collinson, Dwight and Irene Ferguson, Ernest Ferguson, George and Elizabeth Hendricks, Jon Johnston, Jack and Peg Kaiser, Robert Westervelt, and John and June Yungblut. Two significant minutes were adopted at this meeting, in the Stanleys' absence.

One minute stated: "The Monthly Meeting is in enthusiastic accord with the flow and outreach of the Quaker House program, and supports John Yungblut in the development of convincing Friends' witness in Atlanta."

A second minute stated: "In our efforts to restore the health and spirit of our Meeting and to find a new basis for operation, we should strive to deepen and strengthen our belief that there is that of God in every man and to find ways of expressing this in our relationship with each other." It was agreed to ask the trustees to meet weekly until accord was reached, especially in matters affecting finance and program, and to bring additional Meeting members onto the board of trustees. Wider participation by Meeting members was encouraged.

The Stanleys soon ceased participating in Meeting affairs. Writing to Elizabeth Hendricks on May 1, 1963, Margaret Jones expressed satisfaction over the actions taken, but added, "Does the Stanleys' absence mean, I wonder, a real (or temporary)

withdrawal? That would be rather sad—but might have to be accepted in order to strengthen the Meeting."

A year later, Paul Turner, AFSC associate finance secretary, wrote to the Stanleys from Philadelphia: "Marie [his wife] and I are sad to know that you folks are presently on the 'sideline' so far as this program is concerned. As we see it, the Meeting certainly needs you, and you must need the Meeting. We hope you get together soon."

Unfortunately, this was not to be, although many in the Meeting also wished for a reconciliation. Meeting for business in October 1964 adopted a minute expressing "the weight of the Meeting's concern for their [the Stanleys'] absence from participation in the continuing growth and outreach of the Atlanta Monthly Meeting and Quaker House." A visitation committee consisting of Patricia Westervelt, Noyes Collinson, and Dwight Ferguson was named to call upon them. These Friends visited with the Stanleys and reported in December that John and Phern wanted to continue their membership but felt that they could not participate in the Meeting's "present concerns." According to minutes of the trustees' meeting in October 1966, the Stanleys did attend that meeting, bringing with them visiting Friends from Friends World Committee. Meeting members regretted that reconciliation with the Stanleys had never occurred.

When John Stanley died in 1971 at the age of 87, Phern held his funeral at Quaker House. It was not a customary Friends memorial service. The casket was in the meeting room. Phern asked some young men, who as boys had loved to go fishing with John, to serve as pallbearers. Later, Phern was forced by ill health to enter a local nursing home. Irene Ferguson visited her there, but when she returned for a second visit, she learned that Phern had been moved away from Atlanta.

Many years later in 1994 Friends learned from John Stanley, Jr., of Bremerton, Washington, that Phern was still living, at age 95, in a group home in Eatonton, Georgia, near her stepdaughter, Louise Ashurst, who visited her regularly. Years after their departure from the Meeting, Bob Westervelt remembered the Stanleys' contribution. "Without the Stanleys," he said, "there would never have been a Quaker House." (1994 reminiscences)

Participation in Peace Activities

Peace was a major concern of Atlanta Friends. In November 1960 Peg Kaiser, accompanied by Isobel Cerney and Paula Wilson, an Agnes Scott student, went to Washington, D.C., to attend an observance of the 300th anniversary of the first Friends Peace Testimony. Nearly 1,000 Friends from 38 states, Canada, and Costa Rica took part in this reaffirmation of the 1660 statement. The 1660 Peace Testimony, addressed to Charles II by George Fox and five other Friends, stated:

> We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing of evil, and again to move us into it; and we certainly know and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdom of the world. . . . Therefore we cannot learn war any more. (Quoted in William Comfort's *The Quaker Way of Life*, p. 153)

Trading places in shifts, Friends at the 1960 gathering circled the Pentagon in a silent vigil. On the whole, they felt that their reception was friendly, and that "thousands of people in the Nation's capital who never go to meetings or read peace literature, have glimpsed, through us, that 'there is nothing to fear but fear itself.'"

At the end of December 1961 John Yungblut participated in a five-day international peace gathering in Beirut, Lebanon, with representatives of 12 countries. This group, sponsored by War Resisters International, established a World Peace Brigade in the hope of coordinating international peace efforts. There was widespread sentiment for peace at this time in the face of Cold War tensions and the arms race.

A Friends Witness for World Order took place in Washington at the end of April 1962. John Yungblut, Nancy Collinson, Isobel Cerney, and Kay Gilliland from the Atlanta Meeting attended this testimony. Friends held a meeting for worship Sunday morning on the grounds of the Washington Monument, then walked silently to the White House for a vigil. On Monday they conducted

a day-long walking vigil that surrounded the State Department building and sent delegations to visit several embassies. President Kennedy received a delegation of six members from the Witness.

Meanwhile, in Atlanta in March 1962 Nobel Laureate and peace activist Linus Pauling addressed a capacity audience at Glenn Memorial Chapel on the Emory University campus. Quaker House, along with the AFSC, was a sponsor of this gathering, which led to the formation first of the Atlanta Peace Council, then Atlanta Peace Fellowship. Both organizations sought to strengthen local interest and participation in the peace movement. William Roosa was chair of the Meeting's Peace and Social Order Committee at this time. He was followed by Staughton Lynd, a professor at Spelman College and Meeting member who helped form the Atlanta Peace Council.

Prison Ministry

Another concern of those days was prison ministry. Noyes Collinson initiated "A Fellowship of the Concerned for Prison Visitation," which met regularly as a study group for more than a year. Several Friends repeatedly visited inmates at the Federal Penitentiary, and there were tennis matches between the "Quaker House Panthers" and inmates, which the inmates usually won because they had a Canadian champion on their team.

A highlight of the prison program was a pre-New Year's Eve party held at the penitentiary's Honor Farm on Panthersville Road with inmates as hosts and some 20 Friends attending as guests and entertainers. During the program, the lights failed, and Dorothy (Dee) Parker played "By the Light of the Moon" on the piano, followed by Dulcie Barlow, playing her harp by flashlight. Kenneth Carey, an inmate who with prison officials had hosted the event, later reported to Noyes that one of the men present came to his bedside after the gathering and tearfully told him, "I've been in jails most of my life. . . . I believe in few things, and people aren't one of them. However, those people who were here tonight I would trust with my life. They were so sincere and pleasant. It was hard for me to believe that anyone would care about my future."

Growing Concerns

At the beginning of 1963, according to the State of the Meeting report for that year, there were in the Meeting only "16 families and individuals as well as a number of active and interested attenders." Even so, Quaker House, which had seemed so commodious three years earlier, was feeling cramped, especially for First Day school. Remodeling the basement to create more classroom space became a priority. Meeting for business in November 1962 authorized the Finance Committee to proceed with plans and fund-raising for this expansion. By February committee chairman Jack Kaiser reported that approximately $740 for this purpose was in sight. Called "the happy room," the remodeled basement was ready for use when First Day school began in the fall of 1963.

Another addition was the tiny study behind the garage, constructed as a retreat for John Yungblut. It was equipped with a makeshift desk, a Franklin stove, and bookshelves to the ceiling. Here John wrote his book, *Discovering God Within*, which was first given as a series of lectures for the Quaker House program.

Earliest mention of the Meeting's involvement in assistance to refugees occurred during this period. Through AFSC's Refugee Resettlement Committee and the World Council of Churches, a Yugoslav refugee was to be sponsored. However, this individual was denied admission to the United States. Subsequently an Egyptian refugee, Farouk Abdel Malek, was received by the Meeting in June 1963 and stayed for several weeks with Meeting members Carl and Jacqueline Wilen. Malek was a Seventh Day Adventist, and that church group took him into their care, obtaining a job for him in a bakery in Tennessee.

This was an exciting and perilous time on the national scene. The Cuban missile crisis, in which the nation barely averted a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, occurred in the fall of 1962. The civil rights movement was escalating rapidly from the days of lunch counter sit-ins and freedom rides in 1961. In May 1963 Americans watching television news were horrified to see police dogs and fire hoses knocking down youthful demonstrators in Birmingham on orders of police commissioner "Bull" Connor. In August, a quarter of a million people, blacks and whites, assembled peaceably around the Tidal Basin between the Washington

Monument and Lincoln Memorial. Among those present was Harry Boyte, a Meeting member who worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference between 1963 and 1966. Harry was in the hotel room where Martin Luther King, Jr., was preparing his speech the night before the march. According to Harry, King, who had a rare ability to sense the mood of his audience, abandoned his prepared text and expanded the "I Have a Dream" theme as it fired the enthusiasm of the crowd. In his lyrical "Let Freedom Ring" conclusion to this speech, King mentioned Stone Mountain, the memorial to the Confederacy that Alvin Gaines and his interracial group of high school youths had climbed in 1955.

Then in September, Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church, the nucleus of that city's civil rights demonstrations, was bombed. Four little black girls attending Sunday school perished. Atlanta Friends were so dismayed by the tragedy that they sent $100 contribution to the pastor of the church and wired President Kennedy: "We deplore the inhumanities rampant in Birmingham and plead that federal protection be extended forthwith to all youth, particularly the Negro youth attending integrated schools in that suffering city." The Meeting also sent letters of protest to the editors of the *The Birmingham News*, *The Atlanta Journal*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, and *The Atlanta Inquirer*.

First Regional Gatherings

By 1961 the local Meeting was reaching out to other meetings in the area. At the annual meeting of the Southern Appalachian Association of Friends (SAAF) in May of that year, Atlanta was represented by Jack and Peg Kaiser and their children, Kie Fullerton and her daughters, Jeanne Mansfield and her daughter, and Patricia Westervelt. The Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM), comprising chiefly meetings in Florida but including the Augusta, Georgia, Meeting, was organized about the same time. Both groups extended invitations to Atlanta to participate, and William Shields was named Atlanta representative to SEYM in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1961. Although Atlanta Friends consistently sent warm greetings to SEYM, members participated increasingly in SAAF gatherings.

In May 1963 the Barlows, the Kaisers, and the Collinsons attended the SAAF gathering at Crossville, Tennessee; and there-

after ties with that group (which became SAYMA—Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association—in 1970) continued. Friends also frequently attended the annual gatherings of Friends General Conference at Cape May, New Jersey. Later FGC gatherings met in several different locations.

Interest in extended fellowship was a recurring theme, and the Meeting sought appropriate locations for a retreat. The first retreat took place at Quaker House in July 1960 and was led by Paul and Louise Pfeutze from the University of Georgia, but Friends began looking for a place that could accommodate more individuals for more than a day. Jack and Gene Singletary offered the use of their farm at Plains, Georgia, but this was felt to be too distant and to have inadequate accommodations for the number of people who might attend. During most of 1963, explorations continued for a suitable place that would accept integrated participation.

Rock Eagle Camp refused to have an integrated group, and the Georgia state parks equivocated, stating that the parks were "not barred to anyone," but suggesting that, "for their own protection, Negroes not be included just now." Thus, the Faith and Practice suppers and First Day potlucks continued to be the primary places for fellowship. At the suggestion of Irene Ferguson, who chaired the Hospitality Committee for many years, a special evening program for newcomers was planned for October 4, 1960. This was a social, get-acquainted event, with dessert and coffee and some presentation of Quaker outlook. It proved so successful that it became a precedent for many such evenings.

4

INTO THE INNER CITY

Quaker House was overflowing with activity in the early 1960s. In his 1966–1967 annual report, John Yungblut stated: "We joyfully accept the absurd assignment of striving to make Quaker House at once a School of Contemplation and a Hot Bed of Nonviolent Revolutionaries." On the letterhead was inscribed the outline from Michelangelo's painting in the Sistine Chapel of the hand of God touching the hand of Adam, along with the caption: "Toward a Creative Community through a House of Living Dialogue." Ongoing programs reflected this conception.

Again in the summers of 1962 and 1963, black transfer students in the public schools were brought together with a number of white teenagers, mostly those whose parents were involved with Quaker House activities or who were openly supportive of desegregation. Integrated six-week seminars were offered again, based on the students' choices, in play reading, philosophy, mathematics, drawing and painting, music appreciation, basic English, and preparation for the integrated classroom. The play-reading group studied *Macbeth*, then went together to an Academy Theater performance of the play. Younger children,

including two of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, and two of the Pendergrasts', were brought together in integrated classes. Esther Turner conducted a children's story hour, which became a regular Friday afternoon feature. She was one of the most active participants in many Quaker House programs. High-schoolers also began meeting on Sunday afternoons to discuss many topics, from religious to civil rights issues.

Other programs continued to flourish. The International Student Fellowship met regularly. Students from the three local seminaries met on a quarterly basis to encourage friendship and understanding among young ministerial scholars. John Yungblut's annual report stated that "all the young white Methodist pastors [from Emory University] returning to Mississippi two years ago were signers of the public manifesto [there] insisting on freedom of the pulpit for presentation of racial issues. Most lost their parishes, but the testimony was felt throughout the church."

Quiet Days continued to be held for withdrawal, meditation, and prayer. Evenings with the Arts regularly brought together individuals sharing interests in drama, music, poetry, and dance. Sometimes these groups attended together the production of a play that they had read. Constantly there were seminars, often reflecting John's absorption with "The Mystical Element in Religion," although many were conducted by guest leaders and concerned such current issues as "China and the Far East" or "The Crisis in Black and White," using Charles Silberman's book of the same title.

It was John's practice to present an annual report each fall to Meeting members and supporters in the community. Meeting member Ralph Spillman, a quiet English professor at Georgia Tech, who had been a conscientious objector in World War II, recalled helping John with these reports "over a glass of wine." A location for an integrated dinner still was difficult to find. These took place initially at Interdenominational Theological Center at the Atlanta University complex and later in one of the private dining rooms at Emory University. One objective of the report dinners was to solicit local contributions for Quaker House programs, as finances never ceased to be a problem. In 1963 the dinner was scheduled for the day that President John Kennedy was assassinated. Friends considered calling the dinner off but

decided to go ahead anyway, partly because guest speaker Jan de Hartog already had arrived in Atlanta.

At all times, improvement of race relations was a major focus. During his years at Quaker House, John Yungblut was consistently active with the Friends Committee on Race Relations and served as its chairman from 1965 to 1967. Inspired by the Friends National Conference on Race Relations, which he and Bill Shields had attended at Earlham College in 1961, John convened a Southwide Conference on Race Relations in Atlanta in June 1962. Fifty-eight individuals attended, and some 20 Meetings were represented from every southern state except Alabama. David Scull of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Alex Morrisey of AFSC challenged the group to implement Quaker principles with action. Andrew Young (who would later become United Nations ambassador, then mayor of Atlanta), who was new to the staff of SCLC, described efforts to register black voters. The conference concluded with meeting for worship and a picnic lunch in the garden at Quaker House.

In October 1962 John Yungblut also shepherded a group of prominent Friends to Mississippi for interviews with civic leaders and government officials. This visitation followed the admission of James Meredith, the first black student at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, and subsequent violent riots in the small city. The visiting Friends felt not only the anguish of some leaders, with whom they discussed the situation, but also the resistance of others, especially members of the White Citizens Council, a group dedicated to the maintenance of segregation.

Segregated housing conditions were another concern at this time. Realtors were selling houses in formerly all-white neighborhoods to black families. This practice, called "block busting," lined realtors' pockets while sowing the seeds for "white flight" into the suburbs. Quaker House cooperated with the Atlanta Council on Human Relations to present a series of discussions opposing restricted housing, particularly in DeKalb County, where Quaker House was located.

Expansion into the Inner City

There was a growing feeling within the Meeting and among the Quaker House trustees that the Quaker House program should

expand to reach more disadvantaged persons in the larger community. As John Yungblut stated: "Our seminars and other forms of program drew . . . more or less privileged people, Negro and white, in terms at least of education. . . . At this juncture we felt that a balanced program for the long [haul] required, in addition, a bold attempt to minister to the city's least privileged people." Expanding on this vision, Dwight Ferguson stated, "The way in which we work can be so closely related to worship that I believe they can be one and indistinguishable." Discussing the search for an appropriate neighborhood for service, John wrote in his 1962 annual report:

> We have found ourselves wanting to make a contribution to the "inner city." The "inner city" is a place in Atlanta, as in every large city, where poverty, disease, illiteracy and delinquency all seem to concentrate. . . . While we are searching for a place, perhaps a neighborhood, we have also been searching for a way. The question as to *how* we can be effective in a neighborhood within the inner city—where problems seem almost overwhelming—has always been with us in our discussions. . . . It is not our responsibility to take over the burdens of a community by providing more adequate service for them. By giving encouragement and help we can work *with* people rather than *for* them, and in this way assist them in realizing their own potential for growth and well-being. We have also come to realize that we must start with a community where it is, rather than trying to impose our standards and our way.

The search for such a community first led Friends to Cabbagetown, an area just south and east of downtown Atlanta. It had long been peopled by disadvantaged, tough-minded whites who had come to the city from rural areas to find work in the adjacent Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill on Boulevard. To serve them, a 1964 Meeting newsletter reported, Churchwomen United had established the Savannah Street Mission. The Churchwomen asked John Yungblut's help in administering their program. Dwight Ferguson recalled that he, John Yungblut, and Bill Shields repeatedly visited the neighborhood, slowly touring the streets, noting that no blacks were to be seen. Although Bill's was a fairly light complexion, they eventually saw a scrawled sign held up by some residents: "This is a white community." That convinced

them that Quaker House outreach could not function in such a segregated setting.

Through the Atlanta Community Council (a metropolitan planning group) and the Urban League, a section called the NASH area was selected. Named for adjacent streets, Northside Drive and Ashby, Simpson, and Hunter (now Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive) Streets, the area was a pocket of poverty near Atlanta University. It already had a neighborhood organization, called NASH Corporation, which encouraged Quaker House involvement. The actual area targeted for the Quaker House program was known as Vine City. The Atlanta Housing Authority provided facilities in Eagan Homes, one of its units, for study-hall space, where activities began.

While there is still a great deal of poverty in every American city, the context of Southern black poverty in the 1950s, 1960s, and earlier was unlike anything later generations might imagine. The South lagged behind the rest of the nation in jobs, wages, commercial and industrial development, and education. So, whatever aspects of the American dream were to be had, Southerners had less, and what white Southerners had, black Southerners had the least or none at all. Differences were especially evident in schoolrooms, furnished with out-of-date, grimy textbooks and broken equipment that white schools had discarded.

For most of the adult black urban population in the 1950s and early 1960s, just a few generations removed from slavery, only menial service jobs were available. Black maids were paid $3 to $5 a day—and car fare, if the employer felt generous. In steamy restaurant kitchens, black hands prepared meals that laws forbade black customers to eat, as they were banned from "white" establishments until enactment of the Civil Rights Act. Entire generations of black children grew up in the shadow of emerging highrise buildings but never set foot in city libraries, concert halls, zoos, or museums. And when television entered the living room, whatever knowledge, culture, and entertainment it reflected excluded blacks from the screen entirely.

It was against this backdrop that Quaker House began to prepare for the challenge of service to the NASH community, and in the winter of 1963–64 Quaker House set up two 10-week seminars to train volunteers. The first, "Atlanta's Inner City: A Call for Help," drew on resource people from many local agencies.

The second seminar was called "War Against Poverty in Atlanta's Inner City." Nearly sixty volunteers were recruited from college campuses and older adults in what John Yungblut liked to call "the wider Quaker House Fellowship." It was a thoroughly integrated team. The inner-city program was designed to promote adult literacy through the Laubach method of teaching adults to read and write, and it also provided supervised study halls and one-to-one tutorial assistance for elementary school pupils. Gradually the program came to concentrate on schoolchildren, with the support of the Atlanta Public Schools.

National "War on Poverty"

The Quaker House program was a timely initiative. In his State of the Union message in January 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson declared "an unconditional war on poverty in America." This was followed by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, signed into law on August 20. In his statement on that occasion, President Johnson proclaimed: "We will reach into all the pockets of poverty and help our people find their footing for a long climb to a better way of life. We will work with them through our communities all over the country to develop comprehensive community action programs—with remedial education, with job training, with retraining, with health and employment counseling, with neighborhood improvement. We will strike at poverty's roots." Subsequently on the local scene, the Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA) was established to help implement such programs, and local agencies were able to tap into funds to assist with projects that they developed in accordance with federal guidelines.

Quaker House began work on its own without tapping into any federal programs. As chair of the Meeting's Program Committee, Dwight Ferguson reported to business meeting in April 1964, "The NASH project has been launched. Mary Hardin and Irene Ferguson between them are devoting four nights weekly to conducting a study hour period at Eagan Homes. Attendance ranges between 20 and 30 persons nightly. Esther Turner has teachers on a one-to-one basis at Ware School. Three teachers have one student each in adult literacy." In addition, "John Yungblut reported that with the approval of Dr. John Letson, Superintendent of Atlanta Schools, a tutorial program is being set up for 18

eighth graders at Washington High School with the view to averting dropouts." The Eagan Homes study hall, conducted in cooperation with the public school administration, began with 15 students from fifth to seventh grade from Ware, Bethune, and Carter elementary schools.

Otis White, Jr., the principal of E. A. Ware Elementary School, requested an after-school program with 40 tutors for 40 fourth-grade students. Most of these tutors were from nearby college campuses. They also served as big brothers or sisters, taking children to the art museum or other locations that would expand their cultural horizons. After driving one group to the art museum, John Yungblut described in the July 1964 *Friends Journal* how he watched "child and tutor pairs, often hand in hand, move slowly from picture to picture talking together about what they saw, the child learning new words related to visible (and therefore experienced) objects. . . ."

This sort of activity involved considerable planning, and Quaker House was the scene of many meetings between volunteers and school officials. Dwight Ferguson recalled that on one such occasion, Otis White observed, "This is the first time I have ever talked with a white woman as an equal." It was a touching commentary on the times and on the changes taking place.

Meeting support in the early days of the inner city program was enthusiastic. In August 1964 the Meeting passed a minute stating that it "is gratified with the evaluation of the NASH project launched under Meeting's auspices as its outreach into the inner city. Meeting members encouraged the preparation of this special minute to carry appreciation of the conspicuous contribution made by John Yungblut in initiating the project, guiding the volunteer training program, and participating in every detail of the project. . . ." At this time, Friends even hoped to establish a second Atlanta meeting in the NASH or westside area. An interesting note, however, is that of some 25 volunteers enrolled for the first inner-city training seminar in fall 1963, only six were actually Meeting members or attenders. Throughout the years of involvement, by far the majority of participants were either adult "friends of Quaker House" or students from Morehouse, Morris Brown, or other Atlanta University colleges, usually on a paid work-study program with Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) funds. By November 1964 business meeting minutes reported:

"There is something less than the expected response from volunteers and there is the problem of keeping high morale among the volunteers."

National Student Program in Atlanta

Not all the programs with which Friends were involved in Vine City were initiated by Quaker House. Several were sponsored by others but relied on extensive support and encouragement from Atlanta Friends Meeting. One of these was the Ecumenical Voluntary Service Project of the National Student Christian Federation in summer 1964. Another was the work of Alice Haines, an Earlham College alumna who came to Vine City in fall 1964 with AFSC's Volunteer International Service Assignments. A third was the colorful work and activity of Hector Black on his own initiative as a resident of Vine City, described later in this chapter.

The National Student Christian Federation program tied in especially well with the volunteer work Friends were already doing in Eagan Homes and nearby schools. Quaker House was asked to help plan and supervise a project that brought twelve college students from various parts of the country to Atlanta to work with small groups of children. Bill Shields's daughter, Bette, was one of these students. The group was provided with "camp-style housing" in Eagan Homes, and Friends helped supply necessary furnishings and utensils. During the six weeks from June 22 to the end of July, each college student, drawing upon the talents of many adult volunteers in dance, drama, and art, planned a morning program with a group of the children. In the afternoons the students worked on repairs to nearby houses. Paul and Elizabeth (Pat) Fenske, cochaplains at the Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia, were in charge of the project. To coordinate plans each week, they met with John Yungblut, Dwight Ferguson, and William Shields from Quaker House; Esther Turner, coordinator of the tutoring programs; Henry Pace of the Urban League; Elsie Edmondson of NASH Corporation; and Harvey Michael, manager of Eagan Homes.

On one occasion, Irene Ferguson arranged for the students to go on a weekend to north Georgia, where the Fergusons had a cabin on Lake Burton. The weekend included a visit with Lillian Smith at her home on Screamer Mountain near Clayton. Irene

recalled that the interview took place during a terrible thunderstorm on the mountain. Lillian was a nationally known author and pioneer in race relations in the South; and her novel, *Strange Fruit*, about the love between a white man and black woman, was cautiously passed around in brown paper bags among residents of Clayton.

The students' program was supplemented during that summer by local high school, college, and adult volunteers from the ongoing Quaker House program, coordinated by Esther Turner. Mike Kaiser, a high school student at the time, reported in the fall 1964 Meeting newsletter:

> We started the program at 9:30 by singing songs. Then we had dramatics or playing ball, or other sports outside. I helped with the 10-year-olds and they had boundless energy. They loved playing baseball and relay games. We went swimming several times. We visited a fire station, a barber shop and the airport. We would come back and discuss the trips. After the activities we went to the Art Room. In this class I felt that the real person came out of each child in their painting and drawings. They loved to work with their hands, and they made papier mâché animals and mobiles of wood. Our day ended at 12:30.

Eagan Homes Nursery

Peg Kaiser recalled that following the summer program, volunteers started a nursery for preschool children in the Eagan Homes facility. "We again went out looking for supplies and things for our nursery," said Peg. "Then we had everybody bring in library books, just by the dozens, and we had to catalog them and get them straightened out. . . . Mary Strong came along, a black woman in the neighborhood, and she did a lot. . . . She finally took over."(1985 reminiscences)

John Yungblut later described Mary Strong as "a wonderful woman of great strength and dependable integrity" (Berea tape).

The greatest help in the early stages of the nursery came from Alice Haines, who moved into Eagan Homes in fall 1964. Assigned by AFSC, she worked under the supervision of Quaker House. She shared an apartment in the NASH area with another woman, a young black schoolteacher. In addition to helping with the nursery in cooperation with mothers in the neighborhood, she helped

recruit and train college-age tutors for Ware School. Another helper who came onto the scene fortuitously was Susan Bady, an Antioch College student spending two work terms in Atlanta's inner city. Susan became the first white waitress in Paschal's restaurant, and she, too, found a room in the area. The restaurant was owned by the Paschal brothers, prominent black entrepreneurs. It was a historic gathering place for civil rights activists and a familiar meeting place for blacks and whites. Susan also helped with the tutorial program and with Operation Dialogue.

Operation Dialogue was a program of the SCLC, which Harry Boyte initiated to develop communication between low-income black and white citizens. Harry, a member of the Meeting, had been manager of the Metropolitan Atlanta Red Cross Chapter. From 1963 to 1966 he served as a special assistant to Martin Luther King, Jr., at SCLC. In Operation Dialogue, he was assisted by a Quaker originally from New Jersey, Rachel Davis Dubois, who had a long history of involvement with interracial and intercultural relations, and who had come to SCLC under the auspices of Friends General Conference (minutes, meeting for business, January 1965). She had developed a technique of "Group Conversation" that enabled persons of varied backgrounds to talk with one another in nonthreatening situations. While in Atlanta, Rachel used this method also with an interracial group of teenagers called "Operation Understanding," which Janet Boyte had started at the Young Women's Christian Association. Rachel later went to Selma, Alabama, to work with that divided community following the Selma-to-Montgomery march of SCLC in 1965. During her stay in Atlanta she was assisted by Mew Soong Li, a Chinese-American colleague with whom she shared an apartment in black housing near the SCLC office on Auburn Avenue. Rachel died in 1993 at the age of 102.

The year 1964 was a period of heady optimism for those working to improve race relations. Throughout 1963 and early 1964, massive protest demonstrations and marches took place in downtown Atlanta, focused usually on Leb's Restaurant and the Heart of Atlanta Motel, whose owners bitterly opposed integration. Hundreds of demonstrators, including comedian and social activist Dick Gregory, were arrested. Ku Klux Klansmen marched in counter-demonstrations, and such confrontations sometimes blocked downtown streets. With the passage of the Civil Rights

Act in the summer of 1964, most restaurants desegregated. Lester Maddox, owner of the Pickrick Restaurant and a future governor of Georgia, was one of the few who refused to do so. The Civil Rights Act was followed the next summer by the Voting Rights Act, which seemed to hold great promise for an end to discrimination in America.

Hector Black and Vine City

In February 1965 Hector Black arrived on the scene in Atlanta, seeking a way to participate in the civil rights movement. Hector was a gentle, soft-spoken idealist, a Harvard alumnus, and an accomplished pianist, who had been involved immediately after World War II in service projects in Belgium, New York, and Paraguay. He had met and married Susanna Maendel, who grew up in a Hutterite community in North Dakota. He and Susie lived for a while in a Bruderhof community. The Blacks had three young daughters when they came to Atlanta, and Susie was confined to a wheelchair by crippling arthritis. The Quaker House program in Vine City appealed to them, and they moved first into a small house on Electric Avenue, then into another on Magnolia Street. Their girls integrated Ware School, whose principal, Otis White, Jr., and Hector liked to joke that "Black is white and White is black."

Hector organized the Vine City Council and then a little neighborhood newspaper, *Vine City Voice*, as he began to work with his neighbors to improve their conditions. The Friends Meeting contributed each month first $50, then $100, then $150 to assist in his work, and various members were consistently supportive. Betty Burford (whose husband, Frank, served briefly as clerk of the Meeting), recalled the early days of Hector's residence in Vine City:

> Hector called up one morning and said, "Betty, I don't know what I'm going to do. These Quakers are so wonderful, and they keep bringing boxes of clothing and stuff and putting them on my front porch. I'm not sure I want that relationship with my neighbors . . . to give away clothes." I said, "Hector, why don't you sell it?" So that's where the thrift shop started. Within a couple of weeks they had made enough money selling stuff out of that living room (remember that living room with piles of junk and

> beds and people?), and the first thing they did with that money was to buy a mimeograph machine and put out that *Vine City Voice* (Berea tape).

In his 1965 annual report, John Yungblut said of Hector and his work: "He has an exceedingly rare gift of embracing Lady Poverty in the most disarming and convincing manner. . . . Once again, through the presence of this family as well as Alice [Haines] and Susan [Bady], we felt Quaker House had vicariously moved into, and was, in some sense at least, living among the people we desired to serve."

At Hector's request, supervision and oversight from Quaker House was withdrawn and the council became autonomous, supplemented by some financial aid from Atlanta Friends. The August 15, 1965, business meeting minutes reflect Hector's misgivings: ". . . the support for which he [Hector] had looked to Quaker House and Friends Meeting has not been encouraging and has not produced the direct involvement required to make the NASH area project a Quaker House venture. He indicated that he cannot work with the federal government, being out of sympathy with its methods locally. He sees need for a remedial tutorial program and would volunteer his time in such an undertaking."

The Churchwomen United bought a house near Hector on Magnolia Street, and it served many purposes. Both the National Council of Jewish Women and St. Bartholomew's Church were very helpful. Several doctors, including Alex McPhedran and Lorne Garrettson from the Friends Meeting, organized a little clinic to serve the community on certain nights. The Vine City Council, which became the Vine City Foundation, picketed slumlords and supported a rent strike. These activities led to Hector's brief arrest. Hector helped evicted tenants to find housing. He also supported a demonstration seeking playground space by turning on fire hydrants to cool the children off one fearfully hot summer. His activities, described in an article in *Look* magazine, December 13, 1966, attracted national attention.

Hector Black, Esther Turner, and Alice Haines were in charge of a program that Quaker House sponsored in the summer of 1965 in Vine City for approximately 125 children. College and high-school students volunteered to work with small groups of children in areas related to their interests, and Economic

Opportunity Atlanta provided a small grant for a three-month period to help with supplies and expenses. John Yungblut observed in the 1965 annual report: "There were field trips to the zoo, the Capitol, museums, colleges and private homes. A blind boy, who had never been in the water before, so trusted his tutor that, while some of the other boys sat on the edge of the pool, afraid to wade in, he asked if he might be able to swim. The tutor responded with a warm 'yes,' told him what to do, and assured him that he was there to help him. The blind boy was soon swimming, to the amazement of the others."

First Head Start Program

Quaker House for some time had been exploring the possibility of an expanded nursery and day care program in Vine City. A first step toward realizing this came with the Head Start program in that summer 1965. Head Start was initiated as part of Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" under the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Nan Pendergrast, not yet a member of Atlanta Meeting but a consistent friend of Quaker House programs, was one of a large group of individuals invited to the White House by "Ladybird" Johnson to discuss plans for the program. Head Start was begun to reach preschool children eligible for kindergarten that fall. It offered an eight-week program to enrich the lives of disadvantaged children by improving health, language skills, reading readiness, nutrition, and other aspects of their lives.

Quaker House applied for an OEO grant and was awarded $7,787 to set up a Head Start program. It was one of five agencies in the Atlanta area carrying on a Head Start project in the summer of 1965. Elizabeth (Chessie) Stevenson, a young friend of John Yungblut's from his Connecticut days, was named director of the program, and Peg Kaiser was appointed one of the lead teachers in charge of two groups of twenty children at Bethune School. Betty Burford helped to recruit volunteers, and all adult leaders received special training. Parents in the area gave enthusiastic support to the program; and Dorothy Hornsby, Bethune's principal, was employed to help with the facilities. There was no charge for the families whose children were enrolled.

A family supper on June 11 launched the program. Volunteers helped with transportation; contributed supplies and

materials such as crayons, paper, fabric scraps; and offered their talents in many fields, including singing, cooking, nature study, dramatics, and storytelling. The teacher-student ratio was one adult for every five children. Each teacher encouraged the use of names to help establish self-esteem. For example, she might point to herself, then to a child, saying, "Mrs. Kaiser wants Tommy to sit beside Susan."

Peg Kaiser, recalling the program, said, "It was a wonderful learning experience. . . . We had to teach the children how to eat with knives and forks. . . . We had volunteers come to take the children outside, or read them stories. . . . We had volunteers take them to the health clinics to get their shots. . . . It was a very, very fascinating program."

In that busy summer of 1965 Friends were also involved with the Mennonite General Conference in an interracial work camp in the inner city. Mennonites had come to Atlanta in 1961 to establish Mennonite House, headed by Vincent and Rosemary Harding, on Houston Avenue, and had quickly established cordial relations with the Friends Meeting. The 1965 summer work camp brought together rural high school students from other parts of the country and black high school students from Atlanta for a three-week period. The young people restored two houses that were about to be condemned and supervised recreation for children in the NASH area. John Yungblut and Quaker House volunteers assisted them in their program, as they had assisted the young people from the National Student Christian Federation the preceding summer. John A. Middleton, pastor of the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church, where the young people were housed, was particularly helpful with the program.

Day Care Proposals

The successful Head Start program, as well as Quaker House tutorial and nursery programs in Vine City, gave impetus to the idea of an expanded day care center in the area. Gloria Gross, coordinator of day care centers for EOA, had encouraged such a project as early as spring 1965 (minutes, meeting for business, May 1965). She envisioned a program for children between two and ten years old and hoped that it might serve as a training center for college students. She indicated that EOA was prepared

to allocate $80,000 to an operating budget for such a center (trustees minutes, September 1965).

Among Friends who had worked in Vine City, enthusiasm for this project was running high in the summer of 1965. Head Start and the Vine City program were flourishing. The July meeting for business reported that John Yungblut had submitted a proposition:

> . . . whereby Quaker House would enter into a contract with the EOA (Atlanta-Fulton County) to operate a Day Care Center as a pilot project for 100 children; the $80,000 required for 12 months to be supplied by EOA and 10 percent additional in value ($8,000) to be supplied by Quaker House in the form of voluntary service.
>
> The day care center would operate five days per week from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. with a staff of approximately 15 persons working a 40 hour per week schedule. This is a more extensive program than that currently operating in the Eagan Homes area, which is strictly a Quaker House project. Doubt was expressed by some members as to the practicability of operating so extensive a project on an $80,000 budget.
>
> An interesting question was raised by a member as to the function of a Monthly Meeting. Simply stated, "Is not a Monthly Meeting's major responsibility a concern for the personal problems of its members?" In answer to this question there was consensus that while this may be a concern of all Monthly Meetings, a Meeting, to be meaningful to its members and to the community, must develop an outreach into the community as an expression of its faith and as a means of continual renewal of creativity within the Meeting. Specifically the proposed day care center project gives promise of providing on a broad scale an experiment in race relations and a simultaneous attack on poverty.

The question was referred to the board of trustees for further action. Many Friends were hesitant about embarking on such a vast undertaking. Noyes Collinson and Jack Singletary were outspoken in their opposition. Discussion at the regular August meeting for business lasted until after midnight without reaching consensus, and a subsequent called meeting was held two weeks later. "Friends had many reservations," the August business meeting minutes noted.

Some were reluctant to see such heavy government involvement and feared that the Meeting might "institutionalize" itself. Some felt that efforts should better be expended serving one another. Yet others saw it as an opportunity for "an active extension of Quaker service and belief." They felt that the success of Head Start "has shown us the possibilities of day care as a Friendly outreach."

Complete agreement was not reached, but the "sense of the Meeting" was recorded in favor of proceeding, with details left to the board of trustees and director John Yungblut.

Reservations about the Meeting's heavy involvement in a federally financed day care program were never totally allayed. In a letter dated February 3, 1966, to Noyes Collinson, Patricia Westervelt, clerk of Meeting, refers to Noyes's "resignation from the Trustees . . . since you so heartily disagree with our taking on the day care project." Later, minutes of the March 1966 meeting for business report: "Question was raised by some members to the effect that the social action programs of Quaker House tend to overshadow at times Meeting's concerns for its spiritual life and growth." No action was taken, although the predominance of Quaker House issues continued to be a topic of concern.

Day Care Board Organized

As plans for a day care center moved ahead, a special board of trustees for the center was named, called Vine City Neighborhood Services, Inc. Six neighborhood residents and six Atlanta Meeting members, with a neighborhood person as chair, were to serve on the board. Those from the Meeting were William Shields, Dwight Ferguson, Patricia Westervelt, Betty Burford, Lorne Garrettson, and Winifred ("Winnie") McPhedran. From the neighborhood were Thelma Session (later Tucker), John Jackson, Nell Belcher, Pauline Minnifeld, Mary Strong, and Daisy Wilbur. Thelma Session served as chair. Neighborhood Services, Inc., was formally incorporated by the state of Georgia on March 14, 1966.

Negotiations with EOA concerning a budget, terms of operation, delegation of responsibility, and other details continued, and at the same time a search for a suitable location for the day care center was underway. No building was found that could be adapted to the purpose. As a result, various pieces of property

were examined. Plans moved ahead, despite a six-month absence of John and June Yungblut, who were in South Africa on assignment with Friends World Committee, and the departure of Bill Shields, who resigned from his Quaker involvements and moved with his family to Maryland in August. The Chace Foundation in Philadelphia, which had consistently given support to Atlanta Friends, provided a grant of $10,000, which was applied to the purchase of a $12,000 lot at the corner of Rhodes and Postell Streets in Vine City.

I. E. (Ike) Saporta, a local architect and Georgia Tech professor, was employed to draw up plans for the day care center. In a letter to the Chace Fund Committee, written in September after his return, John Yungblut stated that the building would accommodate 100 children, with 6,300 square feet on the main floor and 3,100 square feet in the basement. Cost was estimated at close to $90,000, and the building would be owned by Quaker House.

John envisioned it not only as the setting for a far-reaching program for disadvantaged children, but as a "Friends' Center in Atlanta in the heart of one of the disadvantaged Negro neighborhoods." He pointed out its proximity to Atlanta University and the opportunity to develop a second meeting for worship.

With his irrepressible optimism, John estimated that this formidable investment would be paid for with Office of Economic Opportunity grants on a yearly basis for operating costs, plus non-interest-bearing loans from friends, rental income, and possibly other foundation grants. John's 1966 annual report stated: "The building would represent in this part of the country a showplace of its kind, setting a new standard of excellence. It is our purpose, moreover, that the Center, in quality of teaching as well as facilities, would realize the objective of serving as a teaching center at which some students entering this growing field from both Atlanta and Emory Universities might receive part of their training."

Day Care Director Hired

Despite the uncertainties of construction and financing, the board of Neighborhood Services hired a director for the day care center. The decision was made in July 1966 to employ Joseph

(Joe) Gross at an annual salary of $7,500, beginning August 1. However, until EOA funds became available, he served on a volunteer basis. Joe was the husband of Gloria Gross, day care coordinator for EOA, and a longtime friend of Quaker House programs.

A liberal and a nonconformist, Joe had conducted many Great Books discussions, including one for high-school students at Quaker House. A private consultant in social work, he was a graduate of Columbia University's School of Social Work and had served as director of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center, as well as with several federal programs. It was hoped that the day care center might open in the fall of 1966. Meanwhile, Joe was expected to develop job descriptions, find staff and supplies, and prepare plans for operation.

Just as the center was about to become a reality, the federal government drastically curtailed its poverty program in the 1967 budget. Although foundation grants and non-interest-bearing loans from Meeting members were sought, the dream of a new building had to be abandoned.

The larger vision was replaced with plans for a greatly curtailed program, for perhaps fifty or even thirty-five children, in a day care center set up in some church facility. Beulah Baptist Church at 168 Griffin Street offered use of its building, and Neighborhood Services accepted. With funds from EOA, the basement of the building was remodeled for use as a day care center.

The Rhodes Street property, which was to have been the site for the center, was bulldozed; and the Meeting allowed the city of Atlanta to use it for recreation. In the winter of 1968–1969 a group of engineering students at Georgia Tech planned and constructed "imaginative" playground equipment for the site. Bert Skellie, a future Meeting member, was one of the students who helped with this project.

Finally, on March 14, 1968, the Vine City Child Development Center, as it was called, got underway in Beulah Baptist Church. Financed with federal funds under what had become a national Head Start program, it served three- to five-year-olds, beginning with 7 children and eventually expanding to approximately 40. Joe Gross was the director, assisted by hired staff and many volunteers recruited and trained for the most part by Quaker House. According to Atlanta Board of Education proposals to Joseph

Gross, January 1969, the program was one of seven day care centers in Atlanta operating under the sponsorship of EOA. Atlanta Meeting representatives on the board of trustees of the Vine City Child Development Center continued to be Dwight Ferguson and Winnie McPhedran, with the addition of Noyes Collinson, Ruth Neff, and sometime attenders Neomia and Roger Sundy and Mary Blau. Many of these volunteers were actively helping in the actual operation of the center.

A little newsletter called *Vine City Friend* was published for families of the children in the program, and every effort was made to involve parents in the activities. Many parents attended the birthday party in March 1969, celebrating with supper and a birthday cake the first anniversary of the center's opening.

Insofar as the children were concerned, the program seems to have run satisfactorily. However, Joe Gross found constant problems and irritations in administrative functions, which were divided among his position, the EOA, and Head Start offices. Neighborhood Services board minutes in March 1969 note that "policies are subject to change at any time by the determination of the OEO or EOA, which in effect means the contract can be set aside. . . . We need more autonomy in setting salaries, sick and annual leave, and hiring. . . . It was pointed out that salaries are considerably higher in the public schools."

Meetings with officials of Head Start and EOA in Atlanta proved frustrating. There was disagreement about "in-kind contributions," which covered the many hours of volunteer service, a requirement that Joe Gross said "has been consistently met since the inception of this agency" (letter from Joe Gross to Nancy Edwards, EOA Child Development director, July 1969). By the second anniversary of the center in 1970, Joe summarized the many difficulties that made his position almost untenable. He pointed out that, due to inexperienced staff, absences, unfilled positions, volunteer turnover, and endless negotiations with EOA, "The director, thus, has served as cook, janitor, teacher, teacher's aide and secretary and occasionally director." He concluded, "The director's job simply can't be accomplished in a 40-hour work week." (Joe Gross to Atlanta Friends Meeting, outline of Director's Position, May 9, 1970). Joe resigned from his position as director in 1970.

Departure from Vine City

In a letter dated August 25, 1970, Dwight Ferguson submitted his resignation to Thelma Session Tucker, chair of the Vine City Child Development Center. His letter stated: "Those of us from Quaker House are taking this action because we are outsiders and we believe that an excellent day care center program for the children can best be achieved by the parents of the community and the Beulah Baptist Church taking full responsibility for the operation of the Center. This action grows out of the deep sense of respect and affection which we have for the Vine City community."

By this time, the climate between blacks and whites in Atlanta had changed drastically. In 1966 Stokely Carmichael, then serving as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) first enunciated the cry "Black Power!" at a rally in Mississippi. Although many legal barriers had fallen, blacks were increasingly disillusioned about white acceptance of genuine equality.

The famous march from Selma to Montgomery, organized by the SCLC, had been carried out in the face of considerable violence and hostility. In 1965, the same year that Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, a six-day riot broke out in the Watts section of Los Angeles. During the summer of 1967 riots occurred in many Northern cities, the most devastating being in Detroit. A militant group, the Black Panther Party, was formed to confront police brutality. Many of its members were veterans of the Vietnam War, well-trained in violence and enraged by a system that declared them men enough to die in Vietnam but still "boys" upon their return to the States.

As the Black Panthers and other militant blacks increasingly disavowed his nonviolent philosophy, Martin Luther King, Jr., developed plans for the Poor People's March on Washington in late April 1968. He hoped that this might bring together the various angry factions. While these plans were being formed, he went to Memphis to lead a protest march by sanitation workers. To his horror, there was an outbreak of violence among the protesters. A few days later, on April 4, 1968, King was assassinated.

The war in Vietnam was escalating, and it claimed more and more of the nation's human resources, productivity, and wealth. It began to divert attention from civil rights activities.

In Atlanta Friends Meeting, references to the day care center, which had so dominated its meetings for business at one time, almost disappeared from the minutes by 1968. Minutes of the April 1968 business meeting record that the Vine City Foundation had closed its nursery in Eagan Homes, which Friends had started.

The Yungbluts left Atlanta in September 1968. Bill Shields had already left, the Burfords and the Garrettsons left, and Alice Haines completed her service in 1966. In 1967 Esther Turner and her husband returned to Pennsylvania. Hector and Susie Black left Vine City in 1967. White participation in the inner city had become less and less welcome.

Reminiscing in 1981 about that period, John Yungblut recalled: "As the transition began to come where white volunteers, instead of being warmly received, were increasingly rejected by the Black Power movement, some [white] people would come [to me] . . . wondering how to adjust to this . . . whether to try to stay with it or to step aside and let black leaders take over what they had been doing." (Berea tape) To these reminiscences Dwight Ferguson added his recollection of a meeting "where they told us very frankly we should get out of Vine City." (Berea tape)

An interview with Hector Black, reported in the August 6, 1967, edition of *The Atlanta Constitution,* reflects the changing atmosphere of the times. Hector, whose Vine City work had the kindest motivation, was unable to deal with black militance aimed at him personally. The Black Power movement condemned him as a "do-gooder" and sent a sound truck around Vine City blaring the question: "What has your white Jesus done for you today?" In the newspaper interview, Hector was quoted as saying, "The more I think about it, the more I think power is the crux of the whole problem. Call it black power or anything else, I think it's essential to put power in the hands of poor people—to give them the power to control their own lives. But I feel pessimistic, not about the ability of these people to solve their own problems and run their own community, but because of a lack of support for efforts of this kind in the whole community. If they are not supported, these people feel they have no recourse but to destroy." Shortly after this interview, Hector and his family went to Pendle Hill for a period of rest and retreat.

5

AN EXPANDING MEETING

While inner-city activities absorbed the attention of many Friends and enlisted support from others, the Quaker House program on Fairview Road continued unabated. Friends' participation has been noted in both the Friends Peace Testimony in Washington in 1960 and the Friends Witness for World Order there in 1962. In Atlanta, the Meeting, through member Staughton Lynd, history professor at Spelman, and William Roosa helped bring Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling to Emory University for a large peace rally, which was followed by the formation of the Atlanta Peace Council.

Atlanta Friends seized every opportunity to host visiting speakers on peace issues. For example, the 1963 annual report recorded that Norman Whitney from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) conducted a Peace Institute at Quaker House and, through Jon Johnston, who was active in the Meeting at that time, presented the pacifist viewpoint to an ethics class at Georgia State College (now Georgia State University). Early in 1963 Quaker House hosted a seminar for some 25 persons on "Beyond Deterrence," a study series published by AFSC. Staughton Lynd and John Barlow, a psychology professor at Emory, both Meeting members, and Vincent Harding, director of Mennonite House,

were in charge of the program, in which a number of members of the Greater Atlanta Peace Fellowship participated. This group had succeeded the Atlanta Peace Council (newsletter, Atlanta Friends Meeting, spring 1963).

Varied Peace Activities

In the meantime, Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council (1962–1963). His 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, lent great impetus to the peace movement. An interfaith *Pacem in Terris* conference took place in New York in January 1965 to study the encyclical. Participants proposed that, as follow-through, 100 local convocations should be held throughout the country. John Yungblut rallied a group of peace-oriented organizations and university and religious leaders for the Atlanta Peace Convocation in December 1965. The convocation's theme was, "Peace on Earth: Moral and Technological Implications." One of the principal speakers was Philip Berrigan, Catholic priest and peace activist. Two hundred thirty Atlantans took part and established a group known as Atlantans for Peace. Nan Pendergrast became chair of this organization. Meeting members Noyes and Nancy Collinson became active in Atlantans for Peace, which numbered about 500 people by 1967. Composed mainly of Southerners, the organization drew its members from "older, moderate, settled members of the community" ("The Movement in One City," *WIN* [Workshop in Nonviolence], June 1, 1969). The group hoped to "educate for responsible dissent in the South" ("Many Have Strong Feeling Against the War," *The Atlanta Journal*, March 13, 1967).

Atlantans for Peace often conducted its meetings at Quaker House. Meanwhile, as the Vietnam War escalated, peace organizations sprang up throughout the country. With increasing dismay, Americans watching the nightly television news saw their own troops burning Vietnamese villages and realized more than ever the horror of war. Nancy Collinson set up an Atlanta Peace Center, with headquarters in the AFSC office at 41 Exchange Place, to help coordinate various local peace activities. Throughout 1966 there were many efforts to alert Atlantans to the dangerous drift of American policy in Southeast Asia. Atlantans for Peace and the Meeting sponsored several programs, including a

dialogue between Eugene Patterson, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, and Charles Wells, editor of the liberal Washington newsletter, *Between the Lines*. This debate on Vietnam was held on the Georgia Tech campus (Newsletter, April 1966, and annual report, 1966). Sidney Lens, a well-known author and economist, conducted a Peace Institute at Quaker House on "Economics and World Peace." Joseph Gross led a seminar on "Forces of Change," using materials from the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

A variety of other peace groups existed in Atlanta, some numbering only a few and centering around key individuals, others with larger memberships, often drawn from student populations. These groups ran the political gamut from socialists and anarchists at one extreme to more moderate pacifists at the other. One group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), had its roots in the civil rights movement and had, despite its name, evolved into a militant organization, condoning violence for the sake of making a point. Although obvious ideological differences hindered their efforts at working together, the Meeting cooperated with SNCC and two other local peace groups in sponsoring a peace march and rally in August 1967 on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

When SNCC dropped out of the march, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) gave full support. Although Don Bender had been one of the principal organizers (on behalf of Mennonite House), Hosea Williams of SCLC virtually took over the march, in which more than 600 participants walked from Piedmont Park to Hurt Park. An international contingent of Friends, many of them fresh from the Friends World Conference held in Greensboro, North Carolina, that summer, marched under a large "Quakers Worldwide" banner. It was the South's largest peace demonstration (Annual Report, 1967).

Nancy Collinson, along with 200 other Quakers nationwide, attended a huge peace rally of perhaps 200,000 people in New York City in April 1967. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed the crowds in the United Nations Plaza and denounced the Vietnam War. Nancy was greatly impressed by the orderly, neatly dressed throngs of protesters in the march through the city, as well as the sympathetic responses of the majority of onlookers along the curbs.

In the summer of 1967 Quaker House collaborated with Atlantans for Peace and AFSC to sponsor another public meeting at Emory "to speak to the conscience of the religious community" (Annual report, 1967). Father Philip Berrigan, Rabbi Abraham Feinberg of Toronto, Robert McAfee Brown of Stanford University, and Coretta Scott King of SCLC shared the platform before an audience of more than 600 sympathizers. An Atlanta Alliance for Peace was formed that summer, composed of various local peace organizations.

An interesting incident in connection with war protests concerned the outspoken and stout-hearted Meeting member, Isobel Cerney. While in California in 1966, she participated in a citizen's arrest of truck drivers carrying napalm that was destined for Vietnam. As a result, she spent nine days in jail. The protest was in response to the use of public highways to transport the napalm, a flammable defoliant that often injured people, many of whom were civilians. Between her arrest and the trial, Isobel took part in an ongoing protest vigil at Port Chicago, California. The October Minutes record that the Meeting sent her a night letter in support of her "efforts in the cause of peace" and sent her a check for $50, plus contributions from individuals.

Many Friends in these years were concerned about the fate of Vietnamese children who had lost homes and families and who were often severely injured by the war. June Yungblut became an active member of a national committee, Meetings for Sufferings of Vietnamese Children, organized by Jan de Hartog. The group hoped to arrange for adoptions in the United States of Vietnamese children, many of them fathered by American servicemen, and to bring napalm-burned children to America for treatment. They also hoped to provide assistance through work camps for homeless teenage orphans roaming the Vietnamese countryside.

June accepted the post of chairperson for the subcommittee making plans for these teenagers, but the plans met with little success. She reported to business meeting in June 1967 that 60 orphans under three years of age had been released for adoption in the United States, with the help of Catholic organizations. By October the number of abandoned toddlers released to this country had been reduced to 14. A few babies finally did reach homes in Philadelphia and Chicago, but the adoption program faded

because of the reluctance of the Vietnamese government to permit children to be adopted abroad.

Youngbluts Visit South Africa

For six months in 1966 the Yungbluts were on leave of absence in South Africa on a special mission sponsored by the Friends World Committee. Friends held a dinner for John and June on February 20 and presented them with luggage and a purse as tokens of the Meeting's affection and good wishes (minutes, meeting for business, February 1966). After a brief stay at Woodbrooke in England (similar to Pendle Hill in the United States), they visited Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Botswana, and South Africa. In recalling their mission, John said, "It was kind of a pastoral visitation of some 200 Quakers individually and their meetings in this whole of southern Africa—South African Yearly Meeting, so-called. It was a great opportunity to experience at first hand segregation in some of its worst forms in another cultural milieu. Later we returned [there] after six years, and still keep up with these people in correspondence" (Berea tape).

After the Yungbluts' return to Atlanta, Will Fox, clerk of the Johannesburg Meeting, and Ian Henderson from Rhodesia both visited Quaker House and spoke of their experiences. Atlanta Friends expressed in the Meeting's December 1965 business minutes:

> . . . wholehearted consensus that members of Atlanta Meeting are grateful for the privilege of participating in the Friends World Committee's South African program, of which John and June Yungblut's projected mission is a part. As one member observed, there is an opportunity for the Atlanta Meeting in a sense to be concerned with both ends of the spectrum, working as it does in the slum neighborhood of Vine City locally and having a spokesman in the person of its director in the world's richest city, Johannesburg, South Africa. In both communities human (race) relations are critical issues.

There was considerable concern about ongoing program activities during the Yungbluts' six-month absence. Friends talked of finding a temporary replacement director, but neither funds nor person seemed to be available. The Quaker House program was coordinated by Dwight Ferguson, chairman of the

program committee; Bill Shields, chairman of the board of trustees; Patricia Westervelt, clerk of the Meeting; and Nan Pendergrast, who was in charge of peace activities. Barbara Harkins, secretary, with her sister, Marie, lived in Quaker House until the Yungbluts returned in September (Annual report, 1966).

Barbara Harkins later was succeeded as secretary by Priscilla Henson, a young Quaker whom the Yungbluts had met in Rhodesia. She served until her marriage to Paul Warhaftig, with whom she later moved to Pittsburgh.

Early State of the Meeting Reports

Annual State of the Meeting reports reflect concerns and conditions prevalent within the Meeting from year to year. The first reports still on hand are individual assessments by William Houston in 1959 and Peg Kaiser and Bob Westervelt in 1960. At that time, the emphasis was on creating a Friends Center and on the acquisition of Quaker House. As Peg stated, "With Quaker House a reality, many problems and questions have arisen and will continue to do so." Bob commended Phern Stanley's "quiet ministry" as "a deep source of strength to us . . . by her devotion inspiring us to a bolder vision" (State of the Meeting Report, May 15, 1960).

The 1963 State of the Meeting report, published in the December newsletter, raised the question: "Is Quaker House to be something of an AFSC program for non-Quakers? Is the Meeting sharing the concerns of Quaker House?" Those attending school desegregation programs, international student activities, and many seminars were principally not Quakers. Much of the struggle going on within the Meeting is reflected in the subdued but profound reflections of this report: "Questions arose as to the relationship of the [Quaker House] program to the Meeting, about responsibilities, about finances, which raised some thorny issues, revealed differences in approach and opinion. The energies of the Meeting seemed to spend themselves toward a resolution of inner conflict rather than on work to be done." Again, the report stated:

> This has been a year of struggle and search within our group. There has been an attempt to be very honest with ourselves

> about our differences of views and approaches to problems. It has not been easy, but the ways of love and truth miraculously open many doors. In the loving opportunities for expression by one and all, many fears have gone, and a close fellowship has developed for those participating. Leadership has developed and responsibility has been borne by many . . . . Yet we see that we are just at a beginning. There are many problems to be resolved, many avenues to explore mutually.

State of the Meeting reports are lacking for the next two years. By 1966 the report was very positive in its statements about the ongoing Vine City program. However, it noted: "The feeling has been expressed that social concerns too frequently tended to dominate our thinking during the worship service." There seemed to be a definite reaching out "for a more worship-centered Meeting." The ongoing Faith and Practice suppers were commended as being especially helpful. As for meetings for business, poor attendance was deplored. The question arose as to whether the time of business meeting should be changed from Sunday evenings to the period following meeting for worship on the third Sunday. This change was finally made in October 1967, and attendance at meeting for business immediately improved.

A basic question raised in the 1966 report was whether "this small group is trying to do a big group's work." It closed with the perennial question: "How can we arrange our lives so that they do not become so filled with activities, even good works, that we are always under pressure? How can we attain and express serenity and peace, and have sufficient time and strength for renewal?"

The 1967 State of the Meeting Report addressed some of the queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* regarding the spiritual nature of meeting for worship. The report concluded that "the past year, in general, has been characterized by loving unity within the Meeting." However, it stated: "We are persuaded, moreover, that the depth and effectiveness of Meeting for Worship would be enhanced were our members more faithful individually in the disciplines of silence, prayer, and meditation in solitude."

Although 1968 was a year of monumental changes for the Meeting, including the Youngbluts' final departure, it was still felt that there was "a healthful and vital spirit in the Meeting for Worship." Eight new members had joined, and there was an

increase in the number of young people. Here, as often before and afterward, "a laxity in the matter of accurate record-keeping" was deplored; perhaps for this reason, detailed reports were included for every committee.

In these years, Ministry and Counsel seemed to have an almost overwhelming burden. Its duties, reported by Peg Kaiser in the monthly business meeting minutes for February 1966, included the following responsibilities: young people, attenders' inquiries, new members, marriages, nonattending members, differences and reconciliations, visitations to the sick and to attenders, concern for those in need, greeting guests before and after worship, overall response to special needs that would be referred to their proper committees, concerns for the spiritual life of the Meeting, worship service to help it grow more truly worshipful, help to encourage vocal ministry of spiritual depth, and the committee's own spiritual development!

If there was constant erosion of membership through departures, there was also an influx of new members. The Barlows left Atlanta for Thailand, where John had a teaching fellowship; the Lynds moved to Connecticut in 1965; the Gaineses transferred to a Methodist church at the beginning of 1966; the Shieldses left the city in 1966; the Burfords moved to West Virginia in 1967; the Garrettsons left in 1968 (to return again in 1988). But Don Bender joined the Meeting, retaining an affiliate membership in the Mennonite Church. A young couple, Tom and Suzan Kenworthy, who would each become clerk of the Meeting, arrived late in 1966 with their growing family. Tom came from a long line of Quakers from programmed meetings and had attended Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. Janet and Harry Boyte, as well as their daughter Anne, joined the Meeting in 1964. Gilbert and Janet Rinard, with three small sons, arrived in 1968 when Gil became a professor in Emory's School of Medicine. They were from Quaker families. Their youngest son, Clark, and daughter Susanna were born in Atlanta.

It was important for the young Meeting to build a sense of fellowship. Faith and Practice suppers each month and potluck meals on First Days contributed to this. Annual picnics in early summer were held in parks or in individual homes. Even disasters sometimes brought people together, as when the Lynds' little boy, Lee, fell from the second-story nursery window onto the

basement stairs in 1963. Fortunately, he recovered completely from his injuries.

Women of the Meeting gathered in a group they called "Quaker Ladies" one morning a week, bringing their brown-bag lunches and sharing ideas and projects, such as helping with the Meeting's library or sorting clothes for Hector Black's thrift shop. In May 1965 the Meeting approved the establishment by Ministry and Counsel of a discretionary fund, to be administered discreetly to aid individuals having temporary financial problems. It "was observed that a prime characteristic of Friends is their mutual concern for the welfare of members and persons in temporary distress" (minutes, meeting for business, May 1965).

Another ongoing concern was the need for simple burial procedures. Peg Kaiser chaired a subcommittee from Ministry and Counsel, which investigated inexpensive funeral arrangements and circulated forms asking members to indicate their wishes regarding their death. A system was developed to keep on file information about each person, including options of body donation to Emory School of Medicine and disposition of organs. In cooperation with the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, Friends helped to organize the Memorial Society of Georgia.

Visitors at Quaker House

A steady flow of visitors streamed through Quaker House during the 1960s, and John and June Yungblut provided hospitality for most of them, many of whom had come at their invitation. Well-known Friends such as Norman Whitney, Kenneth Boulding, Mary Hoxie Jones, James Walker, Barnard Walton, and Herbert Hadley were among them. There were civil rights and peace activists as well, including Hodding Carter, III, from Mississippi; Clarence Jordan from Koinonia Farms; A. J. Muste of Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR); the itinerant Peace Pilgrim, who walked thousands of miles with her challenging message for peaceful living; Maynard Jackson, Atlanta's future mayor (then running for U.S. senator against Herman Talmadge); and Thich Nhat Hanh, the exiled Zen Buddhist monk who toured the United States under sponsorship of FOR, appealing for an end to the bombing of his native Vietnam.

John Yungblut recalled the visit of Thich Nhat Hanh, who read some of his poetry one evening at Quaker House and met with activists, including some militants from SNCC. John recalled, "One of these young black firebrands asked him, 'What is the one thing needful to become a real revolutionary?' And I remember how he pinned their ears back with the enigmatic response, 'Read poetry.' That was a wonderful answer, I thought. And he smiled his enigmatic smile." John added that the visitor "elaborated on that: 'Read the mystics, be taught by metaphors. . . . Cultivate the inward dimension. Become a contemplative'" (Berea tape and Treadwell interview).

Diverse Concerns of Friends

Although the Vine City program and efforts to establish a day care center were the Meeting's principal outreach, other activities also reflected Friendly concerns. One of these was the ever-expanding response to a need for counseling of conscientious objectors and draft resisters as the war in Vietnam escalated. Yet another concern was opposition to the death penalty. In August 1967, the Meeting approved an extensive minute opposing capital punishment "because it denies our basic belief that there is that of God in every man." Signed by Patricia Westervelt as clerk, this document was forwarded to the Georgia Senate committee that was holding hearings on the subject (minutes, meeting for business, August 1967).

Equal housing opportunities continued to be a significant issue, and the Meeting was cosponsor with AFSC, under Noyes Collinson's leadership, of a Metropolitan Atlanta Conference on Equal Opportunity in Housing, held May 29, 1968 (minutes, meeting for business, June 1968). John Yungblut and Harry Boyte reported to the Meeting on the Sixth National Conference of Friends on Race Relations, which they had attended in July 1967, at Blue Ridge Conference Center in North Carolina (minutes, meeting for business, July 1967). There Vincent Harding was the principal speaker.

The conference report stated: "Most of those at the conference felt that Meetings generally fail in their obligation to become involved in the challenges of the times, which cannot be resolved without great effort and commitment. It was suggested that

Friends more than ever before need to be involved in such issues as housing, equal education and equal employment opportunities." Vincent Harding also took part in one of two evenings at Quaker House discussing "Black versus White Power," with panel members from SNCC and SCLC (Annual Report, 1967).

National immigration policies were another "weighty concern" of Atlanta Friends, minuted at meeting for business April 25, 1965. This minute was forwarded to Georgia senators and to representatives of metropolitan Atlanta, affirming, "We hold that the National Quota system is as unjust now as when it was originally promulgated and that the criterion for admission to the United States should be the contributions immigrants can make to the American community and not either their place of birth or their ethnic ancestry."

One small Meeting achievement of these years was the "Cabbagetown Driving Club," a group of women—Suzan Kenworthy, Irene Ferguson, Peg Kaiser, and Carol Cummings—who provided transportation, in their own vehicles, for mentally handicapped children from Cabbagetown to a special school several miles from their homes. Eventually a Methodist church contributed its bus, and Friends paid for a driver to transport the children. At that time, Friends were also giving support to Al and Carol Henry, Meeting attenders, who had moved into the Cabbagetown area.

Still another project was participation in the BOND community. BOND was an acronym for Bass Organization for Neighborhood Development, a first thrust in rehabilitating the area around Bass High School and Little Five Points, near the quiet street where Quaker House was located. Isobel Cerney and Noyes Collinson were appointed representatives to this organization, which held monthly luncheon meetings. Harriet Treadwell of the Meeting was later employed by the BOND Credit Union. (A detailed account of these activities appears in Chapter Seven.)

Throughout this period, the Meeting was extending its outreach to wider Friends' organizations. Patricia Westervelt represented Atlanta Friends at the worldwide gathering of Friends (FWCC) in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1967, and Beth Garrettson represented Atlanta at Friends World Committee in Washington, D.C., in 1964. Usually several Atlanta Friends went to Friends General Conference. Atlanta Friends were also involved with SAAF (later SAYMA). (See Chapters Three and Ten.) The

March 1968 SAYMA minutes noted that "Jack Kaiser has been named as assistant clerk and will move up to clerk next year." Tom Kenworthy was another Atlanta Friend who was an early clerk of SAYMA. Jack Kaiser served as treasurer for several years.

Children in Meeting

First Day school seemed always to be faced with three main problems: a need for more space, a need for more teachers, and the challenge of devising the best method of scheduling classes. In 1964 and 1965 there were both an adult education committee, chaired by Nancy Collinson, and a young people's committee, chaired by Peg Kaiser. At one time the adult committee held a "Preparation for Worship" period for half an hour prior to meeting for worship. In November 1964 this was shifted to a discussion following meeting. Discussions often focused on Pendle Hill pamphlets or topics such as "Family Life" or "How to be a Quaker Parent." The adult discussions were discontinued in fall 1966 but were resumed a year later on the second and fourth Sundays. After October 1967 the meeting for business occurred on the third Sunday, and potluck on the first.

Children worshiped with their parents for the first half-hour of meeting, then went to their First Day classes. There were 48 children in 1965. For the most part, teachers were parents of the youngsters. For a while, children were shown a film on the Meeting's new sound projector before proceeding to classes (Religious Education report, January 1966). Another procedure was a period of children's creative activities, drawing upon the talents of artists and musicians within the Meeting to occupy the young people during discussion periods.

Reports for 1964–1965 by Peg Kaiser and for 1967–1968 by Neva and Sam Webb were very upbeat, especially in commending the work and skill of First Day School teachers. Some of the classes examined Quaker history; others looked at the life and times of Jesus or some of the major figures of the Old Testament; one group studied religions of the world; a high school group discussed such advanced topics as short sermons of theologian Paul Tillich. In both reports, special mention was made of very successful Christmas family programs with music, and in 1965

"the children's own production of a puppet pageant depicting the old legend of the Christmas Rose."

It was apparently the custom to present children with gift Bibles, but the Religious Education report for May 1968 suggested as an alternative that "we give gifts to the First Day School: an autoharp, triangles and sticks for the younger set, and recorders for the middle group."

Financial Concerns

Finances were an unending problem for the small Atlanta Friends Meeting. There were separate budgets for Quaker House (designated Atlanta Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Incorporated*, as a separate entity from the Atlanta Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends). Originally, given early fundraising successes, Friends had an optimistic outlook about financing their ambitious program. Quaker House was responsible for the maintenance of the building, and the cost of the salaries of the director and secretary, office supplies, and travel expenses (John Yungblut Fund Appeal, November 1961). In the Meeting's newsletter for December 1961 William Shields, treasurer, wrote: "From a financial point of view, the Atlanta Friends Meeting has just completed the most rewarding year of its existence. Increasing monthly contributions from its small group of members are reflected in a Meeting donation of nine hundred dollars toward Quaker House. This does not include additional amounts given directly to Quaker House by individual members."

In a fund appeal dated November 20, 1962, John Stanley, as Quaker House treasurer, stated, "You may not easily separate the Meeting activities designed for the spiritual development of the members, from the larger program aimed at the wearing away of racial barriers, and the promotion of sympathies and understanding amongst heterogeneous segments of our society. In fact everything which we do comes out of the Meeting."

The Meeting budget was a consistently modest one, usually ranging between $4,000 and $6,000 annually. One-third of its income was given to Quaker House. Friends recognized that "the amount which Atlanta Friends Meeting contributes annually to Quaker House for maintenance and upkeep does not cover the

actual costs which would be involved in maintaining a Meeting-house" (annual financial report by Jack Kaiser, 1964).

At the end of 1963 Jack Kaiser became treasurer for both Quaker House and the Meeting. His competent records made the cash flow for each entity easier to maintain correctly. However, it became increasingly difficult to raise the necessary amounts for both Meeting and Quaker House. For example, in September 1964 Jack reported that only $1,719.89 of a total $4,000 Meeting budget had been raised. His final report in January 1965 showed that only $2,846 of the 1964 budget had been raised.

Most budget items were underspent, easing the strain, although letters and pledge cards were mailed to members and attenders to solicit regular contributions. On occasion, according to Peg Kaiser's recollection, Sam Webb, after encouraging member contributions through charts and appeals at business meeting, sold one of his personal bonds to make up the deficit.

Throughout the years that he served as director, John Yungblut made annual fund appeal trips to Philadelphia and New York, meeting with some of the initial supporters of Atlanta Center and leaders of AFSC. Annual fund appeals were mailed to those who had made contributions over the years, and the local annual report dinner pointed out to Atlanta supporters the needs and accomplishments of Quaker House.

Although there was some slight fluctuation, the budget was approximately $25,000 annually. The mortgage on the building was paid off in 1964, according to the original purchase agreement, and this lent optimism for future programs. In his 1964 annual report, John noted, "We have just paid in full the $15,000 mortgage with which we began the program four years ago. This enables us without increasing our budget to transfer this item of $5,900 [including interest] for debt reduction in each of the last three years to program expansion in the NASH [Northside Ashby Simpson Hunter] area for the coming year."

A number of grants from various Friends' foundations had helped to launch the center in 1959. The most consistent and generous help came from the Anna H. and Elizabeth M. Chace Fund Committee. As mentioned in previous chapters this fund made an initial grant in 1959 of $20,000 to the Friends of Atlanta Center and $10,000 toward a day care center in 1966. In addition, each year it provided matching funds in the amount of one

dollar for every three dollars raised in the annual fund appeal. A letter dated August 26, 1966, pointed out that as of that date, the day care grant brought "the total grants from the Chace Fund for Quaker House to $50,000 since 1959."

In March 1968 Eleanor Prettyman, secretary for the Chace Fund, wrote John Yungblut and sent a "terminal grant of $5,000 on a 'one for three' basis, payable in the same manner as in recent years" (summary of contributions for early grants, January 1, 1961–January 24, 1962).

As one after another of the grants from foundations came to an end, the financial strain on Quaker House mounted alarmingly. It had been the original expectation of Friends of Atlanta Center that local contributions would take up the expense of carrying on the program, but this goal never was realized. Between January 1961 and January 1962 members and attenders contributed $1,371, and Atlantans outside the Meeting gave only $670 to Quaker House. Despite the annual appeals, local support never became significant.

One reason for the lack of national support, according to John Yungblut, was that "Quakers in the North who had been so generous in supporting the program felt that critical areas for the sake of civil rights had moved to northern cities where there were beginning to be crises of various kinds . . . therefore, they were supporting new ventures in the North, and I didn't have access to the same support financially."

The Meeting's newsletter for October 1967 reported, "The Board of Trustees of Quaker House is confronted by an impending $4,000 deficit for 1967. Letters are going out soliciting contributions for special gifts so that we can end the year in the black." The Meeting agreed to take over the cost of the upkeep of Quaker House, thus easing the budget for the trustees (minutes, meeting for business, November 1967). The Meeting's 1968 budget of $5,865 included an additional contribution of $750 to Quaker House. It was at the close of one of many worrisome financial discussions that Bob Westervelt commented on "the magnificent way we arrive at indecision!"

In January 1968 secretarial service at Quaker House was reduced to two days a week. The 1968 budget was cut to $17,000 (trustees' minutes, July 31, 1968). John Yungblut was teaching a course at Georgia Tech to supplement his income.

Contact with Thomas Merton

In their last years at Quaker House, the Yungbluts developed memorable contacts with the philosopher and monk, Thomas Merton. In a letter to Janet Boyte Ferguson dated September 17, 1993, John wrote: "June had an extensive correspondence with Tom over a period of three years. They had a common love of the 'literature of the absurd,' which Tom thought was the best contemporary theology. June's dissertation was on Samuel Beckett, and Tom was fond of his writing. I've just been going over some of the letters, and they were quite animated and very interesting. A number of letters to June appear in the definitive biography [of Merton] by Michael Mott."

With two friends, John and June visited Merton at Gethsemani Monastery in Kentucky, where he had his "hermitage." When they arrived at the monastery, John recalled:

> . . . [Merton] couldn't invite women into the monastery, so he came out on the lawn on the driveway to greet us all and sat down on the grass. He invited us to come to his hermitage the next day . . . outside the wall of the monastery. . . . He would give us two afternoons. He was very generous; he was very much in demand. . . .
>
> June was invited to climb the outer stairway to the chapel and sit in the balcony while the 3 o'clock morning service was going on. . . . It was snowing when she went to this service and she was picking her way through the cemetery which she had to pass to get there; she was scared to death thinking of all the gothic novels she had read. . . . Thomas Merton was coming from his hermitage [and] their paths merged, and Merton said he thought she was a horse because she was dancing to keep up her spirits. They proceeded to have a wonderful talk about the monastery and the future (Treadwell interview).

Continuing his reminiscence of Merton, John told of going to the monastery bookstore when Merton happened to be there. "I was picking out some of his books and had four or five of them in my hand, so he said, 'I'd like you to have this one, too,' and then he got another one and yet another, and I began to get worried because I didn't have resources to buy all his books. I said, 'I'll have to have a smaller number; I don't have enough money with me to buy these.' He said, 'Oh, I'm giving them to you. I guess I

can do what I want with my books. They have brought millions to the monastery'" (Treadwell interview).

The Yungbluts made plans for Merton to lead a retreat at Gethsemani for some of the civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, and a few others. John recalled, "It was all arranged, and Thomas Merton had consented to do this and was planning to do it when Dr. King was shot. It never came off" (Treadwell interview).

Effects of King's Death

King's assassination in Memphis on April 4, 1968, was a watershed in the civil rights movement. Only a week or two before, John and June had been dinner guests at the King home, an occasion they remembered with great warmth. The day before King's funeral procession through Atlanta on April 9, John flew to Memphis to march with Walter Reuther in the parade sponsored by the labor movement.

John said, "I took the plane back [to Atlanta] and got there in the early evening [April 5]. Walking from the gate to the front [of the airport], I must have had about 14 invitations for overnight from people trying to offer hospitality in their home to anyone who came." John took part in the funeral procession with thousands of mourners as King's body was borne on a wagon drawn by two Georgia mules. "We walked through some of the very poorest parts of town as well as some attractive areas. . . . It was a stifling day, and some of the poor blacks had cold drinks like lemonade in their yards and offered it free of charge as you walked by. Camaraderie experiences then were wonderful. . . . Suddenly a man took my arm in his, and I looked up and it was an old black man who felt free to do that. . . . A deep sense of brotherliness prevailed" (Treadwell interview).

In the weeks following the funeral, June Yungblut worked tirelessly at the King residence, helping with the messages flooding in from all over the world, "organizing these communications so that Coretta [Scott King] could later respond to them." Several Friends from Atlanta Meeting helped with this overwhelming outpouring of sympathy. Janet Boyte recalled that letters arrived from Europe and Africa addressed simply to "Mrs. Martin Luther

King, Atlanta, Georgia," and were delivered in the bags of mail reaching the King home.

At the time he was killed, King was organizing his "Poor People's Campaign"— indigent whites, blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics from all over the country were to meet in Washington, D.C., linking the causes of poverty and civil rights. Even before King's death, John Yungblut had called together at Quaker House representatives of several groups involved in inner-city programs, to discuss participation in the Poor People's Campaign, as well as a cooperative approach to service in the inner city. Emmaus House, the Ecumenical Church of Christ Our Brother, the Unitarian/Universalist Congregation, the Vine City Foundation, and representatives from Cabbagetown were involved. According to the Meeting's newsletter, "All feel a major hurdle is the actual confrontation of middle-class whites with poverty as a reality" (newsletter, April 1968).

After King's death, his second-in-command, Ralph Abernathy, took over the Poor People's Campaign and set up "Resurrection City" on the Mall in the nation's capital. In Atlanta, June Yungblut organized a busload of about 35 Atlantans, principally from Vine City and Cabbagetown, with several Friends, to travel together to Washington and back. "The first hours of the northbound journey were marred by overtones of racial tension bordering on open hostility. Before the bus reached Washington the travelers found their shared poverty a common bond more unifying than their racial differences were divisive. Subsequent to their return from Washington these two disadvantaged groups joined in a series of meetings at Friends Center to further mutual respect and understanding and to seek solutions to their common problems" (interim report on Quaker House, 1969).

It was during the Resurrection City encampment that John Yungblut had his only experience of being arrested. He explained, "I was at Cape May, at Friends General Conference in the middle of the Resurrection City experience. People were being thrown in jail, and the Friends started to be concerned. Thirty-three of us—and I was appointed one of the overseers of this protest movement—went and worshiped on the Capitol grounds and we were all thrown in jail" (Berea tape).

Another of these Friends was future Atlanta Meeting member Courtney Siceloff. John said the judge who handled his case "told

June, who came into the courtroom, 'I don't know what to do with these Quakers who are giving me a lot of trouble. I agree with them, but I've got to sentence them because they're disobeying the law.'" John was sentenced to 10 days in jail but served only six before being dismissed (Berea tape).

Yungbluts Leave Atlanta

King's assassination and the declining financial support for Quaker House were catalysts in the Yungbluts' decision to leave Atlanta. "The question of leaving had to do with the change of emphasis on what was important. The northern cities seemed to be where help was needed. . . . I remember one thing I heard when I first went South to do civil rights work for AFSC. . . . A black man is speaking: 'In the South the white man says to us, Come as near as you like as long as you don't come any higher. In the North the white man says, Come as high as you like, as long as you don't come any nearer.' There's a lot of truth in that" (Treadwell interview).

John and June accepted jobs as codirectors of the International Student House in Washington, D.C., an autonomous facility that had been started by AFSC. Atlanta Friends gave them an emotional farewell dinner at Quaker House on August 22, 1968, and presented them with a silver tea service and a certificate of appreciation. The occasion marked the end of an extraordinary era for Atlanta Friends, who believed that their concerns for peace, poverty, and racial understanding must somehow continue.

John Yungblut later served on the faculty at Pendle Hill, then was director of the Guild for Spiritual Guidance in Rye, New York. He and June established Touchstone, Inc., a counseling and retreat center in Lincoln, Virginia. After June's death in 1982, John married Penelope Addiss, a Jungian counselor. John died in 1995, and Atlanta Friends held a memorial service for him and planted a dawn redwood tree on the Meetinghouse grounds in his memory. Penelope continued the Touchstone program.

6

ATLANTA QUAKERS AND THE WAR IN VIETNAM

The passage of civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s coincided with the escalation of the United States' military involvement in Vietnam, as Lyndon Johnson's energy and attention were diverted from enforcement of the new civil rights laws and the War on Poverty to the undeclared war in Southeast Asia. In 1965, Johnson sent the first U.S. fighting troops to Vietnam, intensifying the conflict there and spreading alarm among those who had effectively used the principles and techniques of nonviolence to win civil rights for black people.

At the time his life was cut short in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., was using his national prominence in the civil rights movement to protest the U.S. action in Vietnam, suffering criticism from many sides as a result. Once civil rights and antiwar movements began to combine their efforts, activists called themselves simply "movement" people and began a long struggle to persuade Americans of the folly and immorality of the war.

Already John Yungblut was counseling young men who found that they were conscientious objectors. In April 1963 Arlo Tatum, executive director of the Central Committee for Conscientious

Objectors, conducted a conference on counseling COs at Quaker House (spring newsletter, 1963). At the Meeting's 1966 annual report dinner at Emory University, Britt Pendergrast gave a report on counseling conscientious objectors. He and his wife, Nan Pendergrast, were not yet Meeting members but were closely involved with Quaker House in peace activities. Emory was also the scene in the spring of 1965 of "teach-ins" and debates between activists and prowar public figures.

In 1967 Henry Bass came to Atlanta under the sponsorship of the Committee for Nonviolent Action, War Resisters League, and Fellowship of Reconciliation. He organized a peace vigil that was held once a week in downtown Atlanta. Friends participated in this vigil for a number of years, as described in Chapter Nine.

In spring 1967 representatives from the national organization Workshop in Nonviolence (WIN) moved from New York to Atlanta to begin antiwar work. Quaker House established an intermittent relationship with Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence (AWIN) that lasted about ten years.

The Vietnam War did not draw a unified antiwar response from Quakers. Some Quakers, like most Americans, were reluctant to identify themselves with the "peacenik" element—the "hippies" and "flower children" (see Chapter Seven), who rebelled against the establishment in general, then turned their anger toward the government when it began calling up young men to fight in Vietnam.

By spring 1968 U.S. casualties reached 500 per week. A decisive victory in Vietnam seemed elusive. National debate over the war intensified and seriously divided American politics and society. The Atlanta Friends Meeting did not take an official position on Vietnam until 1969, when it was put to the test over the issue of offering sanctuary to a young man who had deserted the military.

Atlanta Meeting and AWOL Sanctuary

A letter dated April 9, 1968, from Chicago Friend David Finke to Dwight Ferguson of Atlanta Friends Meeting signaled the beginning of a new thrust for Atlanta Quakers. It began, "I am

writing to you in the interests of some old Quaker customs: hospitality, and support to those who are seeking to act in response to the demands of conscience." The request was for a "sympathetic but inconspicuous home in which to stay" for a young man in Chicago named Russell Malone, who had "gone AWOL [absent without leave]" from the military and was in hiding. He had sought advice from various people, including a lawyer who practiced in Atlanta, and he wanted to work through his Atlanta attorney to try to obtain conscientious objector status. "If you are able to be of assistance in this regard," the letter continued, "or if you could work something out within the Beloved Community in Atlanta, I would appreciate hearing from you. . . ."

The Fergusons offered their home for Russell but also proposed that Atlanta Friends make a public stand through their support of him. This request gave rise to several intense meetings, some lasting far into the night, to consider what action, if any, the Meeting should take. Those who were wary pointed out that Russell's case was complicated by the fact that he was not known by Atlanta Quakers, was not from the Atlanta area, and was not of a Quaker background. A young wife and mother, member of Atlanta Friends Meeting and whose own husband was serving in Vietnam, said she would not feel right to offer support to an AWOL serviceman. Friends were troubled by the many painful aspects of bearing a consistent witness to their families, to their Quaker Meeting in a Southern city, and to all Friends everywhere. Don Bender recalled years later that this decision was the most agonizing experience the Meeting had gone through in all the years he had been associated with it (1985 reminiscences).

Finally, the Meeting decided to offer sanctuary. A few members permanently left the Meeting because of this decision, which was recorded in the minutes of the May 1969 business meeting:

> Consistent with Friends' opposition to all wars for more than 300 years, the Atlanta Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends will offer hospitality and moral support to conscientious objectors to war and/or military service. Implicit in the Minute is the mutual understanding that nonviolence shall prevail in whatever procedures may be followed resulting from this peace witness; that there shall be no secrecy in offering hospitality; and that Ministry and Counsel shall be the Committee in charge.

To be completely open, the Meeting decided to make available to the media a letter that Russell wrote to the military. *The Atlanta Journal* printed it in full, along with the story of his sanctuary at Quaker House. The letter also appeared in *The Great Speckled Bird*, a counterculture newspaper in Atlanta. Furthermore, the Meeting notified the military that Russell Malone would be provided sanctuary by Quaker House. Russell's letter (quoted in part below) typifies the plight of thousands of young men during the Vietnam era:

> I quit high school in my junior year and joined the Army out of a spirit of adventure and a lack of anything to do. It wasn't until I was in the Army that I realized what I was expected to do . . . kill anybody called the enemy. I went to classes where I learned to rip a man's jugular vein out with my teeth. I growled like a tiger when I was told to growl like a tiger. I was told that the Ten Commandments, however worthy they might be in civilian life, had to be suspended in the name of National Interest.
>
> My reaction to this type of training was more of confusion than anything else. I found that the Army was not only unsympathetic to my thinking, but indifferent as well. At the time, I felt the only thing I could do was to go AWOL. It was not until several AWOLs later that I learned anything about the legal ways of expressing my views.

On Sunday, June 1, 1969, Russell arrived at Quaker House hidden in the trunk of a car that backed in, awkwardly negotiating the curves of the driveway. Meeting for worship had just ended. With carefully selected words, one friend outlined the scenario of what was about to happen. All were made to understand that by their presence, they could be implicated in whatever criminal charges might be made against the group. Visitors and others who did not wish to support the action were invited to stay or leave, as they wished. Some families with children went home for their midday meals.

No one could guess how long it would be before the military might take action, so it had been arranged for several Quakers to take shifts waiting with Russell in Quaker house. At 3:00 P.M., several television stations came to interview Russell, as well as to talk with members of the Atlanta Meeting. Then, the next morning, while Russell was still asleep, the Federal Bureau of

Investigation arrived to take him away. His first destination was Atlanta's Fort McPherson, where a small band of supporters demonstrated on his behalf. Immediately after his arrival there, he was flown to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

In Dwight Ferguson's article in *Friends Journal* four months later, the end of the story was told: "Following our visitor's arrest, we sent a petition to the Secretary of the Army, signed by members of the Meeting. . . . We also had direct correspondence with the captain at the Fort Leavenworth disciplinary barracks in response to his request for a character reference. We later heard from the young man that he [Malone] had received a six-month sentence for violation of parole and, since this was the minimum sentence, he was pleased."

Dwight continued, "Meeting members . . . felt that possibly [Russell Malone] contributed more to our Meeting than we contributed to him. In this encounter, we have come closer together as a Meeting, and, we hope, have established a sounder base for further action."

The "further action" was to counsel many hundreds of young men like Russell in a full-scale draft counseling service, operating out of Quaker House. The push for this effort came mainly from the Quaker House trustees. Hesitancy among other Meeting members is indicated by this statement from Ministry and Counsel only six months after the Russell Malone case: "The [Ministry and Counsel] Committee has decided not to issue a minute for approval by the Meeting regarding giving hospitality or sanctuary to those avoiding the draft, but instead to leave this matter to the conscience of individual members" (business meeting minutes, November 1969). This resolution effectively absolved Ministry and Counsel from further responsibility, leaving the issue of such sanctuary to the trustees.

Peace March in Washington, D.C.

By the end of the 1960s the American presence in Vietnam and the resistance of Congress and the president to the concerns of the people had provoked a deep and violent moral crisis in the United States, dividing generations, families, religious groups, and universities into the opposing sides of hawks (who demanded

escalation of the war effort to gain a victory) and doves (who wanted to pull out of Vietnam to end further damage and loss of lives on both sides). Many ordinarily law-abiding citizens were increasingly willing to risk scorn, arrest, and even jail to protest against the war. The government's response was to become more entrenched in its military strategy.

Some members of the Meeting joined in a national mass demonstration in Washington, D.C., in November 1969 in the hope of persuading the United States government to end the war. Dwight and Irene Ferguson, Noyes and Nancy Collinson, and Harriet Treadwell and her daughter Gail were among those from the Meeting who participated.

Perry and Harriet Treadwell and their four children had moved to Atlanta in 1962 when Perry took a faculty position in microbiology at Emory University. They had practiced the Episcopalian faith until, on a year's sabbatical in La Jolla, California, they encountered Quakers. It was with the La Jolla Quakers that they participated in their first antiwar protest. The day after they returned to Atlanta in 1969, the Treadwells began attending Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Harriet remembered the Washington, D.C., march vividly. She recalled that they boarded chartered buses in Atlanta in the evening, traveled all night, and arrived in Washington the next morning. That bus, she recalled, was "full of nuns, Quakers, and teenagers."

During the march, all the Quakers from Atlanta walked arm-in-arm. Harriet recalled the pull of that emotional experience. It was a very cold day, so after the march, she and Ruth Boozer, the wife of an Emory professor, decided to try to find a place to buy coffee. Because of the cold, marchers had started fires in trash cans. Harriet and Ruth found themselves in a throng of other marchers passing the Justice Department building, when police started throwing tear gas into the crowd. Armed soldiers stood on the rooftops. It was an eerie, warlike scene. As Ruth and Harriet tried to find their way back to the bus, tear gas in their eyes, a uniformed officer stepped in front of them, ordered, "Halt!" and thrust his bayonet in their direction. Finally, they found their bus among the hundreds of other buses. Harriet exclaimed, "Ruth and I are bosom buddies to this day because of that frightening experience" (Rinard interview).

Draft Counseling at Quaker House

In 1966 Don Bender, a young Mennonite conscientious objector from Delaware, arrived in Atlanta. All COs were required by law to perform two years of alternative service for the government, and Don fulfilled his by teaching in the Atlanta public schools. When he first arrived in Atlanta, Don lived in Mennonite House and immediately became active in the civil rights and peace movements. Soon he met John Yungblut and learned of Quaker House. Mennonite House and Quaker House worked cooperatively on many occasions. Quakers and Mennonites both helped Hector and Susie Black (see Chapter Four), and together they created the Atlanta Peace Coalition. From the first, Don's ability to bring together groups of people to accomplish a common goal was recognized. People felt that they could trust Don. In his quiet way, he could voice eloquently the group's idealism. He also had the ability to make sound organizational decisions.

In June 1968 Don became a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting; and three months later, just after the departure of the Yungbluts, he was asked to serve on the board of trustees of Quaker House. Within months, Don was coordinating a fledgling draft counseling service in Atlanta.

The draft, or conscription, was a well-entrenched system that had filled the ranks of the armed services both in times of peace and in the wars that wove in and out of the fabric of American life. Challenging the draft was an act bordering on treason. However, because Quakers, Mennonites, and the Brethren are known as "peace churches" historically in the United States, they have been granted privileges concerning military conscription.

The conscientious objector system was compatible with Quaker principles during World War II; but by the Vietnam War, some Quakers had begun to decide that the system was elitist, requiring that one be born of pacifist parents to qualify for CO status. Quakers nationwide shared a sense of this unfairness.

Bob Harbort, one of the Meeting's draft counselors, attended the Quaker Conference on the Draft and Conscription, held in Richmond, Indiana, in the fall of 1968. The conference published a declaration that said in part: "We are called into the community of all who suffer for their refusal to perform unconscionable acts." By this declaration, Friends were urged to take steps to help all

men who refused to register. Friends were advised to respond to the needs of AWOL military personnel, as well as men still on active military duty, and to provide draft counseling centers. These suggestions far exceeded the intentions of the original Conscientious Objector law.

Quaker House trustees knew of the Richmond Declaration and were sympathetic to the local draft counseling work of AWIN. By the end of 1969 the trustees decided to offer Quaker House as a draft counseling center. Announcement posters were placed in high schools and colleges, and Don Bender was officially employed in 1971 to coordinate the draft counseling program there.

As early as spring 1970 the trustees, of whom Don Bender was one, had discussed employing Don as the new program coordinator of Quaker House. His duties would emphasize peace work and draft counseling. The biggest problem, and eventually an insurmountable one, was the lack of funding for a full-time director. The budgets of both the Quaker House board of trustees and the Meeting were dismal. Meeting had operated at a deficit for nine of 12 months of 1970, and the trustees launched yet another disappointing fund appeal in 1971.

Don Bender and Judy Harak, a former Franciscan nun who had come to Atlanta from Minnesota with members of her order to work with poor children, had married in August 1969 under the care of the Atlanta Meeting. A Catholic priest and a Mennonite minister (Don's father) participated in the ceremony.

When Jim and Sue Marinell, then residents of Quaker House, left Atlanta in June 1970, the Benders moved in. That same month, the Supreme Court handed down the *Welsh* vs. *United States* decision, which allowed nonreligious conscientious objectors to qualify for CO status. This court decision opened the doors to many more COs than before. The need for draft counseling services suddenly expanded.

With the Benders in Quaker House, Don was successfully guiding the growing draft counseling program, and the trustees sent him to Philadelphia to a Draft Counseling Institute and stepped up fund-raising efforts. Within a month, Don reported that counselors were overextended because of so many calls for their services. The program was burgeoning, but there were meager resources from which to pay Don a salary as director.

Trustees' minutes for September 3, 1970, show that support from the Meeting was inadequate.

By the end of 1970 Quaker House had been opening its doors regularly for counseling four nights a week, three hours each, and had trained about 40 counselors in Atlanta, as well as several in other cities of Georgia. Don Bender took on the leadership role of a new group, Draft Counselors of Atlanta; and Quaker House was emerging as a preeminent center for draft counseling in the Southeast. But the plans for Don's employment as program director had to be scaled back. The trustees offered him subsistence wages of a half-time position at $160 a month, plus free rent at Quaker House. Don supplemented this with teaching half-days at the Atlanta Penitentiary. Don submitted an ambitious program proposal, and the trustees heartily approved it, to begin officially on January 1, 1971.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam War continued to play its deadly scenes on television in American living rooms, night after night. Whatever ideals and romantic notions Americans may have held about war and national honor were eroded by images of brutality. Relatively unfettered, the media were the government's undoing. Americans began to see for themselves not only the physical wounds of war, but the warp of conscience that had to occur to create soldiers who would do what their sons, brothers, and husbands were doing in Vietnam. (This lesson was not lost on the military. In later actions, especially Desert Storm in 1991, news was rigorously censored, presenting a bloodless and invincible image of war to a new generation.)

As long as the draft board granted deferments to students, young men could avoid the draft by staying in college, which many people rightly felt discriminated against those who could not afford the tuition. In an effort to simplify classification and to make the draft process more equitable, the government instituted a lottery system in the early 1970s, which randomly assigned priorities according to birthdates. Draft counseling centers were deluged with parents seeking CO status for their sons. As more middle-class Americans embraced the antiwar cause, the government was forced to listen. And besides the direct counseling of young men pursuing draft alternatives, Quaker House counselors widened their reach to those who were already in the military and wanted out. The demand for both of these types of counseling

outpaced the numbers of trained counselors; in response, Quaker House accelerated the program of counselor training. Quaker House hosted a Southeastern Regional Conference on the Draft and became the regional contact referral point for the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objector Service.

At the peak of this activity, Quaker House counseled an average of 100 people each month. Contacts with Toronto made it possible for Quaker House counselors to help young men who wanted to escape to Canada, a drastic, life-changing step that many young men were taking nationwide. (Sweden was also accepting draft resisters.)

In many instances, people drove from out of state to receive counseling. Attorney Mike Mykel, from the Meeting, was active in training counselors. Frank Cummings, Bob Harbort, Britt Pendergrast, and Don Bender spent many evenings at Quaker House talking with young men. Janney Wilson, who had spent time in CO camps during World War II, felt strongly that Quakers needed to provide counseling assistance (1994 reminiscences). Don sent out numerous letters answering inquiries about the draft. Draft literature filled a specially built display case in the hall.

As the counseling program continued, it became clear that the better-educated and the more well-to-do had a distinct advantage with the government when applying for CO status or deferment. This, coupled with the need to clarify the position that Quaker House was willing to support illegal action, prompted the following position paper from the trustees, written as a press release, and recorded in the trustees' minutes on July 14, 1971:

> . . . We do not believe in the right of government to coerce young men to serve in its armed forces. Therefore we will continue to assist young men of draft age. . . . Quaker House wishes to make explicit that we will assist and support young men who choose any of these alternatives (legal or illegal) for reasons of conscience.
>
> Quaker House has counselors trained in Selective Service Law and aims to give the best counsel possible—free of charge. Registrants are welcome to come back as often as necessary to work out the option they have elected. . . . Quaker House does not push young men toward any specific option.

Other Antiwar Activities

Don Bender headed up a successful year-long effort to provide all high school seniors in the Atlanta Public School system with information on draft alternatives. The school administration, after much discussion, agreed to reproduce and distribute a leaflet for students and a more extensive resource booklet for each high school counselor. These were written by a group under Don's guidance.

Quaker House participated in other antiwar activities as well. The U.S. Selective Service required all men of draft age to carry a wallet-sized card that indicated their draft classifications. COs had to carry their CO cards. Joining a national movement, Quaker House organized a "draft card turn-in" in Atlanta. Don Bender mailed in his own draft card, with the full support of the trustees. Quaker House also became involved in the national effort to repeal the draft by legislative action. Demonstrations were organized at the Selective Service headquarters in Atlanta. Similar actions from people around the country brought an impasse on Capitol Hill.

Overlapping with the antidraft movement was the "Unsell the War" campaign. Quaker House, along with other local groups, convinced several Atlanta radio stations to carry antiwar spots, designed to counter the media efforts of the Pentagon to sell Americans on the war.

Quaker House trustees sponsored Christmas Eve vigils in downtown Atlanta in 1970 and 1971. These were planned as silent vigils, not specifically against the Vietnam War, but for world peace. Participants brought homemade placards and stood against the great stone walls of the Federal Building. According to Judy Bender, in one of those bitterly cold vigils, Quakers stood very still and shivered inside layers of extra coats and scarves. Two intoxicated men shuffled by and through bleary eyes looked quizzically at one silent Quaker after another down the row. Finally, one turned to the other and pronounced, "They're all dead!" (Ferguson interview, 1993).

Some antiwar factions in Atlanta grew more radical as the war went on. A rumor circulated that someone from another draft counseling center had set off a bomb near the Atlanta Induction Center. The trustees realized that things could get out of hand, as

more people associated themselves with the activities of Quaker House. "In view of the independence of groups sponsored by Quaker House," they said in July 1971, "it is recognized that Don alone cannot be responsible for the methods and spirit which [have] become identified with Quaker action. Rather it is the responsibility of the Trustees and members of our Quaker Meeting to participate as far as possible in the group activities, so as to assist the group in developing a program which is in harmony with Quaker witness." This was, for the most part, wishful thinking. By and large, the programs drew only a handful of steady participants from the Meeting.

Later, Quaker House was offered as the Atlanta headquarters for the local Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) organization, along with a support group of non-veterans. One of the more dramatic things these groups did was to stage a guerrilla theater action in downtown Atlanta, simulating the search-and-destroy tactics of the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

The VVAW drew in some radical ex-veterans. The government was aware of some of the plans of these men and sought to infiltrate the organization. Consequently, the phones at Quaker House were tapped. One young man, posing as a sympathetic veteran, was actually a government informer. He spent much time at Quaker House. No one at Quaker House suspected that he was cooperating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He talked incessantly, was a sort of agent provocateur—one of the more radical people, Don remembered. "He was strange, but that came with the territory. Folks came from all over the board, psychologically and philosophically" (Rinard interview, spring 1993).

The informant's cover was blown when the Gainesville Eight (eight recent Vietnam veterans) were brought to trial in Florida for planning violence to military property. The evidence to bring them to trial was gathered by the same informer who had frequented Quaker House. The Gainesville Eight were eventually acquitted.

The Final Days of Draft Counseling

The draft system became more and more complex toward the end of the Vietnam War. "They [the U.S. Selective Service] began to issue new rules almost every week," recalled Frank Cummings.

George Hayes, one of the earliest Atlanta Friends, returned for a visit in 1976.

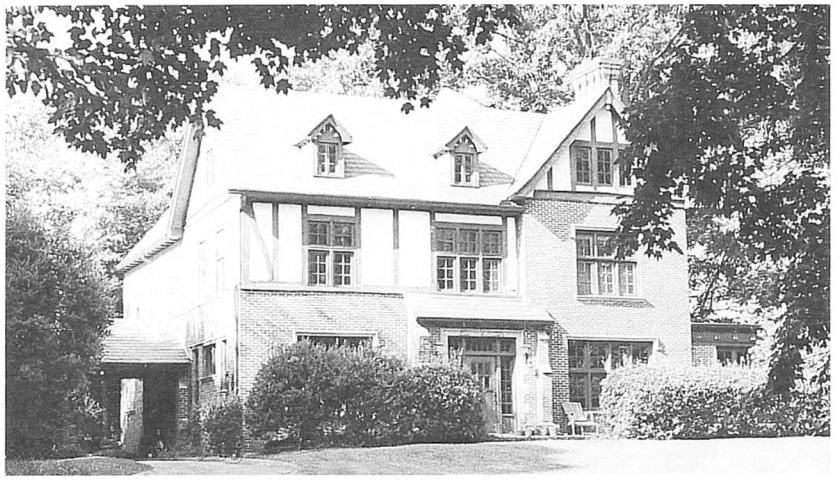
AGNES SCOTT PROFESSOR TO ADDRESS QUAKERS

The Atlanta Quaker Group (Society of Friends) will meet for supper and a worship program Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Central Y.M.C.A. 145 Luckie Street. The Public is invited.

Professor George Hayes, of Agnes Scott College, will speak on "The Doctrine of the Inner light in the Soul of Man."

A notice in The Atlanta Journal *February 6, 1943 invited interested persons to the city's first Quaker gathering.*

John and Phern Stanley led the drive to establish a Friends Center in Atlanta, in 1959.



Quaker House, a former residence in northeast Atlanta, was purchased in 1959 with help from concerned Friends throughout the country.

Benjamin Mays, President of Morehouse College, spoke to a high school group at Quaker House on the eve of Atlanta's school desegregation in 1961. John Yungblut and several students shown listening.

An integrated class of high school students met with Jon Johnston (second from right) at Quaker House in the summer of 1961.

Elizabeth Hendricks presented June and John Yungblut with a certificate of appreciation as they left Quaker House in 1968.

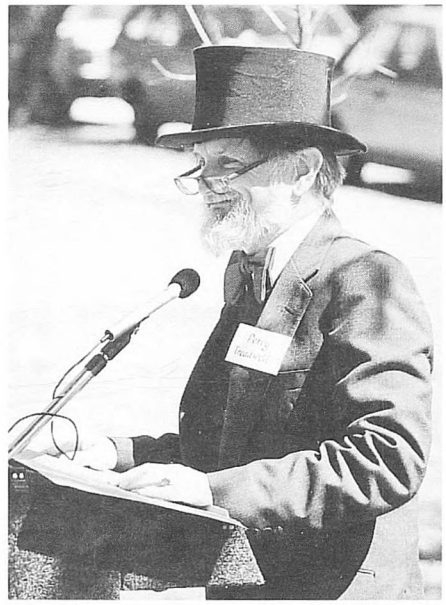
Jack Kaiser shown chatting with Ray Camp and Patricia and Bob Westervelt in the garden at Quaker House.

Reminiscences were shared in 1985 by (front, left to right) Emily Calhoun, Ralph Spillman, Martha Gaines, Peg Kaiser; (rear) Don Bender, Janet and Dwight Ferguson, Elizabeth Hendricks, and Alvin Gaines, all "old timers."

The Women's Group held many happy gatherings. Front, left to right: Nita Hinely, Joan Thompson, Karen Skellie, Barrie Roberts, Janet Rinard, Suzan Kenworthy. Rear: Audrey Ferguson Doehne (visitor), Janet Ferguson, Peg Kaiser, Sandra Anderson, Lillian Tikitin, Georgia Dreger.

The Ferguson Cabin on Lake Burton in the north Georgia mountains was a gift to the Meeting from Dwight Ferguson in 1983, in memory of his wife Irene.

Carlos, Ruth, and Rosaura were among many Central American refugees helped by the Meeting's Sanctuary Committee, led by the Cummingses.



Perry Treadwell opened the dedication ceremony for the newly acquired meetinghouse site in 1990.

First Day school classes shared "holding in the Light" experiences. (Maria Ladd and Bill Holland in background.) Claudia Stucke standing.

Beth Garrettson shown giving a report to Meeting for Business in the new meetinghouse, with Dave Thurman (clerk) and Kathy Marth (recording).

Some Friends from the 1940s and 50s were among the large crowd attending the fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1993. Left to right: Britt and Nan Pendergrast, Martha and Alvin Gaines, Peg Kaiser, Charles Hendricks, Patricia Westervelt, Mike Kaiser, Elizabeth Siceloff, Emily Calhoun, Elizabeth Hendricks, Bob Westervelt, at the new meetinghouse.

"Finally, it got so the draft board would call *us* up to find out what the new rule meant" (Frank Cummings, tape recording, April 28, 1989). The war and the draft continued through the election year 1972, but few draft calls were issued. As the demand for draft counseling dwindled, Quaker House ended its role as a counseling center. Some of the remaining counselors helped to counsel expatriates, deserters, and other men with lingering legal problems.

Late in the 1972 presidential campaign, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger announced, "Peace is at hand," and Richard Nixon was overwhelmingly reelected to four more years in the White House. All U.S. ground forces left Vietnam by the end of March 1973, but fighting continued, with the United States sending aid in the form of weapons and money to the South Vietnamese army. The war officially ended April 30, 1975, with the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese.

Meanwhile, the larger community had "discovered" Quaker House. "It was like living in a glass house," Don recalled when looking back on those years. People came by at all hours, a few of them under the influence of drugs. "We had one young man who had overdosed by mixing several drugs together. David Via and I worked all night with him. He was totally paranoid. He didn't want to go to the hospital, because he thought that was precisely what *they* had in mind . . . that's when *they* would get him" (Rinard interview, May 1993).

Judy Bender remembered that there were always house guests. One, Gora, an atheist peace activist from India, was to speak at a Quaker House seminar and stayed several days with the Benders. He had worked with Gandhi and wore a white garment similar to the one that Gandhi wore. This garment had to be laundered every day. The daily task of ironing it fell to Judy, because it was beneath Gora's dignity to do such work himself (Ferguson interview, 1993).

In the end, the Benders needed rest and privacy. Their daughter, Anneke, was born while they lived at Quaker House. They planned to adopt an infant, and there wasn't room for two children in the upstairs apartment at Quaker House. Don still taught at the Atlanta Penitentiary, and Judy was just beginning a faculty position in biology at Morehouse College. They didn't know what their future held, but they moved to a house on Miller Avenue at

the time a number of Friends were establishing households in the Candler Park area (see Chapter Seven).

Draft Counseling Remembered

Quaker House draft counselors helped hundreds of young men. More than 20 years later some cases stand out. Mike Mykel remembered the legal maze he conquered to help Maurice Turcotte, an articulate Roman Catholic, claim conscientious objector status. Maurice was a philosophy major and wrote a thoughtful CO application. He went through the draft counseling program at Quaker House and wanted to do everything by the book. Nevertheless, his draft board turned him down twice, and after appeals he was soon sent a notice to report for induction. He refused induction and was indicted and prosecuted. Mike took this case to the Fifth Circuit Court in New Orleans and was able to get Maurice acquitted. Mike speculates that Maurice was a victim of his religion. The draft board probably assumed that "no Catholic could be a CO" (Rinard interview, September 1993). Afterward, Maurice joined Atlanta Friends Meeting and made lasting friendships in the Meeting.

Don Bender recalls the problem with people who decided they wanted to be COs after they had their call for induction. "You had to have had a 'Road to Damascus' experience in order for that to be considered valid," he asserted. "So, we looked for ways for them to get the induction postponed until they could apply for CO status." The first route was to find a medical problem. The military put out an extensive list of medical disqualifications. Some doctors became familiar with this list and made their diagnostic services available to Quaker House referrals. "Of the people who came to us, a few were able to get medical deferments, but mostly we had quite a bit of success with COs," Don said. Some young men called for help but found that they needed none. They qualified for deferment because they were going to college or seminary.

A young man already serving in Vietnam was convinced that he could no longer serve. Don Bender recalled, "We helped get him released. We helped him on the strategy, not the substance, and on the basis of that, he was given his CO discharge" (Rinard interview 1993).

"Draft dodgers," who tried to use the CO route purely to avoid risking their lives, found their way to Quaker House, too. Bob Harbort remembers interviewing a spoiled, whining young man and thinking to himself, "What this kid needs is a good dose of the Marines!" At that point, he realized how exhausted he had become after so many intense counseling hours (Rinard interview, 1993).

A friend of Steve Watts remembers what draft counseling was like from the receiving end. Steve was in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at Georgia Tech. His feelings were against fighting, but when his number in the lottery came up, the reality of it became immediate. "We were of the age where our friends were being killed," said Steve's friend. "I remember when he got in trouble with ROTC one afternoon for wearing love beads. The officer came up and demanded, 'What are those, soldier?' And he answered, 'Love beads.' So, it was a blessing for each of us to come [to Quaker House] to find our confusion accepted. People like Perry [Treadwell] and Don [Bender] and others reassured us that of course this is confusing" (Joanne Rainey, taped interview, April 28, 1989).

Quaker House draft counselors tried to avoid pushing frightened and vulnerable young men toward decisions that would be wrong for them. "We were different," remembered Mike Mykel. "We didn't twist anyone's arm to take a particular course of action. Our draft counseling program was not near as big as the ones in San Francisco, Chicago, or New York, but I have no doubt ours might very well have been the best in the country."

The draft counseling centers across the country, along with the antidraft movement, put great pressure on the U.S. Selective Service system. Mike Mykel pointed out that until about 1970, if a man refused induction and was convicted, he had to spend up to four years in prison. After unrelenting Vietnam-era protest, that was reduced, in practice, to two years on probation. This leniency can be attributed to a change of attitudes among courtroom judges in response to the antiwar movement. Another policy change occurred during the Vietnam era: COs were no longer required to perform two years of alternative service. No existing bureaucracy was capable of finding alternative service assignments for the swelling numbers of new COs, so the requirement was dropped.

When asked in 1993 to evaluate his participation in the civil rights and peace movements, Don conceded that, although he did not regret any of the stands that were taken, he probably would be less dogmatic and strident about it now. "People were . . . working out personal agendas through [the political movements]. We made many enemies," he admitted, now recognizing that there are different paths to reaching the same goals, but he cited these constants: "The less violent, the better; the more just, the better; the more egalitarian, the better." Don went on to say that effective opposition to the war required that the issues be kept simple. "After the war, while clearly believing that our cause had been just, there was opportunity . . . to build bridges to those who had supported the war" (Rinard interview, September 1993).

Atlanta Meeting and the Vietnam War

During the war years, the Atlanta Meeting was willing to let trustees, using the name "Quaker House," act on its behalf. For its part, the Meeting refused to pay the 10 percent war tax imposed on all telephone bills and in 1970 sent letters to the two Georgia senators, Herman Talmadge and David Gambrell, in opposition to extending the draft. After the draft counseling center closed its doors and the Benders moved out, there was still the occasional request for hospitality for young men who were troubled by their military service or who were conscientious objectors. The Meeting took on the responsibility of developing procedures for such hospitality at Quaker House, as business meeting minutes noted in April 1973. (The government continued to draft men into military service until 1977.)

Harriet Treadwell remembered an incident one Sunday during the height of the war in Vietnam. She was the greeter at the door before meeting for worship. A well-dressed, middle-aged man whom she had never seen before came in. He seemed very agitated. During worship, he rose and told his story. He was one of the neighbors who had opposed Quaker House from the beginning. He had signed petitions against Quaker House moving into the neighborhood. Almost sobbing, he reported that his son, a soldier in Vietnam, had been very seriously injured and would never recover. Now, too late, he realized that the Quaker peace

testimony was a valid response to Vietnam. Friends were sympathetic toward this neighbor and were bolstered by his brave change of heart.

Although the war continued, in 1973, Watergate, the biggest political scandal in United States history, dominated the news. Atlanta Friends, aware of then-President Richard M. Nixon's Quaker heritage, responded with the following letter to him prior to his resignation from office in 1974:

> Dear President Nixon:
>
> On behalf of the Atlanta Friends Meeting we write to you to express our awareness of your personal travail in this time of national distress. . . . First, we urge you . . . to examine your conscience . . . and to do whatever is necessary to restore the faith of the nation in the executive branch of our government. If your resignation is the only way to achieve this, we urge that you take this action.
>
> Secondly, we feel great anguish over the continuing destruction of Southeast Asia. The speculation concerning the Watergate matters pales to insignificance in the light of the daily loss of lives through your sanction of this continual use of force. In the light of the Quaker peace testimony, we strongly urge you to stop the repeated use of military destruction in this and all other areas of the world. We . . . ask that you examine your decisions in the light of your Quaker upbringing. We pray that God will strengthen you in the very difficult days that lie ahead.
>
> Signed for the Atlanta Friends Meeting,
> Margaret Kaiser, Clerk
> Nancy Newman, Recording Clerk
> December 27, 1973

The fighting in Vietnam ended in spring 1975, but many Americans continued to be concerned about lingering problems from the war. The AFSC sought, and was denied, licenses to ship postwar humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese people. In a letter dated October 27, 1975, written by Suzan Kenworthy, then clerk, to members of the Atlanta Meeting, the situation was further explained:

> The staff of AFSC decided to send the aid in spite of the chance of fines or imprisonment carried out by the U.S. Government for "trading with the enemy". . . . Some Friends will be presenting their statement of complicity with AFSC's humanitarian act to

> the U.S. Attorney here in Atlanta. . . . It was our tax dollars which contributed to the destruction of Southeast Asia and we have the right to help in the recovery there. No government has the right to get in the way of our conscience.

Humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese included such items as fishnets, yarn, and agricultural implements, a small beginning for restoration of a country that had been ravaged by defoliants and napalm, as well as by mines and heavy bombing, for a decade. To dramatize support for this shipment, Perry Treadwell brought his heavy rototiller to a protest downtown in front of the Old Post Office Building. Atlanta Friends signed forms that indicated their approval of the aid. Twenty people held a vigil by Perry's rototiller, and the signed forms were delivered to John Stokes, U.S. Attorney, who received the group warmly. People in 45 other cities held similar vigils on the same issue. As a result of the pressure, the U.S. Treasury Department granted permission to AFSC to send assistance to Vietnam. The Meeting sent a letter of thanks to John Stokes for his reception of the delegation.

A gaping wound that needed healing, the question of amnesty for draft resisters had been raised in the U.S. Senate as early as January 1972. The media gave the issue considerable exposure for some time. Amnesty had wide support at Quaker House, and Don Bender participated in two local radio debates on this issue.

In summer 1976, when Jimmy Carter of Plains, Georgia, became the Democratic nominee for president of the United States, Dwight Ferguson saw an opportunity. He called up Nan Pendergrast and said, "I think we ought to go down there [to Plains] and talk to Miss Lillian [mother of Jimmy Carter] about amnesty." Jack Singletary, a neighbor of the Carters in Plains and a member of the Friends Meeting, was the go-between. When he asked Miss Lillian about some folks coming down to talk to her, she replied, "Oh, there isn't any sense in that—Jimmy's traveling all over the country and he'd never listen to anything I'd say, anyway." But when Jack explained that they wanted to talk about amnesty, she welcomed them immediately.

Dwight Ferguson and Nan Pendergrast made the three-hour automobile trip from Atlanta to Plains. They presented Miss Lillian with a statement that pleaded with Jimmy Carter, if elected, to grant amnesty to the draft-resister exiles in Sweden

and Canada. "We never heard anything directly," remembered Nan, "but that was the first official act that Carter took after he took office. He didn't call it amnesty; he pardoned them all" (Rinard interview, October 6, 1993). Atlanta Quakers believed that they might have had an influence on Carter's decision.

Soon after Jimmy Carter was elected president in November 1976, Atlanta Quakers and AFSC coordinated a vigil at the Carter home in Plains, Georgia, in December 1976. The vigil purpose was "to express hope that Carter would work for reconciliation with the Vietnamese people, reconstruction aid to Vietnam and recognition of that government, total amnesty for deserters and rehabilitation of U.S. Vietnam War veterans. The purpose also was to call for an end to development and production of the B-1 bomber and promote economic conversion toward world disarmament" (*The Evening Bulletin* [Plains, Georgia], December 21, 1976). About 50 Quakers from nine southeastern states, as well as a delegation from Philadelphia, participated.

It was a gratifying experience for those who traveled to Plains. Miss Lillian came out and stood in line with the silent group. Then her son, President-elect Jimmy Carter, came out and shook hands with everyone. "It heartened all of us," Nan remembered. "We were so accustomed to encountering hostility" (Rinard interview, October 1993).

After Carter took office, Atlanta Friends sent him a Mailgram saying, "The Atlanta Friends Meeting appreciates your courageous action extending pardon to draft evaders. Quakers from the southeast presented our concerns in a prayer vigil at Plains December 18 and were encouraged by your warm greeting. We continue to urge amnesty also for deserters, cancellation of the B-1 bomber project and reconciliation with Vietnam."

7

NEW VENTURES, NEW IDEAS

The year 1970 opened two decades of strong growth for Atlanta Friends Meeting, but none would have guessed it at the time. A little more than a year had passed since the departure of John Yungblut as program director. Although Friends were sponsoring a vigorous draft counseling program and had employed Don Bender as part-time program coordinator, numerous attempts at fund-raising had been disappointing. The Meeting was unsure who it was or where it wanted to be. Some wanted to encourage the deepening of a meeting for worship, with more emphasis on the Quaker heritage. Others hoped for a meeting with intense involvement in social action with less strong Quaker identification. These different visions resulted in tensions; and as the Quaker House community looked inward, it became aware of a dramatically changing social and economic landscape. Among these changes, the economic growth of the city of Atlanta and the social upheavals caused by the Vietnam War were especially significant.

At the beginning of 1970, the Meeting employed as part-time secretary Janet Boyte, who had experience as youth program director at the YWCA in Atlanta. She remained Quaker House secretary until July 1972, when she and her husband, Harry Boyte, moved to the Virgin Islands for several years. She was

followed by Nita Hinely, a former Atlantan returning from Chicago, where she and her former husband had been resident managers of the 57th Street Meetinghouse from 1955 to 1963. Upon moving back to Atlanta in 1972, Nita transferred her membership from 57th Street Meeting to the Atlanta Meeting.

The Changing Character of Atlanta Friends Meeting

Atlanta's growth had burgeoned after World War II, when business opportunities attracted corporations and people from other parts of the country. In the ensuing decades, the city experienced unprecedented expansion, bringing an influx of thousands, and ultimately millions, of newcomers to the metropolitan area. Among them were several new families with Quaker backgrounds who found their way to the little Atlanta Meeting. Some provided long years of service to the Meeting. Jack Kaiser was treasurer for 19 years. Peg Kaiser, Tom Kenworthy, Suzan Kenworthy, Noyes Collinson, and Patricia Westervelt each served as clerk of the Meeting and filled many other offices. Suzan said that when she and Tom arrived, they "found a big program with a meeting attached." Bob Westervelt, art teacher and potter, with his blend of "artistry, fantasy and mysticism" (Meeting newsletter, June 1970), provided many insightful messages in meeting for worship and donated some of his pottery to Meeting. One, *The Garden of Eden*, a stoneware relief, hung for years in the living room at Quaker House. His lamps, which once graced Quaker House, later provided soft light in the new meetinghouse library.

In hopes of nurturing the sprouts of growth, in 1970 Tom Kenworthy, as clerk, sent the following letter to many meetings in northern states:

> Dear Friend,
>
> We are seeking to extend the fellowship of our Meeting, and would like to learn how to get in touch with members or former members of your Meeting who live in the Atlanta area. We will greatly appreciate your sending us the names and addresses of persons in this vicinity who may be interested in the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

From the responses, a list was developed. Ministry and Counsel wrote to each individual, encouraging them to attend. The

letter campaign did not bring in many people. Tom Kenworthy concluded that Quakers new to Atlanta either had found Atlanta Meeting already (as did Janet and Gil Rinard and their sons, who arrived in 1968), or had chosen not to come, even if invited. A later attempt in 1978 was similarly unsuccessful.

The Quaker testimony of pacifism, which was integral to the Meeting's stance against the Vietnam War, attracted local social activists, as did the draft counseling program flourishing at Quaker House in 1970 and 1971, described in the preceding chapter. Atlanta Quakers were perceived as being sympathetic to the new protest lifestyle emerging from the civil rights movement and Vietnam War. This perception drew people from other religious traditions to Atlanta Meeting. Don and Judy Bender, Frank and Carol Cummings, Perry and Harriett Treadwell, Harry and Esther Lefever, and Mike Mykel were among those who had come.

The Meeting discussed ways to "bring newer people into the center of Meeting" (minutes, business meeting, September 20, 1970), noting, "More people from the community participate in Quaker House functions now than at any time recently."

The ratio of attenders to members was increasing, and the sunporch was becoming too crowded. "Serving and seating the large numbers now attending Pot Luck is becoming quite a problem," reported Irene Ferguson for the Hospitality Committee (minutes, business meeting, March 15, 1970). Meeting for worship moved to the larger living room (State of the Meeting Report, 1970). More families with young children were attending, and needs for First Day school continued to be a major concern. Some people wanted more time together "to discuss Quakerism and its implications for everyday living" or "to get support for non-conformist views" (newsletters, June 1970 and November 1970). Bob and Dot Barrus from Celo Meeting in North Carolina came to present the concept of "Spontaneous Group Dialogue" to Atlanta Friends, and in 1970 Friendly Dialogues succeeded Faith and Practice suppers.

New Quakers of Catholic or Protestant backgrounds, who missed the rituals of their former religious associations, started a "Free Liturgy" group at Quaker House. Two infants, Anneke Bender and Mark Cummings, were baptized in a gathering of the Free Liturgy group in Quaker House.

Many young Americans who embraced the lifestyle of protest were referred to as "hippies." The adjective "hip" had been around since 1904, characterizing persons with a keen interest in new developments. Coined in 1953, the term "hippies" became a household word in the late 1960s and early 1970s, reflecting the alienation of a generation. The youthful hippie movement espousing defiance of societal norms flourished in Atlanta from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. Hippies took over an old commercial area on Peachtree Street from 10th to 14th Streets and dubbed it "the Strip," to the shock and dismay of many Atlantans. The shops along the Strip offered an array of merchandise aimed at the youthful counterculture: from handcrafted leather and tie-dyed clothing to posters, record albums, and drug paraphernalia. Young people from middle-class families donned faded jeans and love beads, becoming "instant hippies."

So-called "Jesus Freaks" (young earnest Christians who wanted to bring back the look and flavor of first-century Christianity) took up residence on the Strip, adding to the carnival atmosphere. *The Great Speckled Bird*, a popular alternative newspaper, was published in the neighborhood. Quaker House advertised its draft counseling services in the *Bird*, and the paper was sold at Quaker House for 25 cents a copy.

The hippies created a problem for the police, and there was a great deal of distrust between these two groups. Young people sat in front of shops, which intimidated some customers. Some urinated against the sides of buildings. They loitered and jaywalked. Many used illegal drugs, and some overdosed. While none of this behavior was appealing, and some of it was unlawful, it represented a crude reflection—not only in Atlanta, but nationwide—of a deep conflict over the boundaries between government authority and personal freedom. Skirmishes over this issue occurred everywhere: on the streets, at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, in peace marches, on college campuses, and around dining room tables of many households. Issues frequently separated young from old, siblings from siblings, wives from husbands. The intrusiveness of government, whether represented by the president, the National Guard, the draft board, the Internal Revenue Service, or the local police, was an inflammatory issue.

The Benders, the Ungers, the Treadwells, and others from Atlanta Meeting went often to the Strip as quiet observers, to help avert friction. Several people from Meeting helped at The Bridge, a counseling service for youngsters who were using drugs. Harriet Treadwell served as bookkeeper and secretary at The Bridge in 1972. And during the following two years she was the "general Mom" to troubled young people at Chrysalis, a counseling center located in the old Peters house at the corner of Ponce de Leon and Piedmont Avenue (later The Mansion restaurant).

By 1970 the Meeting had a large group of teenagers. Some of these young people were also drawn to the Strip. Hoping to deflect their interest from this area, the Meeting permitted them to have the basement of Quaker House every other Saturday night to run a coffeehouse. The teens engaged in some social service of their own, using the 50 cent admission they charged for folk entertainment and movies to help build a school in Bolivia (newsletter, March/April 1971).

Early in 1970 Quakers scheduled several meetings to discuss the hippie lifestyle. The 1970 calendars in January and March scheduled as topics: "The Hip Movement as a 20th-Century Revival of Quakerism" and "Teen Drug Addiction: The Unexpected Peril." Perry Treadwell served briefly as vice-chair of the Metropolitan Committee on Alcohol and Drugs (MACAD), and trustees approved Quaker House membership in this organization.

Meeting for worship took on a different look. Only a decade before, Quakers had adopted what they thought was the proper image for the Friends Center in Atlanta—a clean and modestly decorated Quaker House befitting the importance of its role in the community. Simple but dignified dress and deportment were assumed. In the 1970s, dress styles reflected political leanings and a younger, more relaxed demeanor. The garb that characterized the Strip was now frequently worn to Meeting. Men grew beards; women wore their hair long and uncoiffed. Bare feet were not uncommon at Meeting. For some Friends who remembered earlier times, this change was hard to accept.

Expanding Concerns of Friends

When Don Bender became program coordinator in 1970, he organized several interest groups to respond to traditional

and new concerns of Friends (in addition to his efforts in draft counseling). An ecology group, a prison visitation group, and a communal lifestyle group sprang up.

In response to racism within the white community, trustees supported Don in a 1971 campaign to change the name of a local city street and public elementary school near Quaker House (Don Bender's midyear report to trustees, August 1971). Both bore the name of Nathan B. Forrest, a Confederate general who persecuted blacks after the Civil War and helped to organize the Ku Klux Klan. The school, whose student population had been all white, now served mostly black children. Trustees hoped that changing its name would "eliminate racist symbols in our society" and "demonstrate Atlanta's dedication to the goal of recognizing every citizen's worth and dignity" (newsletter, March/April 1971).

Eloquently persuasive letters to city officials and the media were not enough to bring this about. Instead, Atlanta Quakers received hate mail over the issue. Calling Quakers "race mixers" and "communists," these letters proved the existence of an element of Southern society that many hoped was dying out. Finally in 1980, Forrest Avenue *was* renamed. An article in a 1980 issue of *The Atlanta Journal*, titled, "Ralph McGill Is Well Honored," said, "thanks to the nine-year effort by a Quaker organization [Atlanta Friends Meeting] to get the name changed." The street is now Ralph McGill Boulevard, named for a former editor of *The Atlanta Constitution* who "wrote fiery columns against the Klan" (Doug Monroe, "Roads by Any Other Names," *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1994). The school was closed in 1976 and the property sold.

Like the term "hippie," the concept of environmental awareness did not break through the national consciousness until some time after its introduction. In 1962 Rachel Carson's landmark book, *Silent Spring*, had awakened some and had alienated others. Those who exposed the polluting and wasteful practices of American industry sometimes were labeled "communists," suggesting that they opposed free enterprise.

Early in the 1970s Atlanta Friends Meeting woke up to environmental problems. Perry Treadwell, then an associate professor of microbiology at Emory, gave a lecture on "Getting Emotionally Involved in Your Environment." Soon thereafter an Ecology Interest Group set up glass recycling containers behind

Quaker House, as a service both to attenders of meeting and to the neighbors in Druid Hills. Glass recycling locations were scarce in Atlanta at the time. A new ritual developed: Before going in to meeting on Sunday mornings, Friends walked in back to deposit their previous week's glass collection. Sometimes the silence during meeting for worship was shattered by the crash of breaking glass. Meeting children had to be cautioned against playing with the glass jars. Each week George Hendricks, Jim Cain, Steve Watts, and Paul Biehl hauled the glass in the Hendricks family's red pickup truck to the Coca-Cola plant, where it was being collected. When glass recycling caught on elsewhere and alternative depositories became available, the Meeting ended this project with a sigh of relief.

Interest in prisons revived again in 1972. Mike Mykel assumed leadership of a commitment group concerned with prison conditions and reform. Atlanta Friends helped sponsor Mike's attendance at a Conference on Prison Rights held in Chicago in December, and the commitment group began to visit jails in and around Atlanta. Quaker House hosted 10 or 12 members of a prison reform group known as the Church of the New Song when local hearings were being held on the right of prisoners to participate in the group as a religious organization. Some Atlanta Federal Penitentiary inmates had been active in the group.

By 1972, Quaker House was hopping with activity. The Meeting's newsletter marveled that "participants in ever-increasing numbers flock to meetings of all kinds at Quaker House, from community lifestyles to Chinese language classes, international student gatherings, or a search for better human relations in high schools. Newly organizing groups such as farm workers, social workers, a Catholic peace fellowship, and others find temporary hospitality" (newsletter, March 1972).

Through their efforts for civil rights and against the Vietnam War, Quakers had seen that nonviolent protest could speak to a national issue and help change it. There was fervent hope that the whole society could be changed for the better. Movements to push the social agenda emerged during the war years. Quakers pointed back to John Woolman, a Quaker nonconformist of an earlier generation, who was unconventional in personal appearance and audacious in thought.

Although the South as a region was slow to absorb these new movements, for many Atlanta Quakers of all ages the ideas affirmed traditional Quaker testimonies of simplicity, community, justice, equality, and peace. This emphasis, as Elizabeth Hendricks recalled, was "basically good. Our Quaker testimonies were finally being acted on. We had high objectives and a vision for our country . . . a big, fine view of what our country could be. Friends stood for this hope" (Rinard interview, 1994).

Friends Respond to Changing Lifestyles

As Americans expanded social experimentation, no institution went unchallenged, not even marriage. Quakers, like others in Atlanta, were challenged and intrigued by changing cultural norms. When the book *Open Marriage* hit *The New York Times'* best-seller list in 1972, a group of Atlanta Friends met weekly to discuss it. Ideas of new sexual freedom were explored. Paul Kuntz, a member of Atlanta Meeting, published an article in *Friends Journal* titled, "As Long as Love Lasts," suggesting that "marriage should be made much more difficult and divorce much easier" (newsletter, July 1972).

It took a situation right in the Friends' meetinghouse to bring the "new morality" home to Atlanta Quakers. John Miller, a young single man from California, became the temporary resident of Quaker House after the Benders moved out in the spring of 1972. He was invited by the trustees to stay for the summer. When John's girlfriend Susie Brosin, whom he had known from high school days, moved in with him, some Atlanta Friends were upset. Living together without legal process "violated Friends' commitment to marriage as a God-centered relationship," they said (board of trustees special meeting, August 16, 1972). Some worried that the young couple did not represent the Friends' traditional commitment to marriage. Parents feared that condoning it would set a bad example to the Meeting's teens.

A special meeting was called on August 16, 1972, to discuss the issue. Trustees, responsible for arranging for the resident, were taken to task for not informing the Meeting of the situation. Up for discussion was the theoretical question, "How does Quakerism respond to changes in established institutions and customs?" There was no consensus for immediate action. Some

trustees supported the right of the couple to choose their own lifestyle. Trustees agreed, with misgivings on the part of some, to ask Miller to stay for four more months, while "dialogues about the new lifestyle, including roles in marriage, feelings about youth movements, etc.," could be held with both the trustees and Meeting representatives present (minutes, August 20, 1972).

Finally those with a more liberal stance bowed to pressure from members who stood by their position that an unmarried couple should not reside in Quaker House. After a month, the board of trustees announced its intention to seek a permanent resident for the new year. John Miller found other interests, and he and Susie Brosin moved out as requested.

The State of the Meeting Report for 1972 records the end of this saga in customarily oblique style: "A sharp divergence in attitudes relating to changing lifestyles—particularly alternatives to traditional marriage, and their concomitant variations—created the opportunity for frank discussions on marriage. Patience and the readiness of members mutually to respect contrary opinions prevailed." The next residents were Chris and Joan (Thompson) Newland, a married couple.

Sensing that marriages in Meeting needed support, Ministry and Counsel made arrangements for a marriage retreat for couples in the Meeting. The retreat was led by Bob and Dot Barrus of Celo, North Carolina, who had conducted such retreats in other settings. Eight couples signed up for a weekend in February 1973, to participate in activities designed to help them understand and strengthen their relationships. However, over the next years, as was happening throughout the country, more than half of these couples divorced. Suzan Kenworthy, clerk of the Meeting in 1974, recalled that those were disconcerting years when several Meeting families dissolved and realigned (1994 reminiscences).

Communal or community living was another social experiment of the 1970s. A weekend workshop at Quaker House in 1972 drew more than 70 interested people to explore urban and rural communal group living. George Lakey and others from the Philadelphia-based Movement for a New Society (MNS) conducted the discussions (newsletter, March 1972). MNS had put together an analysis called, "Revolution: A Quaker Prescription for a Sick Society" (newsletter, fall 1972). Philadelphians with connections

to Quakers had formed "Life Centers" (communal houses). They published books and pamphlets to spread their vision. Workshops conducted in Atlanta by the MNS continued to intrigue Atlanta Friends.

Perry Treadwell, Linda Feeley, and Kerry Thornley from Atlanta attended MNS training in Philadelphia in 1975 and returned imbued with ideals of simple living and community. The announcement for a simple-living workshop held at Quaker House in the fall of 1975 read: "What is your person[al] relationship with the world food crisis? What can you do to act on your concerns? Evaluate your lifestyle. What [does] it mean to build a support community? What does simplicity mean to you?"

Inspired to adopt a new and simpler lifestyle, Perry Treadwell had resigned in 1974 from the Emory faculty. Kathy Johnson, a native Atlantan who had become interested in MNS while living up north, moved back to Atlanta, partly because Friends were involved in the movement.

There were those who wanted to establish communal households based on the Philadelphia model and others who were interested in exploring "community," a concept built on separate houses in one neighborhood. Young couples just starting their families and careers found the idea of community appealing. Child care and tools could be shared, and neighbors would be friends. Their answer to urban community lay just one block south of Quaker House, in a declining neighborhood called Candler Park.

Candler Park was part of a neighborhood organization named BOND—Bass Organization for Neighborhood Development—in the Little Five Points and Bass High School area. Atlanta Friends had begun to participate in this organization when it was organized in the late 1960s. In 1970 Perry Treadwell and Don Bender represented Quaker House at BOND meetings and recognized the potential for service in the BOND neighborhood. "We had been so focused on saving the world, that we wanted to focus on a specific geographic area," Don Bender remembered (Rinard interview, 1993). Although one reason for choosing Candler Park was its proximity to Quaker House, there were other issues. "We already knew that there were more progressives per square foot there than anywhere else in Atlanta," Don explained. "So it seemed like a good place to begin a seedbed for work for change, and to estab-

lish the kind of community that we wanted to be a part of" (Rinard interview, 1993).

In the early 1970s, houses in Candler Park were relatively inexpensive. Three families, Don and Judy Bender, Harry and Esther Lefever, and Frank and Carol Cummings, were the first Atlanta Friends to buy. They chose houses on Miller Avenue, Oakdale Road, and Clifton Road at prices ranging from $12,000 to $16,500—well below the average for Atlanta. (By the 1990s each would be appraised at more than $150,000.) A few years later Perry and Harriet Treadwell moved in. Succeeding waves of Quakers, including Dave Shields and Betty O'Berry, Austin Wattles and Kathy Johnson, Nick Butterfield, Waldie and Lelia Unger, Dan and Sue May, Bert and Karen Skellie, Mike Mykel, Judy Lumb, Janet Minshall, and Free Polazzo came to live in the area. The Benders moved from Miller Avenue to Oakdale Road, where the Ungers also bought a house.

Behind their houses was a parcel of land, which eventually was jointly owned by the Benders, the Ungers, the Lefevers, and the Treadwells. (Perry withdrew in 1996, but Harriet retained her interest.) The partners named the parcel of land Tern Valley. They shared a tiller and mowing equipment. Their goals were to keep some open space, to have a place for gardens, and to maintain a wooded area in its natural state. Judy Bender developed an experimental fish pond in connection with her research at Atlanta University, where she taught. Tern Valley became a commons, a good open space for people to gather.

Over time Maynard Jackson (when running for mayor of Atlanta) and Ben Jones (when running for Congress) held large rallies in Tern Valley. In 1988 Jim Tolmach and Sally Ferguson built a new house on Miller Avenue on land purchased from the Tern Valley group and became members of the partnership.

Inspired by simple-living principles, in 1976 Perry and Harriet Treadwell set up a community house at 1434 Miller Avenue in Candler Park. "It was part of the whole experiment of reducing our impact on the earth," Perry asserted (Rinard interview, 1993). Four Quakers—the Treadwells, Nick Butterfield, and Wayne Schucker—moved in, along with a VISTA volunteer, a seminary student, and Leslie Withers, the director of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). Many Friends were supporting such CALC

projects as opposition to the B-1 bomber, amnesty for draft evaders, and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

The housemates earned and kept their own money but divided rent and utilities among themselves. They rotated chores, shared shopping and cooking, ate supper together each evening, and held weekly house meetings to thresh out problems. Leslie Withers remembered, "It was like a marriage—it made some things easier and some things harder. We were going in as if it were a lifetime commitment, but it turned out to be temporary" (Rinard interview, May 1993).

Harriet Treadwell observed one persistent problem—differences in the definition of "clean." Looking back, Perry Treadwell realized that community can work, but "a person needs to be very clear what your personal needs are before you go into community, what your space is, and how it can be invaded." The experience led to a better understanding of the various social needs of people, and of balancing the needs of the group and personal privacy. After about two years the original group began to break up when outside circumstances, such as job changes and school, required moves. In the end, the house was sold. Perry and Harriet were divorced, and Perry moved for a while to a farm east of Atlanta, where he built a yurt to live in. Harriet, who worked for the BOND Credit Union, settled into her own little house on Miller Avenue. In 1996, Harriet married Doug Unfug, a history professor at Emory University. Perry and Judith Greenberg celebrated their commitment to each other in 1991.

When they moved out of Quaker House in 1976, Chris and Joan Newland joined a group in another communal house at 188 Waverly Way in Inman Park. Steve Froemming and Toby and Pam Ives, with their young son Nathan, were in this group. The big old shell of a house was in the process of being renovated by the owner, who agreed to rent it to the group for only $125 a month. It was the goal of the group to eat for $1 a day per person. Pam Ives raised goats in the basement and let them graze in the kudzu patch out back. She became interested in women's issues and helped start the Feminist Women's Health Center. "The [Vietnam] War made us radical. . . . This was a very disjointed time." People kept asking the Waverly House group, "Do you share sex?" The reply: "Couples stay couples until they break up." Eventually, the couples did break up and leave the house; and the experiment

ended. Joan and Chris Newland were divorced; Pam and Toby Ives were divorced. Toby moved to Asheville, North Carolina, and later became director of the Asheville Community Food Bank (Rinard interview, October 1993).

Little Five Points and the Pub

In 1972, when these Quaker families helped start the Candler Park and BOND community efforts, no one would have predicted the success of the unique area of Atlanta called Little Five Points. Instrumental in the development of this "Soho of the South" were Quakers with ideas of community revitalization and goodwill. Individual Quakers poured time and money into the neighborhood from the beginning. Eager to restore the neighborhood in which they chose to live, these urban pioneers banded together in a group that they called Atlanta Intown Development Corporation ("the Intown group"). They bought rundown houses, renovated them, and then sold them to people who wanted to live in the neighborhood but did not care to do the fixing-up themselves. The group made only a small profit on each house, but the neighborhood was upgraded in the process.

While working on residential renovation in the neighborhood, people began to talk of improving the adjacent Little Five Points commercial district, a decrepit area with boarded-up storefronts and rampant crime. Part of the decline of the Little Five Points commercial area could be laid to the anticipation of a planned freeway that was to be built alongside the district. Many of the business owners (most of whom were absentee landlords) were just holding onto the property, hoping that the new freeway would hike up values. In the meantime, they did not seem to care what sleazy businesses occupied their low-rent buildings. "They were from the old school; they believed that roads were progress," according to Don Bender (Rinard interview, May 1993).

Freeway or no freeway, the young, energetic newcomers wanted improvement now. Boldly, with no commercial experience but much missionary zeal, the Intown group raised funds and bought up eight commercial properties in the Little Five Points district in 1975, with what became "The Pub," located at the corner of Moreland and Euclid Avenues, as the centerpiece. The story of the Little Five Points Pub, often referred to at first as

"The Quaker Pub," belongs to the genre of those fables of Quakers who went about doing good and ended up doing very well, indeed.

The business that was to become the Pub was the infamous Redwood Lounge. "It was a place where people got drunk, beat up on each other, propositioned each other, and took their fights out on the street." Shootings and knifings occurred regularly. It was a "despicable" place, Don Bender recalled. The City of Atlanta was going to close the business because it was so undesirable, Perry Treadwell recounted (Rinard interview, May 1993). But, before the city took action, a group of 15 people, including the Treadwells (who supplied the largest share of the initial investment), the Benders, the Lefevers, and Ed Turner from Atlanta Meeting pooled their money and bought the business license in 1977. These 15, incorporating themselves as The Little Five Points Community Pub, Inc., soon purchased the building from the Intown group and started a high-risk venture that ultimately paid off in all respects—economic and social.

Success was not assured. In an *Atlanta Journal* article describing the anticipated opening night, the former owner predicted that the same rowdy "hardcore rednecks" who had frequented the lounge for the past two decades would not move out of the "transient and boarding house area" ("Little 5 Points Pub to Bar None," *The Atlanta Journal*, March 1, 1977). Don Bender acknowledged then that "what we're doing is risky. It probably won't be profitable, but it will benefit the community. The Redwood has been a blight on the community for a long time, a place for illegal activity and violence. It has really impeded the growth of the area."

Rebutting the former owner, Don asserted that the Pub "is going to be a decent place, a friendly place, and an absolutely safe place." The article reported that the group "envisions turning enough of a profit on the bar to plough funds into other neighborhood improvement projects," a goal that was reached over the next decades.

The Pub was an immediate success. "It just took off like gangbusters!" enthused Don Bender. "It was incredibly exciting at first." The new owners worked night and day preparing for the opening, wondering if anyone would come. "We were overwhelmed," Don said. Harriet Treadwell remembered that they were scrubbing the floor an hour before official opening. "People

piled in, and before long they were standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Mayor Jackson . . . with bodyguards . . . policemen, TV cameras, reporters. I couldn't wait on anyone," Harriet remembered as she described that night to Anicia Lane. Anicia, a writer and a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting, published an article touting the food and ambience of the Pub after it had been open for two years ("The Pub, Multi-faceted Local Nightspot Center for Little Five Points Life," by Anicia Lane, *Signal*, April 30, 1979).

Led by the spirit of Quaker do-goodism, the Pub group managed to transform the worst place in the neighborhood into a good place. The English pub (short for public house) was the model. The idea was that it be a place for families, good food, conversation, town meetings, art, and live music. It was soon all of these. Quakers went to the Pub for lunch after meeting on Sundays. Committee meetings of Atlanta Friends were sometimes held there. Politicos and young professionals tried it and liked it. "The coming of the Pub started an incredible influx, even though Sevananda [a health food store], Charis [a feminist bookstore], and the [BOND] Credit Union were already there and planted the seed," stated Don Bender (Rinard interview, May 1993). The Pub quickly drew other interested investors to the area.

After the Pub opened, the Little Five Points commercial district developed a momentum of its own. At the time, the Pub investors had no blueprint for the future, but their instincts for success were right. Seven Stages, a theater group, got started in Little Five Points a few years after the Pub opened. The city of Atlanta put money into revitalization efforts. Two streets were converted to pedestrian plazas. Publicity followed as more shops, restaurants, and improvements made Little Five Points a destination for Atlantans from miles around. The Pub was sold in 1987, and the area continued to thrive.

Don Bender found his vocation in Little Five Points. He became very involved in the commercial development of the Point Center, the Shopping Center on Moreland Avenue, the renovation of the theaters, and the completion of the pedestrian plaza. He began to describe himself as a commercial real estate developer/manager. He became president of the Little Five Points Business Association. In this capacity he was able to use his Quaker experience in peaceful negotiation to resolve the tensions of traffic, litter, and noise that inevitably come up between neighborhoods

and nearby commercial centers. (In 1994, Don Bender won the Joel Award, given by the Inman Park Neighborhood Association for his efforts in the interest of these problems.)

At present, Little Five Points is a bohemian village with a far-flung reputation. It appears in many travel guides for Atlanta. Don is pleased that the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau says that it gets more requests for information about Little Five Points than any other location in Atlanta. "People from places as far away as France and South Africa come. They've heard of us," Don said with characteristic understated pride. Asked in 1993 how he saw the future of Little Five Points, Don replied, "We have three theaters, but I'd like to see Little Five Points become the theater district. I want Little Five Points to become a place of artistic and political ferment . . . because I want to be a part of it. . . . It's a challenge trying to make it happen. . . . I see a place of cohesion, a place where differences are worked out" (Rinard interview, May 1993).

Efforts to Block "The Road"

From the early 1960s, Inman Park, Candler Park, and several other nearby areas had been threatened by the proposed construction of what the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) called the Stone Mountain Freeway, connecting downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain. Buildings had been condemned, and land was cleared of houses by the late 1960s. The freeway's proposed route would tear through intown areas, roar past fine old Druid Hills houses, pave over gems of green parks (some designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of New York's Central Park), follow along Ponce de Leon Avenue into DeKalb County, and cut through to the suburbs. Neighborhood groups had halted further progress, and the empty land became an ugly, kudzu-filled gash through formerly intact neighborhoods and festered as an open wound for years.

In 1972, then-governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter killed the Stone Mountain Tollway idea. But the city government in 1979 submitted a proposal for "The Great Park," a parkway designed by Atlanta architect-developer John Portman. Don Bender served on the commission representing the neighborhoods at the time the city commissioned the Portman plan. The plan was designed to

appease the neighborhoods by providing bike paths, lakes, museums, and a 35-mile-per-hour speed limit. However, this grand idea languished for lack of funding.

Several years later, ex-President Carter decided to build his library in the cleared right-of-way, resurrecting the DOT's plan for a major road, which this time took on the name "Presidential Parkway." In 1981, Andrew Young campaigned for mayor as an opponent of the road. During his campaign, Young met with a group of voters in Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff's living room and promised that the road would not be built. However, once elected mayor, ignoring the opposition of Quakers and intown neighborhoods, Young changed his mind and tried to push the parkway through.

Now all legal means for stopping the road seemed exhausted. Some determined Atlanta Quakers and others formed a group called "Roadbusters." Roadbusters took training in civil disobedience from CALC. Overnight the official red octagonal traffic stop signs in Candler Park became billboards against the road. Someone created a stencil with the words THE ROAD in neat block letters and stealthily spray-painted "THE ROAD" under the big word STOP on all the stop signs in Candler Park so that they now read, "STOP THE ROAD" at every intersection. When the city replaced these signs, the stenciled message appeared on the new signs. Eventually the city gave up, and "STOP THE ROAD" signs became visible evidence of the community's defiance.

Construction actually began. The DOT began cutting down trees by Jackson Hill Baptist Church on Ponce de Leon Avenue, east of Quaker House. Some Roadbusters climbed the trees and had to be pulled down, slowing the operation. Other Roadbusters set up a demonstration center in nearby Shady Side Park. Commuters on Ponce de Leon Avenue read the dozens of placards that Roadbusters waved at them each evening. Huge, threatening retaining walls for a bridge over Moreland Avenue were built. To everyone, except the stubborn Roadbusters, it seemed that the road was inevitable.

Coming closer to Quaker House now, construction crews poured tall cement pylons to support a high overpass spanning the tennis courts and playground in little Goldsboro Park, half a block south of Quaker House. To the Roadbusters, this was

blatantly unacceptable. They made plans to block further construction with their own bodies.

Over several months, groups of Roadbusters participated in acts of civil disobedience. They lay down or sat in front of earth movers, were arrested, and were taken to jail. The last such demonstrations took place in Goldsboro Park on a cold day in 1985 and involved Quakers Don Bender, Perry Treadwell, Ed Turner, and Martin Pierce (all of whom were arrested), as well as others. On this day, 30 or 40 people participated in the action, as about 200 neighbors and supporters watched. A small group stood in the way of an advancing construction rig. As the Roadbusters had planned, when a police officer asked them to get out of the way, everyone moved, except for one person (who was arrested), while the others regrouped in another area, where the arrest-of-one scenario was repeated, confounding the whole operation.

The strategy worked, but Don Bender credits another kind of preparation for the success. Before taking their stand in front of the giant yellow behemoths, the Quakers held a meditation, a holding in the Light. "Who knows?" mused Don years later. "You don't know where the power lies—that [holding in the Light] may have been the critical thing. Sometimes we look only at the political, but the whole spiritual drawing on power beyond ourselves, collectively, can be influential as well" (Rinard interview, May 1993).

That day was the turning point of the whole protracted road issue. Don Bender said he felt "exhilarated" at his arrest. A group called CAUTION (Committee Against Unauthorized Thoroughfares in Our Neighborhoods), with the help of sophisticated attorneys, got the road issue into the courts again because of the civil disobedience. It was the CAUTION people who bailed the resisters, including the Quakers, out of jail.

After more convoluted legal twists and the passage of more than another half-decade while elected officials and other players changed, The Road, the dreaded freeway project with its proposed variations, finally died. A compromise was agreed upon. In Atlanta Friends Meeting, at a memorable meeting for worship, Don Bender spoke about the years of fighting the destructive road. Much of the Roadbusters' energy was spent in "warrior" mode, in opposition to the highway. But in the end, the "magician" mode of transformation prevailed. "A lot of the techniques

[for solving the road dilemma] came out of the civil rights movement," Don claimed. "Quakers had a hand in . . . that philosophy of peacemaking."

The Road, named Freedom Parkway, was completed in 1994, extending from Interstates 75 and 85 downtown east to Moreland Avenue, linking the Carter Center and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The remainder of the cleared land was developed as a park-like area with bicycle paths and development plans agreed upon by neighborhood groups.

Involvement with hippies on the Strip, the interest in community living, the establishment of the Pub, and the fight against The Road were all issues only peripheral to Atlanta Friends Meeting. However, they involved many individuals from the Meeting and set the tone for the era in which the Meeting was evolving. Issues of more direct concern to the Meeting will be described in subsequent chapters.

Quaker House Outreach

During much of the time when these events occurred, the Quaker House board of trustees was still struggling to define Quaker House's role in Atlanta. Reflecting the interest in community-building, in 1970, the board hit upon the idea of forming a "Friends Center in the country" (trustees minutes, February 25, 1970). A weekend work camp was announced at the farm nursery that Hector and Susie Black had set up near Rockmart, Georgia. The plan was to establish a place for dialogue between "Old and Young . . . Rich and Poor . . . Black and White . . . Hippies and Straights" ("Help Bridge the Gaps" in announcements of events, 1970s meeting file folder, February 6, 1970). Trustees even allocated money for a temporary director (trustees minutes and newsletter, June 1970) and for materials to build tent platforms.

The idea did not advance much beyond the planning stages, although the Blacks' farm became a destination for a number of young dissidents who heard of it through Meeting. Help was always needed in the small commercial bakery or in the greenhouses of the Blacks' thriving fuchsia business. "They had more varieties of fuchsias than anyone [else] in North America," asserted Carol Henry, who with her husband and four daughters lived and worked on Hector's farm for a period following their

work in Atlanta's Cabbagetown (Rinard interview, spring 1993). The Black family offered some communal living arrangements on the farm until 1977, when Hector and Susie sold their Georgia property and moved near Cookeville, Tennessee, where they established their prosperous Hidden Springs Nursery.

Yet another indirect involvement of Atlanta Friends around 1970 was The Patch, a small community center in Cabbagetown, near the house where Al and Carol Henry and their daughters were living on an independent mission to the community. Carol invited Esther Lefever to bring her guitar and sing old mountain songs on the center's porch steps with the neighborhood people. Esther was from the Pennsylvania mountains, and she identified with the Cabbagetown residents, many of whom had migrated from the southern Appalachians. By 1971 Esther Lefever and Harriet Treadwell were directing the Patch project. They improved and expanded it, set up tutoring programs, piano lessons, and sewing classes. They took girls to Planned Parenthood and helped people obtain food stamps.

Later, cottage industries, including pottery, painted tiles, and furniture refinishing provided a source of income for the people. According to Harriet, Esther was a "fireball" on behalf of this program. She "hobnobbed" with politicians and got grants. The program received wide publicity, drawing interest of others to Cabbagetown. Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire program in the north Georgia mountains, similarly attuned to preserving folkways, arranged exchanges with Cabbagetown programs. Inspired by the publication of a Cabbagetown cookbook, R. Cary Bynum, Atlanta playwright and director of Georgia State University Press, created a theater production called *Cabbagetown: Three Women*, which enjoyed success in Atlanta. Harriet worked at The Patch for 10 years. It closed in 1985. Esther Lefever died of cancer in 1991. On June 5, 1993, the City of Atlanta, with Mayor Maynard Jackson officiating, held a ceremony in Cabbagetown to dedicate a city park in the center of the community named for Esther Peachey Lefever (Rinard interview, fall 1993).

Quaker House tumbled accidentally into another program which no one had planned or anticipated: an emergency housing program which started late in 1972 when Atlanta Police dropped a homeless family off at Quaker House. Chris and Joan (Thompson) Newland, residents, agreed to take them in that night, never

realizing that by opening the doors, they would be flooded soon with so many requests that they would have to turn people away. The house was ill-adapted to such use, but in spite of the wear and tear, the Meeting approved such a temporary housing program as long as Chris and Joan would run it. It was an especially big job for Joan, who was at home all day coping with homeless individuals, often referred by Travelers Aid or other agencies. Joan remembered an 11-member family (consisting of three adults—two sisters, one man—two sets of twins, and infants) who invited Joan and Chris to share a watered-down soup dinner. Then there was the family with the pregnant dog whose pups were born at Quaker House, the people who stole the sugar bowl, the man who forged checks, a very depressed couple, and a brutally raped woman. Twenty years later, Joan marveled that she was able to cope with those situations (Rinard interview, October 1993). At the time, Quaker House was the only location in Atlanta where homeless families could stay together. When the Salvation Army opened a facility that took in family units. the program at Quaker House was terminated. The Meeting's newsletter in the fall of 1994 reported that 103 groups had been served.

Merger of Trustees and Meeting

Meanwhile, the inability of the Quaker House trustees to raise enough money for programs frustrated everyone. The financial troubles described in Chapter Five continued; as out-of-town contributions and grants dried up, they were not replaced by local support. Since Quaker House had been established, there had been dual budgets for its outreach program and for Atlanta Friends Meeting. Jack Kaiser had served as treasurer of both entities since 1964 and was acutely aware of the financial pressures. Fund-raising for Don Bender's salary had fallen far short of the goal. As usual, appeal letters went out, with relatively little success. By January 1971, Jack Kaiser reported that the Meeting had operated at a deficit for nine of the 12 months of the preceding year and could not honor commitments to several organizations. Business meeting for July 1972 prorated the Meeting contributions for each member and attender, including children, at $40 annually. Still, financial support lagged.

Finally, in January 1973 the board of trustees received a report prepared by Jack Kaiser, Margaret (Peg) Kaiser, and Elizabeth Hendricks that proposed to end the board's 14-year existence as a unit separate from the Meeting. According to the trustees' minutes that month, the report

> . . . summarizes the reasons and background for the dual structure, each with its own budget and governing body. Changes in program and funding over a period of 14 years suggest to some members that the dual structure and double set of books are no longer necessary. It is proposed to merge into one organization, retaining a proforma trustee board to meet legal requirements. There would be a single accounting system with provision for receiving contributions. . . .
>
> The proposed restructuring would insure that all decisions would be considered in one rather than two business sessions, thereby eliminating duplication of time and effort, and obviating misunderstandings and misinterpretations which occur on occasion when action is taken separately by the Board of Trustees and the Monthly Meeting for Business (trustees minutes, January 1973).

The proposal for this merger of trustees and Meeting was read and finalized at the February 18, 1973, meeting for business. An executive committee was formed, and duties of officers and other committees were outlined. For such a historic move, surprisingly few questions or comments were voiced before approval. Mike Mykel voiced "the concern that the members of the Meeting are avoiding confrontation, and need to express their differences more openly" (minutes, meeting for business, February 18, 1973). Six months later Bob Westervelt, who had been present at the February meeting, asked if the board of trustees had been disbanded officially. The answer, of course, was yes.

The restructuring created a new committee for Atlanta Friends called Social Concerns, which replaced the trustees' Quaker House outreach program. Dwight Ferguson and Perry Treadwell were the first co-clerks; and the committee was given its own budget, about $5,000 the first year, amounting to about one-third of the Meeting's total budget.

When Ministry and Counsel realized that 1976 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the official beginning of Atlanta

Friends Meeting in September 1951, it came as a surprise. Meeting had added many new people who had no knowledge of the early Friends in Atlanta or of the ambitious years of the 1960s. A 1975 series on Quakerism, requested by new attenders, included an evening on the history of the Meeting.

Now the Meeting allowed itself two occasions for a bit of sweet nostalgia. The first was a reception in February 1976 honoring George Hayes, who was present, although no longer a member of Meeting. George Hayes's diary had created a priceless record of the earliest gatherings of Atlanta Friends in 1943, and excerpts from this diary were read. He presented his collection of old leather-bound Quaker books to the Meeting library. The second occasion was a festive twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in October 1976. Those who had experienced the Meeting's first 25 years reminisced about the early days. John Yungblut sent a tape recalling his time as program director in the 1960s. Old photographs and special poster displays adorned the living room. "Everyone is asked to bring a special dessert—as healthy as possible," read the announcement in the calendar. Members and attenders celebrated the Meeting's short history with a mixture of pride and wonder.

8

BUILDING A NEW HOME

The pleasant, Tudor-style house at 1384 Fairview Road, which Friends called Quaker House, seemed spacious in 1959, when about 30 people began worshiping together on the sunporch. But as the Meeting grew, it became more and more crowded. In 1963 the basement was renovated to provide more space for First Day school. Throughout the 1960s, Friends considered various expansion proposals. Meeting for worship was moved from the sunporch to the living room in Quaker House, and finally included both areas. Since structural considerations prevented knocking down the wall (and fireplace) between the two rooms in order to combine them as one, Bob Westervelt took the initiative in exploring possibilities for expansion.

A Meeting Development Committee was set up to discuss not only the expansion of physical facilities at Quaker House, but also possible creation of a second Friends meeting (minutes, meeting for business, November 1966). For a while, Friends considered the idea of a meeting in West End, tied to the day care center they envisioned there. As for the enlargement of Quaker House, an architect who was a friend of Bob Westervelt offered to prepare tentative designs for expansion, at a cost of $350, and this was

approved. The proposed feasibility study suggested that space could be doubled (minutes, meeting for business, December 1966). Drawings showing a separate meeting house on the front lawn and a model of the proposed building were prepared (minutes, meeting for business, May 1968). Additional parking space was proposed, to be located at the rear of Quaker House. Eventually, however, nothing was done with regard to space, other than enclosure of the garage. The absence of a parking lot forced people to park on the surrounding streets.

The Meeting tried, at various times, to separate into two meetings, holding meeting for worship at different hours on Sunday and assembling in different places. For a while the house called "Casa Blanca", which Kathy Johnson had purchased on Oakdale Road, drew a number of worshipers. At the same time, more than 100 worshipers crowded the living room and sunporch. Yearly Meeting's assessment, based on the number of attenders in the Atlanta meeting, had grown from 60 participants in 1973 to 180 in 1987.

Quaker House nearly burst trying to accommodate the people Friends invited to use the building. After the emergency housing program under Joan and Chris Newland came to an end, office space in various rooms, nooks, and crannies was offered to numerous causes. A Friends World College representative moved into a small bedroom upstairs; the AFSC Peace Associate had a desk and phone on the sunporch. When remodeling of the garage was completed, thanks to much volunteer labor in 1972, Martin and Margaret Pierce leased space in it for yoga classes. A SAYMA intern stayed one summer in the house. A small congregation of Korean Presbyterians met in the living room on Sunday afternoons, and a group of Sufi dancers gathered there regularly. Groups of up to 30 people were charged $5 for each use of the living room or kitchen. Sometimes the house seemed almost to function as an inn.

With so much activity, the building was in constant need of repair, and discussion about this need dominated many business meetings. The House and Grounds Committee dealt with repairs, made mostly with the Meeting's own hands-on labor. In the early days Ernest Ferguson often had to be called upon to start the old furnace. Friends recalled Janney Wilson's patient struggles repairing windows. Larry Erb moved in as resident in 1976 and

soon became the unofficial "maintenance man," as Bill Withers was to be in the 1980s. The roof leaked, old plumbing gave out, gutters rusted, ornate woodwork needed repainting, and holes in the driveway had to be patched. Sue Williams, as the capable chair of House and Grounds one year, was the first woman to hold that position.

Often much-needed Saturday workdays enlisted help from members and attenders. A group of men from the Meeting climbed scaffolding to replace and carefully paint some of the flaking brown boards that formed the second-story half-timber exterior design. Bill Withers undertook replacement of the asbestos insulation in the basement. Workdays enlisting help from Meeting members and attenders have continued to the present time.

In 1988 a Research Committee reported that the space issue "has sparked in the last 25 years, five committees, nine specially called meetings, forums, three questionnaires, the drawing of six plans for additions or new buildings, and interest in six alternative buildings or sites for Meetinghouses" (minutes, meeting for business, May 1988). Apparently as early as April 1978, Friends had despaired of reaching a solution and had approved a minute stating: "The Meeting reached a consensus that we will not expand the Meetinghouse at this time . . .," and decided not to open the subject for several more years (minutes, meeting for business, April 1978; Research Committee report).

However, when the Phoenix Church on Candler Park Drive came up for sale in February 1980, some Friends suggested looking into its possible purchase. A Long-Range Planning Committee was formed and concluded that the Phoenix Church building was not considered appropriate. In 1985 an ad hoc committee started a new round of discussions, examining once again the various proposals and looking for other buildings.

Pressure for resolution of the space problem came especially from those with children in First Day school. At times 40 or more children were distributed in the basement, the bedrooms, the library, and the renovated garage. Some people believed that the Meeting was losing families because of inadequate space.

A trial meeting at another location helped to clarify feelings about meeting for worship. This temporary move was necessitated in late 1986, when the asbestos insulation in the basement

had to be replaced. While this work was being done, meeting for worship was held for six consecutive Sundays in the basement of Jackson Hill Baptist Church, at 1585 Ponce de Leon Avenue, near Quaker House. Friends discovered that this larger area served their needs quite well. The meeting was not separated by a wall, and potluck went smoothly with more available space.

When the Meeting returned to Quaker House, Friends concurred in January 1987 that "there seemed to be no disagreement that the house is inadequate as we are using it." The Monthly Meeting set up a search committee to investigate possibilities. Members of the committee were Jim Tolmach, Bert Skellie, Betsy Eggers, Suzan Kenworthy, and Janie Branscomb. They found a possible location in the Education Building of the Candler Park Baptist Church on Iverson Street. This was reported to the February meeting for business, and a March forum was held to discuss possible purchase of the building; but Friends decided that it would not be adequate. It was suggested that each committee of the Meeting answer questions regarding its expectations. Janet Minshall, clerk of the Meeting, summarized the committees' responses:

> 1) We must be clear about our fears as well as our hopes. Until we get our fears out in the open, they will not be adequately addressed.
>
> 2) We must consider who we are and what we need in the light of our Quaker testimonies—what is the simplest way of meeting our needs, what conveys our concern for equality, what promotes peace among ourselves and our neighbors, and what is an honest and straightforward representation of who we are and what we wish to be.
>
> 3) We may need to break down the decision-making process still further, for example, to decide first unequivocally that Quaker House is inadequate to our larger needs as a community, and then proceed to sell Quaker House and move to temporary quarters so that we all may be more equally and continually motivated by our discomforts to act to meet those larger needs.

The next business meeting, in April 1988, was charged with energy. Forty-one people attended. The various committees of the Meeting made reports as requested. Once again the options were discussed, and according to the minutes, "The proposal which

was approved was that within 60 days we will, God willing, come to a decision about which direction to take on our space needs."

It was decided to have two threshing meetings in May for further discussion. At the first of these the sense of the meeting was, "Quaker House is no longer adequate for our needs and we will leave it over a period of time." This statement hardly expresses the emotional struggles heard during the first months of 1988. Nan Pendergrast wistfully recalled playing in the house as a child with the children of the owners at that time, long before it became Quaker House. At the second threshing meeting, the only consensus that could be reached was that Quaker House was "inadequate for this Meeting in its present size."

The Decision to Sell Quaker House

Forty-four attenders were present at the June 1988 meeting for business. After lengthy discussion, they approved a minute stating: "1384 Fairview Road is no longer adequate to our needs and we have decided to leave. We will diligently search for, find and move to a new meetinghouse(s), and we will sell 1384 Fairview Road. We are mindful that our decision to sell the Meetinghouse is an expression of faith in the Spirit and in each other, and that we can go on and do what needs to be done."

After more than a year of intense scrutiny and all the years of deliberation, the decision to sell Quaker House appeared almost anticlimactic. However, an audible exhalation occurred when the clerk found no objection to the minute. There were many vacant stares. What had Friends just done? Finally, they were making a leap of faith. The remaining barrier seemed to be concern that Atlanta Friends Meeting could not financially manage a move. It may also be that the Spirit was not yet ready to move the Meeting.

Once the decision was made to sell the home that Friends called Quaker House, events moved rapidly. In January 1989 a firm offer for 1384 Fairview Road was received, and the property was sold for $275,000, although the sale was not finalized until July. During April and May, Friends moved to Jackson Hill Baptist Church. After two months Friends relocated to Horizons School, 1900 DeKalb Avenue, which offered rental space for $400 a month. They remained at Horizons School until the new meetinghouse was almost completed in 1991. Files and furnishings

were widely scattered for storage: some at Horizons, many in the garages and basements of Friends' homes.

When Quaker House was sold, various building sites already had been examined, and dreams and expectations of Friends and the Meeting committees were explored through questionnaires and discussions. In 1987 the Search Committee located a possible site in Decatur at the corner of West Howard Avenue and Adair Street. This site was above the MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) tracks, which plunged underground nearby. Questions were raised about vibrations from the trains running through the tunnel beneath a meetinghouse and about certain restrictions that MARTA had placed upon construction. Finally these questions were resolved satisfactorily; and in February 1989, the Meeting approved purchase of the land.

A New Meetinghouse Committee was established in March 1989, consisting of Courtney Siceloff, clerk; Caroline Morris (later replaced by Suzan Kenworthy); Sandy Beer; Perry Treadwell; Wayne Schucker; and Tom Eubank. Jim Tolmach and Jack Honderd joined the committee later.

Finances were always a concern. The Vine City property on Rhodes Avenue, purchased in 1966 as the site of a proposed day care center in the inner city, was sold in the summer of 1989 for $55,000, thereby supplementing funds available for the new meetinghouse. Susan May explored in depth possible gifts to a New Building Fund, and she projected gifts totaling $120,000 over a three-year period. The Meeting approved a budget of not more than $675,000 for a new Meetinghouse and purchase of the land. Working with the New Meetinghouse Committee, the Finance Committee presented the following budget:

Costs		Income (Revenue)	
Land	$ 75,000	Sale of Quaker House	$275,000
Site Preparation	175,000	Vine City Property	55,000
Building	400,000	Gifts in hand	25,000
Contingency Funds	25,000	Gifts projected	120,000
Total	$675,000	Total	$480,000

The difference was to be obtained through a bank loan and mortgage. It would be necessary to borrow between $170,000 and $195,000 for construction (business meeting minutes, October 1989).

Selection of an architect took place after the committee interviewed six strong candidates and finally chose Geddes Dowling. He immediately began attending meeting for worship and acquainting himself with Friends' philosophy and dreams for a structure of 8,000 square feet. Final negotiations with MARTA dragged on into February 1990. Purchase of the land was completed March 22, 1990.

New Building Site Dedicated

On April 8, 1990, a glorious spring day, following meeting for worship at Horizons School, Friends trekked about a mile to the new building site for a groundbreaking celebration. The clerk, Perry Treadwell, popped open a top hat and declared, "Friends, let the celebration begin!" According to old English common law, the "livery of Siesin" was passed from MARTA to the Atlanta Friends Meeting, represented by Jim Tolmach. Tom Bertrand read the Covenant for the New Meetinghouse, which he had written for the occasion:

> As members and attenders of Atlanta Friends Meeting we come together on First Day to join our hands and hearts, our dreams and our resources, in the happy enterprise of breaking ground for a new Meetinghouse.
>
> We are thankful to God for guiding us to this place—may we keep our vision for what we do here very clear, and our caring for one another abundant.
>
> We are mindful of those Friends who founded the first Quaker House in Atlanta, where sisters and brothers of all races and creeds could join in the task of building a just society—may we remember that we hold in trust their gifts and their dreams.
>
> We are mindful as well of those who have used this land before us: the birds and other creatures, the grass and trees that have inhabited it through all time; the Native Americans who found their sustenance upon it; the men and women, black and white, who farmed it and whose sweat and tears mingled with it; the soldiers, blue and gray, who struggled on this spot, and those other folk who walked across it gently to heal the wounds of war; the many families through the years who lived here and the children who played upon this ground; the public agency that deeded these acres to us—our gratitude embraces them all.

> And we are grateful for the earth wherein we plant this tree—may we be its faithful stewards, so that it may flourish as a garden for all who will worship here or pass this way. Here we shall raise our Meetinghouse as a sanctuary and hospice, where all may be welcomed and affirmed in simple dignity, and where our children and their children after them may grow in their faith.
>
> To these ends, and with a prayer of thanksgiving, we make our covenant together on this Eighth Day of the Fourth Month in the year Nineteen Hundred Ninety.

After a white oak was planted by high school Friends, assisted by the younger children, and a rendition of "Simple Gifts" was offered by flutist Melanie Kramer, Elizabeth Hendricks reflected on the history of the Meeting. She pointed out that in the 1940s a tiny worship group of Friends met on the Agnes Scott College campus, "almost within shouting distance of this very place." Henry Slack with his trombone led a procession of other musicians around the property, and an elegant potluck followed. Enhancing the memorable occasion, Patricia Westervelt and Janet Minshall appeared in authentic Quaker dresses and bonnets worn by their early forebears, and the children wore hats—from Quaker traditional to coonskin and Stetson.

As often happens, building plans had to be scaled down to meet the budget when bids from contractors exceeded the architect's estimates. Construction finally began in November 1990. Friends had hoped to occupy the building the following July, but construction moved slowly, due to repeated winter rains and errors in delivery of materials. As meeting clerk Perry Treadwell asked in the May 1991 newsletter, "Will we make occupancy by July? Only God knows, and She isn't telling!"

Occupancy actually did occur in July. On the 27th day of the seventh month, a caravan of trucks and cars piled into the parking lot at 701 West Howard Avenue and deposited tables, benches, First Day school furniture, and odds and ends of kitchen and other supplies. Some things looked too dilapidated for the new surroundings and were relegated to the dumpster. But Friends were happy to reclaim the old benches that had been acquired from Spelman College for the original Quaker House. Many details of construction still were incomplete; but on July

28, 1991, the first meeting for worship took place in the wonderfully bright new meeting room.

Total cost of construction came to $696,131, approximately $21,000 over the initial allocation. Within the next few years, problems of drainage, acoustics, air conditioning, etc., arose; but the work of the New Meetinghouse Committee was essentially done. The Landscape Committee took over responsibility for the site and for planting, which was carried out principally by volunteers.

At a dedication service, incorporated in a called meeting for worship on September 8, 1991, Tom Mullen of Earlham College was guest speaker. His challenge to the Meeting regarding the new building was: Now that you have built it, what will be your ministry?

Friends School of Atlanta

The first occupant of the new building other than Atlanta Friends Meeting was the Friends School of Atlanta. Even before the Meeting finally planned to move from Fairview Road, some Friends had envisioned a simple way to utilize a new building during the week by opening a Friends school. In 1987 Neva Fisk gathered together a School Exploration Committee, whose nucleus consisted of herself as clerk, Karen Morris, Rob McDonald, Sally MacEwen, Peg Geronimo, Cindy Berg, Cate Foster (who later married, took the surname Fosl, and moved to Virginia), Mike Mykel (who later resigned), and Lorne Garrettson, with Alex Horsley as consultant. The committee studied both the existing independent schools in Atlanta and the needs and wishes of Quaker parents, spending many hours considering the kind of school that they would want to have. There was strong feeling that a school centered in Quaker values—a Spirit-led education—would make an important contribution to Atlanta. The committee was very mindful that too many independent schools, even with the best intentions, become elitist; and it kept its focus on a school that would be economically and racially diverse. It was also determined that opening a day care center, which could address a serious need in the community, would not be feasible in the Meeting's new building as it was designed.

While most Atlanta Friends supported the founding of a school, others had reservations; and several threshing sessions were held to air concerns. Some Friends worried about taking white students out of the public schools and the potential association of such a Friends school with the "Christian academies" founded in the 1960s for the purpose of helping whites avoid the integrated public schools. Some Friends were uncomfortable with the traditional Quaker practice of marking our Society off from the wider world; they felt Friends could spread the Light best not by gathering together but by shining individually in the wider secular culture. Much controversy over the issue developed in successive meetings for business, and no consensus was reached.

Nevertheless, members of the School Exploration Committee and others felt led to open a Quaker school in Atlanta. Because of the differences among Friends, no formal minute endorsing the school was ever brought to monthly meeting for business. Instead, the Friends School of Atlanta was incorporated separately from the Meeting in 1990, and the School Exploration Committee was laid down.

The Friends School of Atlanta clearly states that it "admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin and does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or marital status of parent or guardian." It opened in the fall of 1991 with 37 students and a faculty of four, including head Waman French. There were two classrooms, one with four-and-a-half and five-year-olds, one with six- and seven-year-olds. As the school expanded year by year, two temporary buildings were placed on the property.

In August 1996, with 147 students and 25 teachers and staff, the school temporarily moved to more spacious accommodations at the First Christian Church in Decatur, 601 Ponce de Leon Avenue. Enrollment in the 1995–96 year had reached through the equivalent of sixth grade. In 1997 work began on the renovation of an old warehouse acquired on Sams Street in Decatur. This building was remodeled to become the very attractive home of Friends School of Atlanta. When the school took occupancy of its new space in September 1997, its curriculum extended through the equivalent of eighth grade.

Other immediate occupants of the new meetinghouse in 1991 were Congregation Bet Haverim and the Thurmond Hamer Ellington Unitarian Church. The latter group moved away in 1995. Another religious group, Circle of Grace, had taken up residence by then. The building was a popular site for weddings, and a variety of organizations rented space for workshops and seminars. During the first year of occupancy, records show more than 100 separate reservations by persons and groups outside the Meeting.

9

FRIENDS' SOCIAL CONCERNS

Quaker House, the social outreach of both Atlanta Meeting and Friendly supporters in the community and nation from 1960 until 1973, expressed traditional Friends' concerns about race, peace, and poverty. But when funding came to a point where the Meeting was mostly on its own to support Quaker House, it became necessary for the Meeting to disband the Quaker House board of trustees. As described in Chapter Seven, a new Meeting committee was formed to take the board's place. This new Social Concerns Committee of the Meeting sought to continue addressing problems such as the ones Quaker House had served, but with volunteers instead of paid staff.

The building itself, still known as Quaker House, stayed open, of course, serving as meetinghouse and as a center for ongoing outreach programs until it was sold in 1989. But the social and political upheaval of the preceding 13 years was settling down. Where was Quaker action needed?

At its inception, the Social Concerns Committee was uncertain of its focus. With the Vietnam War winding down, draft counseling was no longer in demand. Meeting members had their own agendas, which elicited some support from other individuals.

There was no longer a paid director and no larger vision. Just before the dissolution of the trustees, a Program Committee chaired by Dwight Ferguson envisioned the formation of "commitment groups" centered around key interests. Hoping to attract additional SAYMA participants, these proposed groups would address such topics as "Humanizing High Schools," "Let's Do Away with Prisons," "Changing Life Styles," and "Nonviolent Revolution." Each commitment group would be asked to present a "Weekend Panorama." However, the only Weekend Panoramas that took place were projects of the Program Committee rather than commitment groups. A "Nonviolent Revolutionary Group" did materialize briefly.

In September 1972 Dorothy Hutchinson of Sewanee, Tennessee, who had proved to be an exciting speaker at SAYMA the previous spring, led a successful workshop on Friends' social testimony on the dangers inherent in America's economic system (newsletter, fall 1972). This was followed by another inspiring workshop led by Heberto Sein, a Friend who had greatly impressed Dwight and Irene Ferguson when they visited the Casa de los Amigos, which Sein had established in Mexico City. He had served as an interpreter in 1945 at the San Francisco conference that established the United Nations. He was an educator, diplomat, and linguist with broad perspective and refreshing optimism about a changing world. "It's great to be alive!" he affirmed.

In spite of these efforts, the 1973 State of the Meeting Report confessed that "social outreach has been more from individual efforts instead of a unified effort, and this has led to a dwindling of attendance and interest in the [Social Concerns] Committee's function." Ongoing Meeting support was noted for The Patch in Cabbagetown, the United Farm Workers, and the Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence (AWIN). The emergency housing program also continued, using Quaker House as a shelter for homeless families referred by Travelers' Aid and other agencies. Still, in 1974's State of the Meeting Report, the Social Concerns Committee asserted that it "was not certain how best to act and where to put its energies, and it hopes there will be a more dynamic and creative social outreach program in the future."

As co-clerk of the new Social Concerns Committee, Perry Treadwell at this time was primarily absorbed in peace activities with AFSC and in the simple-living workshops described in

Chapter Seven. A weekly macroanalysis seminar took place during 1973 "designed to develop an understanding of the interrelationships between the problems of ecology, underdeveloped countries, and U.S. domestic and foreign policy" (1973 State of the Meeting report).

FCNL and *News/Views*

One new undertaking was local Meeting involvement with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), based in Washington, D.C. Dwight Ferguson, co-clerk of the Social Concerns Committee, was responsible for this. He had become interested in FCNL and its efforts to lobby Congress and influence legislation in keeping with traditional Quaker principles. Soon he began serving on national FCNL committees. At the request of its Washington-based parent organization, the local group distinguished itself with the name Atlanta Friends National Legislative Committee (AFNLC). By the late 1970s and early 1980s, some 25 persons, playfully dubbed "Dwight's disciples," were taking part in its regular meetings. Not all of these participants were members or even attenders of the Friends Meeting: Edward M. Brown III, Mary Price, and Aileen Thompson, for example, were "friends of Friends."

Among early projects of AFNLC was establishment of a telephone tree to spread "action-alert" messages from the national office concerning legislation pending in Congress. Individuals were encouraged to contact senators and members of Congress about such issues as armaments reduction and funding of the B-1 bomber. A special workshop on reduction of military expenditures took place the weekend of June 7–8, 1975, first at the Riverdale Christian Church, then at Quaker House. AFNLC members met with Georgia Senators Herman Talmadge and Sam Nunn regarding the B-1 bomber. There was also a joint potluck and discussion with a coalition of hunger-relief advocates called Bread for the World (business meeting minutes, November 1975). Margaret Via and Elizabeth Siceloff prepared a pamphlet describing the work of FCNL. In March 1976, AFNLC joined with the Cathedral of Christ the King, the seat of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Atlanta, to sponsor a meeting at the cathedral with Andrew Young as speaker.

By April 1977, local activities became so intense that Dwight was able to use the services of an Antioch College student who was on his college work-release program. A national meeting of FCNL representatives took place in Atlanta in September, with Meeting members providing transportation, overnight hospitality, an evening meal, and desk staff.

It was at this time that Hal Gulliver, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, began accepting on a weekly basis news reports selected by Nan Pendergrast and Dwight Ferguson on issues of national concern. The articles were chosen because they dealt with issues that were inadequately covered in the local media. This proved to be the beginning of *News/Views*. Friends began to see a need for publishing more than the *Constitution* could handle. So, rather than send articles there, they organized volunteers to clip selections from newspapers in such widespread cities as New York; Los Angeles; Miami; Boston; St. Louis; Atlanta; Manchester, England, and elsewhere. An editorial committee, consisting originally of Nan Pendergrast, Ralph Spillman, Janet Rinard, and Dwight Ferguson, chose a dozen or more articles primarily on issues of peace, social justice, and environmental protection. They created a homemade publication called *News/Views*, pasted up the clippings, had the printing office of Clergy and Laity Concerned print a front-page Table of Contents, and took it to Barry Weinstock to be printed. It was sent 21 times a year to a list of subscribers that grew to about 500. The first issue appeared in April 1980.

Every other week until Quaker House was sold in 1989, a convivial group of volunteers assembled around the squared tables in the dining room to collate, staple, and affix address labels, arranging the papers in Zip Code order before Dwight carried them to the post office. Among early volunteers were Ralph Spillman, Myrtle Dooley, Mary Zimmerman, Aileen Thompson, Om Sinha, Georgia Dreger, Irene Ferguson, Peg Kaiser, Janet Boyte (later Janet Ferguson), Anicia Lane, Margaret Hunter, Maria Ladd, and Claudia Stucke, with Betty Channel doing the bookkeeping from the beginning. Maria, Margaret, Anicia, and Claudia did the *News/Views* layout and paste-up, choosing paper conservation over graphic design. Their unofficial slogan (borrowed from the *New York Times*' "All the news that's fit to print") was, "All the news that fits, we print." At one time a Teachers' Guide was prepared and used by a number of local

teachers as a basis for discussion of current events in their social studies classes.

When Dwight Ferguson moved to a retirement community in North Carolina at the end of 1987, *News/Views* continued under the editorship of Nan Pendergrast. Production shifted to the Pendergrast home, where Nan and her husband, Britt Pendergrast, with the help of Mary and Bob Zimmerman and Aileen Thompson, continued to prepare each issue for the printer. Dwight's name remained on the masthead until his death in 1991 at age 91.

Inspired by the work of AFNLC, Meeting participants George Cox, Tom Bertrand, Sue May, and Carol Ann Dalton organized a Friends Committee on State Legislation. This group included other Friends in Georgia, among them several from Augusta Meeting. They lobbied state legislators on issues such as equal rights, the death penalty, and prison reform (minutes of business meeting, May 1980). On the larger scene, Friends sent financial support to the United Farm Workers and conscientiously boycotted grapes grown by the agribusinesses that exploited migrant farmers.

The AFNLC continued to meet regularly, discussing major legislative issues and communicating with congressional representatives. The AFNLC helped to organize Georgians for SALT II Treaty in the summer of 1979 (business meeting minutes, June 1979), with Joseph Reid from the Friends Meeting and state senator Paul Brown as cochairs. The AFNCL also supported a nationwide Nuclear Freeze/Jobs with Peace campaign and strongly opposed the deployment of American Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. Nan and Britt Pendergrast, Maria Ladd, Lynn Leuszler, Laurel Kearns, and Om Sinha were among the staunch supporters. Many of them regularly accompanied Dwight to the annual national FCNL conference in Washington. Dwight also took a group of young people from Atlanta to Washington on one occasion. They stayed at William Penn House, the Quaker hostelry near the Capitol, visited Congress, and met with their representatives.

Often the initiatives of Social Concerns Committee, AFSC, and AFNLC coincided. In 1957 the Meeting forwarded to the AFSC office in High Point, North Carolina, a proposal to assign a "regional peace associate" to Atlanta (business meeting minutes, April 1975). The AFSC approved a three-year program with local

support from Friends and other Atlanta peace activists. An Atlanta Peace Committee of 10 members oversaw the program, which was aimed at such issues as providing information about military service alternatives to local high school students. Twenty-six Atlanta schools required Junior ROTC training of male students (Peace Committee Special Report, 1975, by Chris Newland).

Elizabeth Hall Lee, a social worker who had graduated from the University of Georgia and who had worked in New York City, was hired as the new peace associate and was given office space on the sunporch at Quaker House. Elizabeth remained in this position for three years, then in 1978 became the resident at Quaker House for almost four years.

Two energetic peace activists, Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff, came to Atlanta in the fall of 1973, direct from Afghanistan, where Courtney had been program director for the Peace Corps. "We were taken into the bosom of the Meeting immediately," Elizabeth said. Dwight Ferguson met them at the bus, and the Hendrickses loaned them both a car and the garden apartment they rented as a town residence in the Fergusons' house. Both Courtney and Elizabeth had many years' experience as AFSC volunteers. Courtney, at the time they came to Atlanta, was working with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He had been a conscientious objector for three years during World War II. Between 1950 and 1969 the Siceloffs directed Penn Center, a community and conference center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, which originally was established as a school for freed slaves during the Civil War.

Peace continued to be a major issue for Atlanta Friends, who often supported efforts of AFSC or joined in national peace rallies in Washington, D.C., and New York City. In the 1960s (as noted in Chapters Five and Six) Friends helped organize Atlantans for Peace, and during the Vietnam War they took the initiative in draft counseling of COs in Atlanta. After Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) formed an Atlanta chapter in the autumn of 1976, Friends often cooperated with both CALC and the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta on issues of mutual interest, such as the Nuclear Freeze/Jobs with Peace campaign. Friends strongly opposed the reinstatement of draft registration in 1980, and they again set up a draft counseling service at Quaker House "to help individuals investigate all legal options and their own

personal concerns about registration and the draft" (business meeting minutes, June 1980 and printed announcement, July 10, 1980). Jim Tolmach, Ed Turner, and Joseph Reid were active in this program, but since the draft was not reinstated, the counseling service was not used.

As the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union continued, the Reagan administration accelerated arms production with new and ominous weapons systems, such as the mobile MX missile, Cruise and Pershing missiles, and the "Star Wars" program, which would expand nuclear defenses into space. Peace vigils became a major emphasis among Friends, sometimes with support from other churches and organizations. Kathy Johnson reported to the June 1982 meeting for business that "a vigil on arms was held in which many Friends were active."

Two months later Friends also joined in a silent Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign vigil at the tomb of Martin Luther King, Jr., in observance of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, respectively (newsletter, July 1982). The June protest had taken place at the State Capitol, but in September, regular vigils opposing Cruise and Pershing missiles began at the Five Points MARTA station. These downtown protest vigils were later shifted a few blocks north to Peachtree Center. Faithful protesters shivered in cold and rain or sweltered in summer heat as they distributed leaflets denouncing the spread of armaments. Many leaflets featured the cartoon-like logo, borrowed from Dutch and British activists, depicting an angry, square-jawed woman vigorously kicking a bomb.

By 1987 the vigils, led by Kathy Johnson and Mark Yates, advocated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Friends also supported protests at the Savannah River plant, where plutonium for nuclear weapons was manufactured. Austin Wattles, a Meeting member at the time, was one of several protesters arrested there, and he received support from Friends (newsletter, July 1984). Another target for protest and vigiling was the Trident nuclear submarine base at King's Bay, Georgia, where Friends encouraged participation as "peace witnesses" (business meeting minutes, November 1984).

A very special event for Atlanta Friends was a Peace Breakfast held at Quaker House in February 1984 for Linus Pauling, eminent scientist and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Linus Pauling

was brought to Atlanta through the initiative of Judy Lumb, a Meeting member and professor at Atlanta University, for an address on her campus the preceding evening. Many Friends attended the breakfast that Judy arranged for him and listened attentively to his account of behind-the-scenes negotiations with Soviet scientists, who proved cooperative in helping to end atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

The Meeting, along with 119 other places of worship in the nation, declared itself a "nuclear-free zone" (business meeting minutes, October 1986). Friends contributed $200 to a Peace Walk in Europe in which the Meeting's Fred Stevens took part (business meeting minutes, May 1985). A national group calling itself "Beyond War" sprang up in the mid-1980s. It proposed a "new way of thinking" with a challenging method for helping people to become aware of their prejudices and to help humanity move "beyond war." Many from the Meeting were active in this group; some of them presented the procedure at a SAYMA workshop in 1984 (business meeting minutes, April 1984); and proponents gave frequent programs in the Atlanta area.

As described in Chapter Six, Quakers were constantly troubled by the fact that their taxes helped support the military establishment, and several made significant financial sacrifices by way of protest. The State of the Meeting Report for 1985 notes that the Social Concerns Committee had the "responsibility of overseeing a Peace and Disarmament budget of nearly $2,000 from a Friend who contributed each month the amount that the Federal Government claims from his paycheck." This same Friend was a peace activist and demographer who traveled the world and later moved to Baltimore. Some of his large donation was used for such purposes as leaflets at peace vigils, but significant contributions were made to the AFSC Regional Disarmament program, Nuclear Freeze/Jobs with Peace campaign, and San Jose Peace Center in Costa Rica (State of the Meeting Report, 1985).

In a letter to the Meeting (business meeting minutes, April 1984), Perry Treadwell pointed out that payment of taxes supporting the military is in conflict with the historic Friends' peace testimony. Several Friends participated regularly in April "Tax Day" demonstrations in front of the IRS office on Peachtree Street. On one occasion Perry donned a Nazi helmet and U.S. Army jacket, and another year he dressed as Gandhi. Bill Withers and

Beth-Ann Buitekant from the Meeting were arrested April 15, 1983, for leafleting at the IRS office against taxation for military purposes. Their arrest was reported that day by *The Atlanta Journal*, which stated: "Although tax protester Bill Withers said he paid his taxes, he said he was willing to go to jail in order to publicize the Tax Conversion Fund's protest against income tax revenues being used to fund Reagan's defense budget." Bill and Beth-Ann were taken to jail and released. They were tried and acquitted on the basis of freedom of speech (newsletters, May and September 1983).

Members of the Metro Atlanta Tax Resistance Group put money that would have gone for war taxes into the BOND Credit Union, in the account established for the Metro Atlanta Tax Conversion Fund, thereby redirecting tax money away from military spending and toward peaceful, constructive projects.

War tax refusal was not a Meeting project but rather a project of the Tax Conversion group to which a number of Meeting members belonged, and they received much support from other Friends. Inasmuch as the IRS could arbitrarily seize bank accounts and demand large penalties, tax refusal was a perilous step, as some Friends discovered. There was general concurrence, although never official action, on a minute approved by the Social Concerns Committee in support of tax resisters. It stated in part: "We call upon the members of our Meeting to seriously consider war tax refusal as a means of conscientious objection to our involvement in the ongoing preparation for nuclear war. Such objection may take several forms, ranging from writing a letter of protest when filing a tax return to refusal to pay all federal taxes" (business meeting minutes, August 1984). Again in 1989, pointing out the disparity between billions being spent on armaments and the growing number of homeless and indigent people in the United States, the Meeting approved sending a letter to *The Atlanta Constitution*, stating in part: "On Tax Day, April 17, 1989, area homeless advocates and peace and justice groups will be holding a 'Build Homes Not Bombs' rally at the City of Decatur main post office. The Atlanta Friends Meeting endorses this action as one step toward educating the public concerning the federal budget priorities issue as it relates to federal income taxes and responsible government policies."

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, peace issues seemed less demanding than they had been. This was also the period when Atlanta Friends were deeply involved in moving from Quaker House and building a new meetinghouse (see Chapter Eight). However, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the subsequent Gulf War revived Friends' anguish over war as a means of settling disputes. At its business meeting in September 1990, the Meeting adopted and later publicized a minute, urging nonviolent solutions to the invasion of Kuwait. It stated in part:

> We are concerned for the safety and well-being of all people in the Middle East—individuals of many faiths and nationalities, civilian and military, children and adults. We are especially concerned about the well-being of the people residing in Iraq and Kuwait if they are prevented from receiving food and medical supplies, and we urge that these materials be made freely available.
>
> We are opposed to the armed aggression by Iraq against Kuwait . . . . The rapid and massive build-up of U.S. military forces is a destabilizing factor rather than an agent of peaceful resolution.
>
> We support a negotiated settlement and the nonmilitary peace-keeping activities sponsored by the United Nations as the proper response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

When the U.S. Senate finally approved the invasion of Iraq by U.S.-led United Nations forces, a Social Concerns Committee report (February 10, 1991) stated: "The use of violence in the Persian Gulf prompted great concern by Friends for all participants. The Meeting minuted our concern, forums have been held, letter-writing encouraged, visits made to Congressional leaders, and young people were provided information on conscientious objection. Weekly vigils are attended by members of Meeting. In the midst of war, Friends were reminded of our testimonies. Our love and support go out to all."

The meeting also paid for an ad which appeared in the Atlanta newspapers' religion pages February 23, 1991. It was addressed "To the People of Atlanta" and said in part: "Quakers hold 'there is that of God' in every person. For the last 300 years and into all tomorrows we oppose all wars and violence. We strive for peaceful solutions, even as war rages in the Middle East." As a result

of this appeal, many newcomers visited meeting for worship, which was temporarily being held in Horizons School, and some continued their affiliation.

Prison Concerns

If peace is traditionally the first concern of Quaker outreach, another concern has been prison reform and assistance to prisoners. Noyes Collinson began a prison visitation and study group in the 1960s, and tentative "commitment groups" suggested in 1972 and 1973 listed prison visitation as a priority. In response to a letter from Friends in Pennsylvania, according to business meeting minutes in September 1975, Nick Butterfield visited a prisoner in the Atlanta Penitentiary. Working at first with Yokefellows, a Methodist group started 25 years earlier by Quaker Elton Trueblood, several Friends began regular visits to the penitentiary (business meeting minutes, May 1976). Nick reported in March 1977 that prisoners had requested a Quaker worship group at the prison, but due to red tape and the absence of any actual Friends in the prison, this did not materialize.

The Meeting paid the expenses for Nick Butterfield and Larry Erb to attend a nonviolence training workshop held in a West Virginia prison. In May 1977 Friends approved a minute introduced by the Social Concerns Committee stating, "In the light of Quakers' historic concern for prisoners, the Social Concerns Committee asks the Atlanta Friends Meeting to adopt a commitment to explore and better understand the many aspects and problems of the prison system and to help in finding creative solutions. Recognizing the isolation of prisoners, we further ask the Meeting to accept responsibility, insofar as possible, for projects such as tutoring, visitation, correspondence and other efforts to restore prisoners to the larger community."

Interest extended to the Women's Pre-release Center, then on Peachtree Place near 10th Street, and some tutoring took place there. A large group of both adults and children from the Meeting put on a lively potluck picnic at the center one July day in the late 1970s. There were songs, improvised skits, and a friendly interaction among the women at the center and the visiting Quakers. A Halloween party followed in the autumn. Women of Atlanta Meeting were told by officials at the Pre-release Center that the

women there would appreciate help in grooming for the jobs to which they reported each day. In particular, they asked for advice in hairstyling and makeup. Anicia Lane, one of the Meeting members who agreed to help, later expressed to Janet Rinard amusement that Quakers who themselves often wore no makeup willingly layered it on the women they were working with, teased their hair, and decorated their nails with bright polish. Anicia wondered if Friends' ineptitude was obvious!

The Meeting also approved providing hospitality at Quaker House for one to three nights for families of prisoners, especially those in the Federal Penitentiary. This was to be arranged through Larry Erb, who was Quaker House resident at the time. George Cox and Katherine Jefferson from the Meeting were especially interested in prison service. George worked at that time for the Georgia Department of Corrections, and in 1980 resigned his position in protest against the resumption of the death penalty. An organization called Georgians Against the Death Penalty had sprung up when the state was about to resume execution of prisoners on Death Row, and many Meeting attenders and members were active in this group for a while. They often took part in candlelight vigils on the steps of the State Capitol the night before executions. The Siceloffs continued to participate in the candlelight vigils, still accompanied by some other community activists.

Interest in prison work lapsed after a few years, but it never completely vanished. For several years in the mid-1980s Friends collected books for prisons. In 1983 the Mennonite Central Committee initiated a program called Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). This program was designed to train mediators and through the legal system to find alternatives, such as restitution, to prison sentences for less heinous crimes. Meeting for business endorsed the program (business meeting minutes, July 1983), and Janet Boyte was appointed to the board of VORP, although the Mennonite program was never really accepted in the local courts.

In March 1984 the Meeting, noting the upsurge of executions in the country, affirmed: "We believe that the taking of life by the State, in accordance with the fallible judgment of human beings, is an absolute and irrevocable denial that there is that of God in everyone." Social Concerns regularly sent a contribution to Prison Visitation and Support, an ecumenical service founded by

Quakers. A contribution to the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty is listed in the committee's budget as late as 1990. The committee's report for 1991 stated: "Members of Meeting participated in a Pilgrimage for the Abolition of the Death Penalty."

As executions multiplied throughout the nation, Atlanta Friends again voiced their concerns over the death penalty. Instigated by Chris McGraw, a new young attender, a local committee, an offshoot of the national Friends' Committee to Abolish the Death Penalty, was formed. They held a vigil at the meetinghouse in July 1996, to observe the anniversary of resumption of the death penalty. Later in the year they assisted New Hope House in the mailing of its newsletter. This small facility near Jackson, Georgia, was operated by Possum Trot Ministries, which offered hospitality to families visiting inmates at the Jackson Prison, visitation of prisoners, and support for defendants and their families at death-penalty trials in the various Georgia counties.

A continuing local interest of Friends in the 1970s and early 1980s was the Council on Battered Women, founded by Susan May from the Meeting, who served first as executive director, then as president of the board. A number of Meeting members gave time as well as money to the council, and in 1978 the business meeting contributed $100 from the Social Concerns budget. Additional financial help followed.

Later Susan May was responsible for helping to establish People's Place (renamed O'Hern House) in the inner city, a residence for homeless, mentally disturbed individuals, providing them with individual rooms and baths, counseling and medical services, and a community kitchen. The Meeting lent support to this much-needed project by adopting a room to furnish in one of Sue's imaginative fund-raising efforts. O'Hern House was one of three such local facilities, with more being planned under sponsorship of the privately funded Project Interconnections.

Staff Person Employed

With peace work, prison work, AFNLC, simple living, and involvement in the Little Five Points area (described in Chapter Seven), the Meeting began to think wistfully of once again having a paid staff person to help direct its energies. George Cox proposed in January 1978 that the Meeting employ a half-time person, and

the following month meeting for business approved hiring someone to coordinate its outreach. The Social Concerns Committee had no modest vision for the work of such an individual. Sample duties that it outlined included developing a calendar; coordinating projects and events; supervising and supporting interns and volunteers; representing Friends at seminars, forums, and workshops; relating efforts of national, state, and local service organizations to Friends' projects; recording, refining, and reporting concerns of individual Friends; and coordinating the many practical tasks associated with the Meeting's expanded action program. All this with 20 hours a week and a salary of $3,000!

Although the post was vacant for several months, there were eventually four applicants; and Maria Ladd, a regular Meeting attender, accepted the position in October 1978. Maria was a native of eastern Germany. She grew up on a potato farm there and bicycled away from the advancing Russian army in 1945. As a refugee in Bremen, she met and married Edward T. Ladd, an American civilian working with the Allied Military Government. They came to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1948, and to Atlanta in 1958, when Edward became head of the Educational Studies Department at Emory University. She set up her desk and file cabinet on that useful sunporch at Quaker House. "The job was demanding, but it gave me a good education!" said Maria. She felt it was an opportunity for a fresh approach, and set about investigating community organizations with parallel concerns.

Don Newby, executive director of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta at the time, proved especially helpful, as he had similar interests in peace, race relations, hunger, and social justice. Maria Ladd and Mike Mykel were the Meeting's representatives to the council, serving on its unofficial "moral leadership committee." Ed Turner later succeeded Mike Mykel. A typical Christian Council project in which Meeting members participated was packing boxes of food at the Civic Center for a "Food for the Hungry" program (Social Concerns minutes, December 1979).

Some Atlanta Friends from time to time expressed reservations about Meeting's participation on the Christian Council because of its specifically Christian character, but Maria always felt it a great advantage to reach out to other religious bodies in the community and express a Quaker point of view, sharing information, for example, on national legislation obtained through

FCNL. Maria was very active in local FCNL programs. She recalled a major effort to obtain many signatures on a petition in support of the Salt II nonproliferation treaty, which was sent to then-President Carter. It was signed by many prominent Atlantans, including then-Mayor Maynard Jackson and Coretta Scott King.

Maria represented Friends General Conference at a gathering of the World Council of Churches, and felt it was important not only to have a Quaker viewpoint expressed, but also to have a woman articulating it. Her report was praised by both organizations. "We can learn from other churches," she affirmed. In 1984, with some financial assistance from Meeting, Maria went to the Soviet Union as one of 262 church delegates in an exchange program between the World Council of Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church. Dee DeBra also visited Russia with some Meeting assistance. Maria's work was so highly valued that the Christian Council named her its vice president in charge of programs for its monthly luncheons. In 1982 the Social Concerns minutes reported that Janet Minshall Roache was assisting with a work camp project sponsored by the Christian Council and the Mennonite Central Committee.

On behalf of the Meeting, Maria Ladd acquired a film, *War without Winners*, a poignant portrayal of the futility of war. She showed it to many Atlanta audiences. Attending various meetings, forums, workshops, and special occasions, such as the dedication of the King Center, Maria more than adequately fulfilled the requirement to represent Friends in the community during the two years she served as staff person.

AFSC Moves to Atlanta

In the fall of 1980, AFSC moved its regional office to Atlanta from High Point, North Carolina. Much discussion and study had gone into this move, which Courtney Siceloff and others had encouraged. Both Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff had had long experience with AFSC. After World War II Courtney had worked for AFSC with Spanish Civil War refugees in the south of France, and both he and Elizabeth had served on the Southeastern executive committee in the High Point office. Don Bender was asked to prepare a study (March 1979) on "The Feasibility of a Local AFSC Program in Atlanta." With customary thoroughness, he inter-

viewed 30 local individuals and organizations outside the Friends Meeting and found a generally favorable response to the move.

The present office at 92 Piedmont Avenue in downtown Atlanta opened the weekend of September 6–8, 1980, with a speech by Colin Bell, AFSC executive director, a program at Quaker House on "The Religious Basis and Challenge of AFSC," and a square dance. Bill Channel became the first director, followed by Elizabeth Enloe, then by Bill Holland. Both Elizabeth Enloe and Bill Holland became members of Atlanta Friends Meeting. Several Atlanta Friends have served on the Southeastern Executive Committee since the move to Atlanta, including Mary Ann Doe (Downey), Free Polazzo, Bill Holland, Bert Skellie, and Althea Sumpter. Jack Honderd was on a special administrative finance committee, Al Campbell was legal consultant for both the purchase of the AFSC building and the sale of Quaker House, and Elizabeth Siceloff and Maria Ladd served on regional program committees. Courtney Siceloff was on the national AFSC board from 1989 to 1995, and Elizabeth Siceloff served on the AFSC Nobel Prize Committee. (AFSC, as a previous winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is entitled to nominate a candidate each year for this award.) Ellen Cooney was named to the national board of AFSC in 1996.

Defining the Meeting's Role

A perennial question for Atlanta, as for most Friends meetings, has been: "Are political actions the role of a meeting?" For example, on September 24, 1978, a called meeting wrestled with the issue of supporting an ongoing nationwide boycott of Nestlé products, in protest of Nestlé's promotion in underdeveloped countries of its infant baby formula as a substitute for mothers' milk. Mothers in these countries were unable to prepare bottles or formula sanitarily, nor could they afford to buy the formula in sufficient quantities to prevent malnutrition. Finally the Meeting compromised with the advice: "Every person should inspect his or her own conscience with respect to their economic support of the Nestlé Company until that company desists in its promotion of infant formula. The Atlanta Friends Meeting has asked its members not to purchase Nestlé's products for Meeting use." A copy of the statement was sent to the company. In 1981, in response to pub-

lic pressure, Nestlé began selling its formula according to guidelines established by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Again and again the Meeting has sought to define its role. When Maria Ladd became staff person, a "procedure on social action on behalf of the Meeting" was drawn up (business meeting minutes, February 1979). According to this procedure, the Meeting would adopt "Minutes of Concern," and individuals would bring their own concerns to the Quaker House staff person or the Social Concerns Committee, which would then determine whether these individual concerns were in line with those of the Meeting. If necessary, a question could come before a called meeting for business. Through many reappraisals and definitions, the basic policy for approving projects and personal concerns has been that they involve someone from the Meeting and that they be in keeping with traditional Quaker concerns. The Social Concerns Committee always has seen itself as inheriting the role of the original Quaker House board of trustees and has spelled out its duties a number of times, not deviating in their essential interpretation. For example, as reflected in its minutes of May 1992, the committee listed as its duties:

1. To act as a means of facilitating outreach for the Meeting.
2. To facilitate and support the concerns of members and attenders by being a listening and testing group for those concerns.
3. To occasionally initiate major projects on behalf of Meeting.
4. To sponsor education programs and forums for the Meeting and the community.
5. To support the formation of interest and action groups in the Meeting.
6. To support the work of FCNL through its subcommittee on FCNL. To bring FCNL issues to the attention of the Meeting.
7. To disperse funds on behalf of the Meeting.
8. To act for the Meeting on public issues.
9. To report as needed to Meeting for Business.

It will be noted that by 1992, the AFNLC activities except for *News/Views* had been absorbed into the Social Concerns Committee. It should also be observed that dispersal of funds on

behalf of Meeting did not include the Meeting's regular annual contributions to wider Quaker organizations, such as AFSC, FCNL, and FWCC.

Maria Ladd as staff person and Nita Hinely as secretary both resigned in the fall of 1980. Janet Boyte was employed to fill both positions beginning in January 1981, a job she held until 1985. (Janet had been secretary also from 1970 to 1972.) She and her husband, Harry Boyte, had returned in 1976 from the Virgin Islands, and Harry died in 1977. On January 1, 1983, Irene Ferguson died, after a long illness. Dwight Ferguson and Janet Boyte were married under the care of the Meeting in August 1983.

One of Janet's innovations, approved by meeting for business, was a new Program Planning Committee, designed to coordinate activities, including social concerns, of the Meeting. The Social Concerns Committee met regularly and began to focus on more local issues.

Church Cluster in Grady Homes

In the early 1980s in Atlanta there was widespread consternation over the "missing and murdered children"—a series of murders and disappearances of black youngsters, most of whom had lived in public housing projects. According to a March 1981 report to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting by its staff representative H. D. Carnes III, 20 of the 22 slain children were from either single-parent families or foster homes. The Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, with help from SCLC, established a Help the Children Project through church clusters. Maria Ladd and Nita Hinely attended one of the early planning sessions (business meeting minutes, October 1980). Maria distributed a statement from the Christian Council expressing the widespread concern for the children and their families. Even though a man was arrested and convicted of these crimes, a number of churches became involved in programs to help children in public housing projects. Atlanta Friends began working with a church cluster group serving Grady Homes, a low-income housing project near Grady Hospital. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tucker, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Liberty Baptist, Big Bethel A.M.E., and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church near Grady Homes were all in the same cluster group.

Elizabeth Lee, Quaker House resident at the time, and Janet Boyte were the Meeting's first representatives to the cluster, soon followed by Bert Skellie, who remained in contact with Grady Homes youth activities. One of the first projects was the sale of "shares" at $5 each to set up a fund that would provide summer jobs for young people from the ages of 10 to 16. Atlanta Friends attending Friends General Conference in Berea, Kentucky, in the summer of 1981 sold $277 worth of shares to out-of-town Friends concerned about the widely publicized "missing and murdered children."

Cluster representatives met regularly for a while at Grady Homes with Susie LaBord, president of the tenants' association, and Ed Scroggins, director of the Boys Club. During the summers of 1981 and 1982, they organized a Tuesday camp program for Grady Homes girls. The girls were transported by the Ebenezer Church bus to the expansive grounds of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tucker for games and activities run by volunteers. Women from Atlanta Meeting provided picnic lunches for them on a regular schedule. Nita Hinely drew upon her skills in working with youngsters to help with skits and games and also with the youth center, which the cluster helped to organize for after-school and summer activities in a ground-floor apartment at Grady Homes. The youth center remained in operation under the direction of Ed Scroggins and continued to receive financial support from Atlanta Friends.

Other Major Concerns

Yet another local concern that developed in the early 1980s was visitation at Willard's, a nearby group home for poor, handicapped, often elderly persons, most of them on Social Security disability allotments. At first a fairly large group of Friends began visiting the home two Sunday afternoons a month, bringing songs, refreshments, and talk of the outside world to these shut-ins. At Christmas in 1982 and 1983 Friends conducted parties at Willard's, bringing refreshments and small wrapped gifts, and leading Christmas carols. Jim Tolmach made some planter boxes for the front porch, and Friends planted flowers in them one spring. Ann Whitley was coordinator of the visits, with help from Janet Boyte and others. Ann often played her violin at the gather-

ings and sometimes brought her baby, Paul Cooper, to the delight of the residents. Friends concerned about Willard's continued to take refreshments and entertainment on special occasions such as Valentine's Day and the Fourth of July after the home was moved from Moreland Avenue to Ponce de Leon Avenue. As has happened with other social concerns, interest in the residents at Willard's finally was superseded by different interests, and eventually the visits ended.

As Friends looked at local issues of poverty and neglect, they adopted a concern that has continued to the present with varying participation: assistance to nearby night shelters for homeless men at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church and Clifton Presbyterian Church. The Meeting became involved through the Druid Hills Churches Association in the winter of 1982–83. Bill Withers and Susan Firestone, residents at Quaker House at the time, scheduled Meeting volunteers to be at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church on designated nights, spending the night and preparing cheese grits and coffee for breakfast. Bill brought down mats from a nursing home in north Georgia, which greatly contributed to the comfort of the 30 men housed in the Druid Hills shelter each night during the winter (newsletter, December 1982). He reported in December 1982 that 18 Meeting volunteers had taken part so far. A year later, the Meeting was taking responsibility for staffing the shelter on Friday nights. Others have helped at the Clifton shelter. Through the years since then the Meeting has struggled to maintain its support of the shelters, with Courtney Siceloff, Bert Skellie, Jennifer Mullins, and Jeff Oglesby-Evans taking responsibility for schedules.

While at Quaker House, the Meeting had participated in the Druid Hills Churches Association, occasionally serving the monthly luncheon which rotated among the churches. Later, after taking up residence in their new meetinghouse, Friends participated in the Decatur Cooperative Ministry, especially in its food and shelter programs.

In 1997 Atlanta Friends joined with other churches of the Decatur Cooperative Ministry in taking responsibility on a regular schedule to help with the shelter for women and children at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Decatur. Teams of Friends prepared supper for the guests, and others stayed overnight with them.

In an article in the Meeting newsletter (January 1993), Bert Skellie described "Why I Help at the Shelter." He wrote: "Regular service at a shelter does as much for me as it does for the men. I have learned that 'the homeless' are individuals. . . . Joe, who wanders the streets looking for cigarette butts and repeatedly asks me to pray for him. . . . Charles, who has advanced from a guest volunteer cook at one shelter to paid screener at another; Fred, who insists on doing for himself despite a serious deterioration of his knee." Bert was also a volunteer driver of the Clifton Presbyterian bus, which picked up men each evening at a downtown location and took them to the church's shelter.

Since Quaker House was established as a Southern outreach for Friends, racism has been a consistent concern. Bill Withers began volunteering at the Anti-Klan Network, established by civil rights veteran C. T. Vivian in response to renewed Ku Klux Klan activity (newsletter, January 1984). Bill arranged a workshop on racism held at Quaker House in October 1984, conducted by C. T. Vivian. The workshop was well-attended, but Vivian's approach was too confrontational for a few of those present, and one or two were so upset that they walked out of the workshop. Another workshop on racism, with a somewhat more conciliatory approach, was held in January 1987 and led by Lillie Allen, but only nine persons attended. For a while Bill led a small study group on "white racism." He presented a challenging list of "12 concerns" to meeting for business in August 1986. The list focused on the treatment of black visitors, who he felt were not welcomed warmly enough by the Meeting. This provoked a "very lengthy discussion" (business meeting minutes, August 1986). In November 1997, Meeting attender Adelaide Solomon-Jordan began a discussion group on racial issues called Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History.

National and international issues were also frequently addressed by Atlanta Friends, not only those working with AFNLC. Friends supported a sister city project conducted by Ground Zero and were paired with Tbilisi, capital of what was then the republic of Georgia in the U.S.S.R. A number of local Friends created a "friendship quilt" under the guidance of Susan May, an expert quiltmaker. The quilt was delivered in 1986 to Tbilisi through the Friendship Force.

Janet Minshall Roache, accompanied on one occasion by Judith and Anneke Bender, traveled to Kenya in 1986 and 1988 to help promote women's self-help projects in Elgon Yearly Meeting. Atlanta Friends had become acquainted with Elgon Yearly Meeting through Elisha Wakube, a Kenyan attending Interdenominational Theological Seminary and who often attended Atlanta Friends Meeting while in the city. Friends provided him with some financial support during his stay in Atlanta. A Friend from Philadelphia, Marjorie Fox, had known Elisha in Kenya when she worked with the Women's Programme in that country. She spent a number of months in Atlanta in 1981, assisting with a mothers' program in one of the housing projects, and she gave much support to Elisha. Marjorie died of cancer in Philadelphia before she could return to Kenya. Janet Minshall Roache explained that she was "fulfilling a promise made to Elisha Wakube, presiding clerk of Elgon Friends Yearly meeting, and to the late Marjorie Fox" to help with this program (minute of concern, June 15, 1986). Janet received spiritual and financial help from the Meeting, as well as from SAYMA and other organizations. In the minute of concern commending her to Friends elsewhere, the Meeting affirmed: "We know that Janet has developed skills to match her spirit. Through her education and her professional work she has acquired expertise in areas which support her present efforts. With Janet's strong commitment to these concerns and her ability to carry them forward, we believe that the fruits of the Spirit will be plentiful. Through her openness and love for others, we know that she will grow in her ministry as well. We look forward to her return to Atlanta so that we may benefit from her sojourn."

Support for Refugees

After the Vietnam War ended, many refugees from Southeast Asia came to the United States, aided often by church-based organizations. Frequently refugees were "adopted" by a church community. At a called meeting in September 1979, Atlanta Friends decided to adopt a refugee family and pledged both time and money to help them get settled. Often it was difficult to work out arrangements, and the family that was first expected was sent elsewhere. However, through a Catholic relief agency, a Laotian family, consisting of a husband, a wife, and the wife's two sisters, arrived in Atlanta in the summer of 1980. The Westervelts had

offered to take them in temporarily; but by the time the family arrived, the Westervelts were moving into the home they had built on Lake Lanier in Gainesville, Georgia. The Laotian family was temporarily housed with Mike Mykel. Sally Ferguson recalled that people from Meeting cleaned the house before their guests arrived, but a few days later when she visited them, the house was so immaculate that Friends' efforts paled in comparison. Because she was a nurse, Sally was asked to offer information about health and birth control. With gestures in the absence of a shared language, Sally tried to explain such matters but discovered that this was not necessary! (Ferguson interview, December 1994). Sally was particularly impressed with the young woman, Sipapay, who showed great initiative in learning the language and adapting to her American surroundings. A year or two later she drove around in what she called a "hot car" to show Sally her progress.

Finding suitable jobs and housing for the Laotians proved to be a major hurdle, which Friends managed only partially to overcome. "We did the best we could," said Maria Ladd, who was staff person at the time. Maria felt that joint efforts by Meeting members were very worthwhile. The family finally moved to Marietta, Georgia, and became self-supporting. However, Jim Cain, who was clerk of the Meeting, expressed regret that "the family did not bring the Meeting together as much as was anticipated" (business meeting minutes, August 1981).

Throughout the 1980s, refugees from Central America poured into the United States. In El Salvador, a rebel guerrilla army was fighting an oligarchic government responsible for the slaying in March 1980 of Archbishop Oscar Romero. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas had overthrown the dictatorship of Somoza and were trying to establish democratic reforms. The Reagan administration was sending assistance to the government of El Salvador in its effort to suppress the rebels, and was providing heavy and constant support for the Contras trying to overthrow the new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. From Guatemala, too, came refugees fleeing a government that sought almost to annihilate indigenous people.

After much discussion, Atlanta Friends agreed in September 1983 to permit use of Quaker House as a refugee sanctuary (business meeting minutes, November 1983). Austin Wattles traveled to Central America to try to establish links for aiding refu-

gees. Betty O'Berry returned from a teaching stint in Monteverde, Costa Rica, to tell Friends about a new Peace Center in that country, which stood out in contrast to the repressive regimes of its neighbors. Several Meeting members, including Ed Turner, Harry Lefever, and Dwight and Janet Ferguson, went with various Witness for Peace delegations to Nicaragua to demonstrate against the Contra attacks on the border with Honduras.

Don Bender asked financial support for an ad hoc interdenominational group working through the Christian Council to assist refugees. Don, Bill Withers, and Austin Wattles were named as Meeting representatives to this interfaith refugee committee. This committee included members of several churches and Jubilee Partners, a Christian community in Comer, Georgia, which housed and familiarized refugees with North American language and customs before sending them to Canada. At that time, the Canadian government was accepting Central American refugees for relocation. Don and Judith Bender kept one refugee couple from El Salvador in their home for several months before the couple was able to relocate in Toronto. Harry Lefever and Frank and Carol Cummings also housed refugees.

To add to their sufferings, the people of Nicaragua experienced a devastating hurricane in the fall of 1988. Harry Lefever had visited Bluefields, Nicaragua, on the Caribbean coast shortly before the hurricane and knew the country well. In March of 1989 he called together "a handful of skeptical people, including myself" for a meeting at Quaker House to discuss the possibility of sending a cargo container full of much-needed supplies and equipment to Nicaragua. Coordinating their work with the Catholic organization Quest for Peace in Washington, D.C., and enlisting help from churches and individuals throughout the Atlanta area, they amassed 20 tons of relief supplies.

"Scores of people and an assortment of trucks, vans, and cars filled with items to be loaded" greeted the truck carrying the empty cargo container one August day. The contributions filled the huge container as the volunteers handed up clothing, tools, household goods, medical supplies, even a bicycle that one woman had fitted with baskets attached to carry materials through the countryside (account by Harry Lefever in *Quest for Peace News*, Winter 1989).

For a while it was feared that the United States might actually invade Nicaragua, and a Fourth Congressional District committee was set up to focus local resistance to such a course of action. Carol Cummings represented the Meeting on the committee, which was based at the North Decatur Presbyterian Church (newsletter, October 1984). Carol reported that regular vigils were taking place at the DeKalb County Courthouse, where more than 30 protesters attended the first vigil on December 19, 1984. Intensive workshops were held at North Decatur Presbyterian Church to acquaint people with the situation.

The issue of public sanctuary for refugees came before meeting for business in February 1985. After "a lengthy and meaningful discussion" and "prayerful consideration," a minute was approved on February 17, 1985, which stated:

> The Atlanta Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has agreed to join with 25 other Friends Meetings in offering Public Sanctuary to refugees from Central America. This means we will care for them in any way we can. In the past we have quietly assisted in sheltering individuals in need. We have decided to make our position public. We take this step with serious and prayerful deliberation, understanding that in doing so, we may be charged with breaking the laws of the United States government as it seeks to deport Central American refugees. As Quakers we take our position because of many firsthand accounts of suffering we have heard about the war and repression now going on in Central America. Not to respond to individual needs would be contrary to our whole religious philosophy and practice and our efforts to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. From our own beginnings when we were imprisoned for meeting for worship in 17th century England, to helping black people escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad, to attempting to secure safety for Jews fleeing Nazism, we have been led to take an unpopular position even in the face of imprisonment or other government action. No government should tell us that we may not help our brothers and sisters. In this case, the U.S. government is telling us whose life to save and whose life to sacrifice. We understand that deporting refugees back to Central America often means their torture and death. And to us this is a great evil. Our help will serve as a witness as we carry on our Testimony to the deepest part of our Faith. We invite and are hoping for direct or indirect support from other individuals and congregations in our community in this effort.

The minute was made public, and copies were sent to Attorney General Meese in Washington and to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The action was joined by nearby Clifton Presbyterian Church on March 24 in a ceremony at the church, packed with standing-room-only supporters. The newsletter for March 1985 observed: "More than 200 churches throughout the country have joined the sanctuary movement in openly sheltering refugees in spite of legal restrictions and ongoing investigations by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which has taken Tucson, Arizona, church leaders to court."

Twelve other Atlanta churches endorsed the actions of the two groups. Shortly afterward the Meeting accepted into public sanctuary a Guatemalan refugee identified only as "Fernando," who described his persecution and the kidnapping of family members in his country. Fernando finally was able to emigrate to Canada (business meeting minutes, June 1986). A subsequent Guatemalan refugee, "Pablo," also helped to acquaint Atlantans with conditions in his country.

When Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta proposed a program to train Guatemalan police officers in Atlanta, Frank Cummings was able to mobilize nationwide opposition. More than 10,000 signatures deluged the mayor, and he met behind the scenes at Quaker House with leaders of the opposition. Mayor Young finally withdrew the proposal.

Frank Cummings and Don Bender accompanied a Quaker delegation to El Salvador in 1986, and Frank and Carol Cummings made several trips to both El Salvador and Guatemala, usually seeking out the families of refugees they knew and giving them news and reassurance regarding loved ones. Inasmuch as housing refugees was always a problem, it proved especially helpful for Kathy Johnson to make available temporary shelter in the White House, or "Casa Blanca," on Oakdale Avenue. At least nine refugees at different times stayed there briefly. Frank and Carol estimated that some 40 refugees were helped through the Meeting and the Meeting's Sanctuary Committee. Atlanta Meeting also took an active role in the National Alliance for Sanctuary Committees, with Frank and Carol editing its newsletter for a year.

Among those who found their way to the Atlanta Meeting during the early to mid-1990s was Maria, a refugee from El Salvador. In fleeing for her life, Maria had had to leave her husband and

children behind in Central America. During the time that she was in Atlanta, she received the tragic news that her 16-year-old son, Ernesto, had been tortured and murdered. The meeting held a memorial service for Ernesto, since Maria could not return to El Salvador for his funeral.

Thanks to Frank and Carol, Central American issues remained a concern of Atlanta Friends. In 1991 they arranged for the Meeting to "adopt" a sister community in El Salvador, El Sitio, a village that they described as "about the size of Friends Meeting." They learned of El Sitio through Pastora, a sister of one of the community members, who stayed at Quaker House with her family before gaining refuge in Holland. Composed of Salvadoran refugees who returned from Honduras, El Sitio constructed a school, a clinic, two small stores, and a day care center. The village was able to turn its attention to economic development and construction of a much-needed road. The president and vice president of El Sitio visited Atlanta in October 1994, met with Friends, and raised about $1,000 in contributions to help in their work. In April 1995 the Meeting observed the tenth anniversary of its participation in the sanctuary movement. Contacts between the Meeting and El Sitio continued.

An interest-free, two-year loan for $5,000 to the Nicaraguan Community Development Loan Fund was approved at the February 1994 meeting for business. This fund, directed toward empowering the poor in Nicaragua, was administered by CEPAD, the Protestant social action agency in that country, which has a history of efficient distribution of school, medical, and agricultural supplies.

Throughout the years, as usual, individual Friends brought their concerns to Meeting for approval and support. Free Polazzo was named Meeting representative to an Ecumenical Business Development Program (business meeting minutes, November 1984), which was an interdenominational effort to help launch small business enterprises among the "hard-core" unemployed. Janet Minshall served on the board of the Christian Employment Cooperative, which had a similar purpose. Perry Treadwell alerted Friends to the AIDS crisis. He was serving on several committees of AID Atlanta and was "AIDS-buddy" for one dying patient. Said Perry, "Carl's dying was the hardest I've ever gone through. He was so much like me." Perry helped to organize the

Atlanta Interfaith AIDS Network, an outgrowth of one of the committees. In June 1989 the Friends Meeting became one of the supporting religious organizations of the network. The AIDS Network since then was consistently included in the Social Concerns budget.

While Friends were absorbed in their wrenching move from Quaker House in 1989, their temporary stay at Horizons School, and construction of the new meetinghouse (in 1991), interest in social concerns tended to languish. Still, publication of *News/Views* under the Pendergrasts' guidance continued without interruption, and FCNL advocates provided incentives for Friends to write cards and letters to congressional representatives on national issues. With the exception of opposition to the Gulf War already described, the Social Concerns Committee's chief activity until 1992 was the disbursal of funds. The State of the Meeting Report that year observed, "The Meeting began an effort to discern a broad direction for shared ministry to the community." Forums were held, the report continued, "to explore leadings of the Spirit in this matter, and the process resulted in a reconstituted Social Concerns Committee." As had happened often in the past, questionnaires were circulated to determine Friends' interests. The resulting information revealed a great diversity of community service rendered to more than 40 organizations by many Meeting members and attenders. For example, Peg Kaiser worked as a volunteer at DeKalb Medical Center from the time the hospital opened (as DeKalb General Hospital) in 1961. Since she moved to Atlanta from Indiana in 1976, Mary Zimmerman helped with both the American Red Cross blood drives and the Atlanta Braille Volunteers.

Nevertheless, the Meeting's social outreach had no consistent focus. The May 1993 newsletter reported, "We are still a long way from consensus on our ministry."

Social Concerns Budget

Friends were led to make a much larger financial contribution to community outreach. Dan May, Social Concerns clerk at the time, pointed out at the end of 1992 that "other religious bodies" were devoting approximately 18 percent of their budgets to external social concerns, while the Meeting's contribution was only 13

percent of its budget (business meeting minutes, November 1992). Spurred by this disparity, Friends created a yearly $6,000 Social Concerns Fund to be managed by the Meeting (business meeting minutes, December 1992), in addition to the regular Social Concerns budget, whose ongoing contributions amounted to $5,500 in 1994.

The Social Concerns Committee added to its budget $1,000 to be used in small grants of up to $200 each for public schools seeking assistance with specific projects. This budget item was to balance the $1,000 which the Meeting was giving in scholarship aid to the Friends School of Atlanta. By 1996 the Social Concerns budget had risen to nearly $8,000, with a larger proportion channeled through the Meeting's Food and Shelter Committee and certain new items. A sample Social Concerns budget (1994) follows:

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE—1994 BUDGET

ORGANIZATION	Amount ($)
Druid Hills Night Shelter	$ 200
Clifton Presbyterian Night Shelter	100
Decatur Emergency Action Ministry	150
Local Homeless Relief/Task Force for the Homeless	300
Decatur Cooperative Ministries	400
Grady Homes Youth Center	600
Atlanta Interfaith AIDS Network	200
Urban Training Organization of Atlanta	200
Christian Council	150
Clergy and Laity Concerned	550
Prisoner Visitation and Support	50
Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors	50
Sanctuary Committee	1,100
Public Education Supplemental Projects	1,000
Undesignated	450
TOTAL	$5,500

Broader Outreaches

Interest grew in making broader contacts in the area immediately surrounding the new meetinghouse. Sarah Haga led an intensive investigation of the area under a subcommittee called Neighborhood Partnership. Friends met several times to analyze needs of the nearby community, and some discussion took place with administrators at Carl Renfroe Middle School. The immediate and

delightful result of this exploration was a joint potluck arranged by Sarah on May 1, 1994, with Antioch A.M.E. Church, just two blocks from the meetinghouse. Following meeting for worship, a large crowd of Friends collected their potluck dishes and strolled to Antioch Church, where they and the Antioch members shared good food and fellowship on the lawn and in the church building. Someone from Antioch Church observed that the Quakers, usually so casual in their attire, "dressed up," while the Antioch members, aware of Friends' tendencies, "dressed down."

At the instigation of Althea Sumpter, a member who grew up on St. Helena Island off the South Carolina coast, Friends participated in a weekend work project each November at St. Helena's Penn Center. Penn Center was founded during the Civil War after St. Helena was occupied by Union troops. Many Northern well-wishers, including Quakers, came to help to teach the freed slaves. In recent years, the facility has accommodated various groups, from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to the Peace Corps, as a conference and training center, and was directed for 19 years by Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff.

In 1994 Social Concerns sponsored two conflict resolution workshops, with participation from 45 individuals. These were followed in 1995 by the ambitious Atlanta Listening Project. A steering committee was formed, consisting of David Thurman, Kathy Marth, Mary Ann (Doe) Downey, Bill Holland, Bette Turlington, Peggy Barlett, David Dault, and Katherine McKinnon. The Atlanta Listening Project was based on the Asheville (North Carolina) Friends Meeting's Religion and Diversity Listening Project and was assisted by Herb Walters, founder of the Listening Project and of the Rural Southern Voice for Peace. Listening Projects sought to foster communication and understanding on a variety of issues among persons of widely divergent viewpoints. This procedure was used successfully in many places, including Asheville, where Friends promoted understanding between the traditional religious community and gays and lesbians. From time to time, Atlanta has had an active Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns group within the Meeting.

Herb Walters conducted a workshop and training program, attended by more than 35 persons at Atlanta meetinghouse in May 1995. A questionnaire was developed and teams assigned to visit leaders of various Christian denominations, including

Baptist, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Orthodox and Reformed Jewish. In all, 43 religious leaders were interviewed. Results of the interviews were carefully analyzed and distributed to participants. Some of the religious leaders who had been interviewed attended two luncheons at the meetinghouse to determine possible follow-up activities. Interest was expressed in continuing dialogue, Bible study groups, forums, and a reading list. By late 1996 efforts were under way to combine the work of the Listening Project with that of a parallel group, the Decatur-DeKalb Gay-Straight Alliance.

Others from Meeting explored possible involvement again in public housing and racial trouble spots, and there was large attendance at a First Day forum arranged by Joe Parko of the Meeting and conducted by Dewey Merrit of the Urban Training Organization. Another new project enlisting help from a number of Atlanta Friends in 1997 was a tutoring program for refugee children. This was sponsored by Neighborhood Networks, an offshoot of Save the Children. Alice Hunter, one of its staff and a young new attender at Friends Meeting, arranged for the tutoring program at the meetinghouse and recruited a number of Friends, as well as others, to coach the refugee children on a one-to-one basis.

As has so often happened in the past, individuals in the Meeting have moved ahead on their own initiative with imaginative programs in the community, sometimes paving the way for other Friends' involvement. One such project was Start-Up Education, begun by Mary Ann (Doe) Downey and Ellen Cooney. Its purpose was "to provide an integrated set of services that teach the fundamentals of operating a business and support individuals in joining the free enterprise system." Channeled through the public schools, it enabled young people to start their own small business ventures and met with considerable success, having expanded to some of the clusters of The Atlanta Project and the East Lake Meadows housing project as well. The Meeting provided $500 for a rotating capital fund for student-run businesses; several local foundations and the anonymous donor of a $10,000 bequest gave important support. It is interesting to note among Start-Up's benefactors a grant of $5,000 from the Anna H. and Elizabeth M. Chace Fund to teach entrepreneurial skills to juvenile offenders at DeKalb Community School. This was the Quaker fund that

gave such significant help in the original purchase of Quaker House and in its inner city programs in the 1960s.

A single outreach ministry seems to be an elusive goal. Through the years many Friends have sought an outreach which would be truly meaningful in the community and which would also build cooperation and dedication within the Meeting. They have seen the various projects that enlisted interest for a while, then faded from the picture. Some Friends traditionally feel that the Meeting should primarily pursue goals of worship and spiritual nourishment. Others, remembering Quaker concerns regarding slavery, discrimination, peace, and prison reform, still want to find a significant and far-reaching ministry which will carry on the tradition of service to their fellow human beings.

10

THE MEETING COMMUNITY

While social concerns described in the preceding chapter claimed the attention of many Friends, Atlanta Friends Meeting also continued to evolve as a community and as a meeting for worship. Thomas Kelly, much-loved Quaker teacher and author, observed that the "inward Life and the outward Concern are truly one whole, and, were it possible, ought to be described simultaneously" (*Testament of Devotion*, p. 89). Inevitably, concerns, however imperfectly implemented, spring from the life of the Meeting, and this and the following chapters will examine the Meeting, both as a community of Friends and as a spiritual fellowship.

Among the many changes in which Friends took part was the growth of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Friends supported passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and helped organize the Georgia ERA Committee. Carrie Miles, who had been especially active with the Nuclear Freeze/Jobs for Peace Campaign, was appointed Meeting's representative on the committee. Joan Thompson and Steve Meredith participated in an ERA march in Washington in 1978. Although the amendment failed to be ratified by enough states, including Georgia,

Americans were reevaluating their opinions over the role of women in society.

Historically, women have held a prominent place in Quaker activities. However, a growing awareness of sexism in the Meeting's own procedures and expectations called for changes. The first area where Friends realized that unfairness existed was in child care. Women had always been the volunteers in the nursery. For a while, the Meeting employed Ruby Pope and sometimes her daughter (neither of whom were Quakers) to care for children in the nursery during meeting for worship. When it was decided to make child care the responsibility of Meeting volunteers, the feminine role was not questioned.

In December 1971, a new plan involving men began. At meeting for business, the clerk of the Religious Education Committee proudly announced that "the surrogate mother plan has been inaugurated, with a bearded male functioning today!" (business meeting minutes, December 12, 1971). During the 1970s men were enlisted to help with food preparation and cleanup. "This is not an ability thing according to sex!" proclaimed the July 1974 calendar. The business meeting minutes for the preceding month noted that "potluck was a resounding success . . . especially since many men shared the task of making and bringing food. Be it hereby minuted that Jack Kaiser baked a cake." By 1979 a Meeting forum, "Changing Roles of Men and Women in Our Society," was an acknowledgment that women's liberation had brought permanent change.

Women's Group, Men's Group Launched

The idea for reviving a Women's Group in Atlanta Friends Meeting arose (incongruously) in 1972 at the Magnolia Room of Rich's Department Store. The Magnolia Room, catering to white-gloved, white-skinned Southern ladies, was a time-honored tearoom. Harriet Treadwell, Peg Kaiser, and Nita Hinely met there for lunch one day and agreed that they wanted to talk regularly in a meeting without men present. The emerging women's group, calling itself "The Women's Rap Group," bore little resemblance to a ladies' tea party. At first they met monthly in various homes, each person bringing her own lunch. Most of these women did not have jobs

outside the home and could talk until they had to hurry back to greet children returning from school.

By 1974, the women's group shifted to evening meetings to accommodate working women. For a short time, there were two groups, day and evening, but they soon merged into the evening group, which took the name "The Women's Discussion Group." They used a support group format, allowing each evening to develop spontaneously from the concerns or shared anecdotes of those present. With no rush to be home for schoolchildren or back to a workplace, women often talked late into the night. Certain topics of discussion ran their course. The August 1975 calendar stated: "We will be discussing the differences in being non-assertive, assertive, and aggressive." Pam Ives conducted an evening discussion of body awareness in October 1976. As need arose, talk centered on raising children or on the problems of teenagers. Women listened to problems with husbands and helped some members as they went through divorces. Younger women heard how older ones had coped with physical illness or the death of a spouse. As time passed, a number of the women earned college degrees and got jobs and were cheered on by the group.

The tone of the women's meetings was not all serious. Laughter, unwinding into the giddy giggles of schoolgirls, often occurred, and everyone remarked how therapeutic that was. On one especially hilarious evening, Anicia Lane and Mary Lou Taylor satirized a then popular and controversial book, *The Total Woman* by Marabel Morgan. A challenge to the women's liberation movement, the book suggested that housewives dress only in clear-plastic wrap and surprise their husbands returning home from dull workdays, which Anicia and Mary Lou parodied by wearing costumes of aluminum foil. Atlanta Meeting women were fascinated with *The Total Woman* and passed it in brown paper bags to one another for several weeks, although they would have been dismayed to have the men in their lives know that they were reading a book whose thesis was that women should make their husbands happy by submission to them. The Women's Group continued through the years, with regular meetings each month in the homes of members and attenders.

Throughout 1985 and 1986 women of Atlanta Meeting participated in the publication of *Friendly Woman*. This quarterly

magazine is produced by Quaker women on a biennially rotating basis among various meetings throughout the United States. It circulates by subscription. The project was undertaken in Atlanta at the instigation of Neva Fisk, who gathered a volunteer staff around her. With Neva as convener, those who contributed to the production of six or more of the eight Atlanta Meeting issues were Cynthia Berg, Ellen Cooney, Mary Ann Doe (Downey), Betsy Eggers, Janet Boyte Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Margaret Horsley (Priest), Kathy Johnson, Leila L'Abate, Anicia Lane, Judy Lumb, Suzanne Murdock, Karen Skellie, Claudia Stucke, and Nancy Whitt (of Birmingham, Alabama).

Tasks were divided up, with an editorial group gathering to determine material to be published, most of it submitted by authors and artists from other parts of the country. Next, other women prepared the layout. Printing was done commercially, and volunteers then read all the page proofs. When each issue was finally ready for distribution, a group of volunteers assembled in the library, that all-purpose room at Quaker House, to prepare the mailing. Even the bookkeeping was done by faithful volunteers.

A year after the women of the Meeting revived the Women's Group, an announcement of the "Men's Liberation Masculine Mystique Meeting" appeared in the October 1973 calendar. Twelve men showed up for the meeting. They divided into two groups, one meeting at Quaker House, and the other in private homes, and they met until 1977. An Atlanta therapist, Bruce Pemberton, heard of these men's groups and joined. At his suggestion, the two groups merged into one, calling itself The Men's Experience, yet they also kept intact the separate identity and meeting times of the two groups. The larger Men's Experience met bimonthly at Quaker House, and attorney Mike Mykel incorporated the organization to obtain tax-free status. More men joined, and more small groups formed; but the men avoided much structure, because they felt too structured in their world of work.

Much of the discussion at the men's groups had to do with being fathers and with work. "We tiptoed around the topic of sexuality for several years before we got around to talking about that," Perry Treadwell recalled. He described one interesting meeting of The Men's Experience on the topic of gender roles. "We danced—fast danced and slow danced," he said. "It was quite an experience

for some men to get past the homophobia of dancing with another man, but also [to feel] what it is like to be a woman, to be led."

The Men's Experience ended in 1989 when Quaker House was sold. An estimated 1,000 men participated during its 16-year existence. The great need for men's support groups led to the start of the Atlanta Men's Center, begun in 1990 by Perry Treadwell and Free Polazzo of Atlanta Friends Meeting. The Atlanta Men's Center, located in the Virginia-Highland area of the city, continued to flourish but had no direct connection with the Friends Meeting.

The Homosexuality Issue

Another matter that has assumed increasing prominence in Atlanta Friends Meeting over the years has been homosexuality. The first recorded indication that Atlanta Friends were concerned with this issue appeared as early as 1973. In November of that year a tape based on a talk by Mary B. Calderone, a Quaker physician and author, at a Rufus Jones Lecture on "Human Sexuality and the Quaker Conscience" was played at Quaker House. The Meeting calendar that month described it as "an extremely radical view on sexual behavior dealing with homosexuality, sexual deviation in general, changing lifestyles regarding marriage, etc." The Meeting had several homosexual members and attenders at this time to whom the entire issue was of deep personal concern. Five years later Atlanta Friends Meeting wrote an official Minute on Human Rights (business meeting minutes, May 28, 1978), using portions of a similar SAYMA minute.

> The Atlanta Friends' Meeting (Quakers) has expressed its concern over the threat to the human rights of gay persons. The City of Atlanta is just emerging from a period of tension in which groups were polarized over the administration of law enforcement. Further polarization is now possible because of the appearance in Atlanta of a spokesperson who represents the movement to deny gays their civil rights. Atlanta Friends in their Business Meeting held May 28, 1978, stated Friends' belief in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. We reaffirm our support for the civil and human rights of all persons regardless of sexual orientation. We regret actions by any group or individual which would result in the denial of basic rights to

> any minority group. We ask that each of us seek the guidance of a loving God as we work for the fulfillment of our shared human fellowship.

The minute was written in response to a widely publicized forthcoming visit by Anita Bryant to Atlanta in June 1978. Bryant, a singer known for her appearances in television advertisements for Florida orange juice, was on a personal national crusade to bar homosexuals as teachers in public schools. Meeting members and men from The Men's Experience joined a parade protesting Anita Bryant's appearance at the Southern Baptist Convention at the Omni Convention Center in downtown Atlanta.

Later, when the predominantly gay and lesbian Metropolitan Community Church on Highland Avenue was bombed, several Friends attended a service at the church as an indication of support. By 1993, a new chapter of Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (FLGC) had formed within the Meeting. As Friends became more receptive to homosexuals within the Meeting, more lesbian and gay attenders began to participate, becoming thoroughly integrated into the larger Meeting. Since 1983, several openly homosexual individuals served as clerks of the Meeting, an indication that the Meeting embraced the full participation of Friends with a homosexual orientation.

Meeting's Sense of Community

In the 1970s the Meeting was still small enough to function almost as a large family does. This family, unconventional in terms of most other Southern religious groups, attracted many individuals who found it a safe haven of freedom from societal constraints. For the most part, these free spirits managed to fit in with the handful of more traditional Quakers, making for a diverse mix of seekers who generally appreciated one another.

Quaker House was also an interesting place for individuals on irregular work schedules or without jobs to "hang out." Nita Hinely, secretary from 1972 through 1980, loved having people around, although she sometimes found them distracting as far as her work was concerned. She called these friends "the gang," and when many of them were absorbed into jobs or school, she lamented, "Larry Erb and Nick Butterfield are employed . . . and

we miss seeing them around the meetinghouse as much as in the past. Gen Summers is also working full time . . . also Mary Lou Taylor, Anicia Lane . . . . So Quaker House is not the same now, without the old gang coming over and solving the problems of the world" (calendar, March 1978).

Attitudes were relaxing regarding marriage, after the dissension concerning John Miller in 1972. Larry Erb was approved as resident in 1976 as a single man on a six-month trial basis (business meeting minutes, February 15, 1976). When Gen Summers moved in with him, there were no recorded objections. Larry and Gen married themselves, with three witnesses present, under the ginkgo tree on the lawn at Quaker House in 1977. Their son, Silvan Rain, was born in the upstairs apartment.

The Meeting's sense of community has traditionally been enhanced by its residents and secretaries. Early secretaries under John Yungblut, while he and June were living at Quaker House, were Carol Driscoll Hough, Barbara Harkins, Bette Turlington, Sarah Moses Owen, Sandy Miller, and Priscilla Henson. Janet Boyte Ferguson served two separate times as secretary, before and after Nita Hinely, who was secretary for eight years. While Susan Firestone and her husband Bill Withers were residents, Susan served one year as secretary, followed by Jackie Yates. At its new home on West Howard Avenue in Decatur, the Meeting first employed Beryl Williams and then Janet Minshall as secretary. When Janet left to become secretary for SAYMA, Friends next experimented for several years with volunteers coordinated by Beth Garrettson, staffing the office on different days. During this time volunteers included Pete Houghton, Peg Kaiser, Perry Treadwell, Kathy Johnson, John Ball, and Ruth Lord.

After the departure of the Yungbluts, Jim and Sue Marinell took up residence at Quaker House, followed in succession by Don and Judy Bender, John Miller, Joan and Chris Newland, Larry Erb, and Elizabeth Lee. As a social worker, Elizabeth often took in individuals who she felt needed support and counseling.

When Bill Withers and Susan Firestone succeeded her, they, too, helped various people in need of housing or assistance. One schizophrenic woman who refused to be institutionalized took up residence in the Quaker House basement for an entire winter. This person invariably appeared at potlucks. She had a special phobia about whistling and almost violently attacked anyone she

heard whistling. Susan and Bill were deeply involved in Meeting affairs, and for a time served as clerks of Social Concerns Committee. Their son, Benjamin Firestone, was born during the years they lived at Quaker House. Susan fondly recalled taking little Ben for rides on a wagon shared by small Salvadoran children whose families were finding temporary shelter at Quaker House. When Susan, Bill, and Ben left, Edward Pollard served for a year as resident, doing chiefly maintenance work, as he was busy with college courses and volunteer work at the Open Door, a nearby haven for homeless people. Jackie and Mark Yates next moved into Quaker House with their three children. Jackie also was secretary, and Mark continued to be especially active with Social Concerns.

In the new meetinghouse, Nancy Tarr became the resident in the apartment provided for that purpose. She was especially compassionate, competent, and patient in meeting the varied demands of Friends as well as dealing with strangers who kept appearing unexpectedly at the door at all hours. In 1997, after her marriage to Leon Ruttley, Nancy moved to New Orleans.

After Nancy's departure, Martha Halima Hutchins served briefly as interim resident. In September 1997 Sylvia Turner accepted the position on a permanent basis and moved into the meetinghouse with her eight-year-old son, Alvin Lanier. When she took over the position of meetinghouse resident, Sylvia was a second-semester sophomore in the Return-to-College program at Agnes Scott College, and Alvin was in his fourth year at the Friends School of Atlanta.

The liveliness of Quaker House is reflected in the 1975 State of the Meeting Report, which asserted, "The tone of the Atlanta Friends Meeting might be expressed in two words: vitality and community." The Meeting still retained a certain sense of family, even though growing attendance at meeting for worship led to moving the benches from the sunporch to the living room. Both 1976 and 1977 annual reports noted that there were 58 members and 46 attenders.

Many activities continued to foster a sense of community. Faith and Practice suppers were replaced by Friendly Dialogues with dessert and coffee, held once a month on Friday evenings through 1979. Christmas parties, brightened by children's programs and brimming pots of chili, occurred each December, and

other parties frequently centered around children. One memorable talent show featured the Rinard family on piano, drums, and trombone, jazzing up an original tune for the son who had just learned to clog. One Halloween the youngsters created a spook house in the attic and a "graveyard" in the backyard.

Thanksgiving dinners became an annual event for Friends who wanted to participate in a community meal. For many years Mike Mykel took responsibility for providing turkeys for this feast, while others brought appropriate potluck dishes.

Discussions, workshops, and forums on a great variety of topics have been constant sources of fellowship and community-building. Memorable speakers have stirred Friends on peace issues, prisons, changing patterns in society, study and service in remote parts of the world, projects with the poor and homeless in the inner city, and other subjects. After some experimentation with discussions before and after meeting for worship, Friends settled into the custom of scheduling forums on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, with the first Sunday devoted to potluck, and the third to meeting for business. Various uses have been made of the fifth Sunday, from music programs to threshing meetings to worship sharing. A Monday night adult discussion group proved to be an ongoing and lively forum for many topics from poetry to ecology to Quaker philosophy.

In 1978 Irene Ferguson was responsible for helping to establish a "Caring, Welcoming, and Visitation Committee." Its aim was to render more support during illness and bereavement, as well as to make visitors and newcomers feel more welcome. This committee, later called the Caring Committee, then the Care and Counsel Committee, continued with increasing duties through the years and proved very helpful. For several years in the early 1980s, Rob McDonald, a committee member, used a Polaroid camera to take pictures of Meeting members and attenders, filling an album still in the Meeting's library.

Other early Caring Committee projects were Friendly Dinners and Extended Family groups, all designed to draw together smaller groups of people in informal, relaxed relationships. Friendly Eights succeeded these, with people signing up, according to interests, for such groups as ethnic dining, games, Quaker readings, or music listening. Saturday morning hikes, organized by Bert Skellie, became another popular activity, giving Friends

not only an opportunity to become better acquainted but also to visit interesting places such as Amicalola Falls or Pine Mountain. In the autumn of 1993, when Linda Garrettson and her husband, Michael Minnig, moved into the house next door to Linda's parents (Lorne and Beth Garrettson), they began hosting a monthly sing-along, which many Friends attended and greatly enjoyed until the couple moved away in 1997. Shari Fradenburgh and Joe Taylor then began hosting the monthly sing-alongs.

It has been quipped that Friends enjoy "meeting for eating," and potlucks usually had substantial turnouts. Some were held for newcomers, some for Friends leaving Atlanta, some for special events, as well as the routine ones on the first Sunday of each month. Traffic control at Sunday potlucks was a problem at Quaker House and continued to demand attention in the new meetinghouse, where long lines doubled back on themselves in the greeting room as people approached the tables laden with food. Folding tables were set up in the new meeting room and some placed on the patio. For potlucks, Friends missed the large backyard at Quaker House, a favorite location in fine weather.

Volunteers set up and cleaned up for each potluck or coffee, and other volunteers helped with the routine responsibilities every Sunday. Greeters welcomed those entering the building and steered visitors to the table for name tags and orientation. Several volunteers assisted Nita Hinely, who was hired to run the nursery during meeting for worship at the new meetinghouse. Volunteers also provided child care during meeting for business and forums. These volunteer tasks contributed to the smooth functioning on First Days and also offered opportunities for camaraderie and getting to know new people.

Throughout the years, various volunteers took upon themselves responsibilities that enhanced the life of the community. Maria Ladd faithfully brought flower arrangements for the mantel at Quaker House, and Nan and Britt Pendergrast regularly provided a bouquet from their garden for the small table (made by Jim Tolmach) in the center of the new meeting room. John Stabler unobtrusively mowed the lawn at the meetinghouse. Suzan Kenworthy and Lorne Garrettson used their calligraphy skills to create name tags for Meeting members and attenders.

Extension of Atlanta Friends Beyond Meeting

As the nucleus for Quaker presence in the South, Atlanta Meeting on occasion helped to extend Friends' outreach in the region. Between 1973 and 1977 Atlanta nurtured a preparatory meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. When this became an official meeting in February 1977, 16 Atlanta Friends attended the potluck and celebration held at the home of Noyes and Frauke Collinson. Noyes Collinson, after his divorce from Nancy, had moved to Birmingham in 1973 after marrying Frauke Bracklin, the daughter of a noted German artist. They were charter members of Birmingham Meeting. Also attending the celebration were representatives from Nashville, Chattanooga, Columbia (South Carolina), and Fairhope (Alabama) Meetings. Bob Westervelt, a recently licensed pilot, flew his small plane from Atlanta to Birmingham, taking his wife Patricia, as well as Sue Williams and Janet Boyte as passengers. In the 1990s Atlanta also sponsored the Athens (Georgia) preparatory meeting, which became a full-fledged meeting in 1993.

Several smaller worship groups under Atlanta's care sprang up in outlying locations, although none continued on a permanent basis. Among these were groups in Carrollton, Macon, and Alpharetta. Atlanta undertook responsibility, under the leadership of Kathy Johnson, for visitation with these groups. An independent, evangelical Friends church called Charity Friends was established in Marietta in 1984 and was laid down in 1993. Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff visited these Friends fairly often and encouraged other Atlanta Friends to do so.

An unexpected extension of the Meeting was the acquisition in 1983 of the Ferguson cabin on Lake Burton in the north Georgia mountains. Dwight Ferguson gave the cabin, with its eight acres of wooded land bordering the lake, in memory of his first wife, Irene, who died January 1, 1983. Dwight and Irene loved the cottage and had deliberately preserved its rustic character with its outhouse, its old-fashioned well with a bucket for drawing water, and its Franklin stove to warm the interior on frosty evenings. Many friends, as well as relatives and neighbors of the Fergusons, had enjoyed the cabin through the years. A Cabin Committee was formed to care for the property and to establish guidelines and modest fees for its use. One of the early committee members

especially interested in the cabin was Kathy Johnson, who had shared outings there with the Fergusons' daughter Audrey, a classmate and friend of hers at North Fulton High School years previously. In "The Quiet Place" in the woods above the cabin is a memorial plaque to Dwight and Irene Ferguson. Dwight's ashes are buried above the plaque.

One of Atlanta Friends' most powerful experiences in community came in 1996 and 1997 through the dying process of Sandy Mershon after her long bout with cancer. Beth Garrettson and Carol Wood, co-clerks of the Care and Counsel Committee, returned from a workshop in Philadelphia inspired by the book *Share the Care* by Cappy Capossela, Sheila Warnock, and Susie Miller. Using the book's suggestions, they organized a Share the Care group to assist Sandy and her husband, John Ball, as help might be needed. The group consisted of 24 persons, including Quakers and non-Quaker friends of Sandy, and was organized into teams, taking account of individual abilities and interests in helping with meals, transportation, telephone calls, errands, etc. In an article in *Friends Journal* in July 1998, Peggy Barlett, a Meeting attender and member of the support group, described the extended family and its operation.

Sandy Mershon, a former Catholic nun, was a very spiritual person. Peggy explained that Sandy "came to understand the use of the dying process as a time for spiritual growth and personal healing." Through small study and meditation groups, Sandy made use of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche. Toward the end of her life, the extended family group was especially helpful to Sandy and John. Sandy's "dying was conscious and pain free, as she had hoped," according to Peggy. Not only those in the Share the Care group, but also all of the Friends Meeting were deeply moved and enriched by the experience.

The ongoing interest in community, manifested in many ways over the years, cropped up again in a new form in 1993 when several Friends proposed the formation of a Friends Village, an intergenerational community to include both young families and older residents. A Friends Village Committee pursued this idea, exploring possible sites for development of such a community and wrestling with fund-raising and other issues. More than 30 individuals expressed definite interest in the project. Kathy Johnson, Kathy Burke, and Pete Houghton took leadership roles in

pursuing this project, which eventually merged with other groups seeking community. Kathy Burke joined Lake Claire Cohousing, as did Shari Fradenburgh and Joe Taylor. Pete Houghton and Kathy Johnson actively participated in helping to organize an ecologically oriented community called East Lake Commons.

In 1993 the Meeting suddenly realized that the fiftieth anniversary of the first Atlanta gathering of Friends was about to take place. On February 7, the very date of that first meeting in 1943 at the YMCA in downtown Atlanta, a huge potluck and ceremony were held, with many Friends and attenders of earlier days taking part. The walls of the greeting room were lined with magnificent posters compiled by Lorne Garrettson, depicting in photographs and narrative the highlights of the past 50 years. It was a time of nostalgia and celebration.

Throughout the years financial demands never ceased to be a concern. Special fund-raising efforts provided not only needed additional income, but fun and fellowship. In 1974 a Christmas bazaar featured donated items sold after meeting for worship. For several years thereafter "garage sales" helped meet the annual budget. The first year enthusiasm was high, and Friends cleaned out their closets and brought in accumulated high-quality goods. Everything sold so quickly that the organizers concluded that they probably had underpriced most items. By the next year, donations were slimmer, but the net profit was considerably better! Nita Hinely, who helped organize these sales, laughed in remembering that as the sales got "junkier and junkier," the proceeds were higher and higher!

Later the Meeting began supplementing its annual income with lively auctions. Friends donated exotic offerings. On two occasions Peg and Jack Kaiser were served an elegant champagne breakfast in bed by appropriately attired chefs Janet and Dean Ericson. Suzan Kenworthy recalled a flight over Atlanta and environs in a small plane with Steve Morehouse, a Meeting member and a commercial pilot. Other prized offerings to the highest bidders included babysitting, a Chinese dinner, and a morning on the Chattahoochee in the Pendergrasts' canoe. The auctions produced much laughter as well as real financial support. In the 1990s yearly auctions provided assistance to AFSC as well. The 1996 auction proceeds in excess of $5,000 were divided equally between the Meeting and AFSC.

While Friends School of Atlanta occupied the new meetinghouse, it paid as much as $19,000 a year in rents; it also contributed toward utilities. Although some Friends complained about the wear and tear from the children's use, pointing out stains on carpets and walls, this rental was a great boon to the Meeting in helping to pay for the mortgage and upkeep. Contributions from members and attenders still were the primary source of income, and Friends were able to expand their outreach through the Social Concerns Committee. With donations and interest-free loans, the Meeting was able to purchase the adjacent lot in 1994, thereby extending its property, preserving the trees, and providing space for a second temporary classroom for Friends School of Atlanta. Even with the mortgage and the expansion, the Meeting made a socially responsible investment in the Parnassus Fund.

By the mid-1990s, the Meeting budget averaged about $75,000 annually, with contributions running about $50,000 and rents averaging $25,000. When the Friends School moved in July 1996, there was no immediate replacement for the income its rent had provided, and Friends were involved in much exploration and soul-searching about the best use for the building during the week. All Meeting committees were asked to reduce their budgets if possible for 1997 to compensate for a projected loss of about $15,000 in rental income. Susan May, as Meeting treasurer, reported both a "low-fat" (medium projection) and "skim-milk" (lowest projection) budget to the meeting for business. June Clark voiced a fear that "our shrinking budget may presage a shrinking vision" (business meeting minutes, November 11, 1996). In response to the financial projections, the mortgage loan was extended for another 15 years, and a capital campaign was set up to reduce the mortgage by $60,000 over a three-year period.

The year 1996 ended on a more cheerful note, however, than had been expected. The Meeting received an anonymous gift of $10,000 and smaller gifts totaling about $4,000. From this, $1,000 was given to the Discretionary Fund and another $3,000 toward permanent improvements. The balance, together with interest from the Parnassus Fund, was applied to the mortgage, reducing it to $88,000.

Participation in wider Quaker organizations was another activity that enlisted support from many Atlanta Friends. This contributed to a shared sense of community, although perhaps

not as much as those taking part desired. Foremost among the larger organizations was SAYMA, the yearly meeting. As previously noted, several Atlanta Friends in the early 1960s attended annual gatherings of the Southern Appalachian Association of Friends (SAAF) at a rustic campground in Crossville, Tennessee.

In May 1970, SAAF became the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA). Jack Kaiser was clerk of SAAF, and Suzan Kenworthy was recording clerk at the time of this important step. The Atlanta State of the Meeting Report for 1970 announced, "The large number of Atlanta Friends and attenders who went . . . were particularly pleased with the decision to become a yearly meeting, since our Meeting has supported a move in that direction."

The first annual gathering of the new yearly meeting took place on the campus of Warren Wilson College near Asheville, North Carolina, in May 1971, where many annual meetings were later held. Most Friends were happy to leave the primitive conditions of the first ten years at the Crossville campground, where old-timers remembered sloshing through mud, bedding down on moldy mattresses, and struggling to prepare food under unsanitary conditions.

Atlanta, the largest of the SAYMA meetings, always had a prominent role in the organization. Members took part in the long process of developing a *Faith and Practice* manual for SAYMA, designed to replace the traditional Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*. Each of SAYMA's monthly meetings studied and finally approved the various sections of the *A Guide to Our Faith and Practice* document, composed by a committee under the leadership of Elizabeth Addison, a North Carolina Friend. Joan Thompson and Janet (Minshall) Roache were Atlanta's representatives to the committee. Among many concerns addressed by SAYMA over the years was the issue of patriarchy, or the dominance of male leadership in society. Free Polazzo was especially tenacious in pursuing this issue until SAYMA finally approved a minute opposing patriarchy.

Other Atlanta leaders in SAYMA in later years included Bert Skellie, clerk (1993–1995); Free Polazzo, recording clerk (1994–1995) and assistant clerk (1995–1996); and Sam and Caroline Morris, Bert Skellie, and Roger Herr and Zora Ugolini-Herr, who served on the program committee. Janet Minshall served as

SAYMA's first administrative assistant (August 1992–July 1994), succeeded by Sandy Mershon until 1997. In 1992 Atlanta Friends began providing office and storage space in the new meetinghouse for SAYMA's records and business.

Atlanta involvement with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) was especially vigorous in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Dwight Ferguson was active in the national organization. *News/Views*, which Atlanta Friends sponsored (see Chapter Nine), continued publication. Another major Quaker organization was the Friends World Committee on Consultation. Jack and Peg Kaiser traveled to Australia for its triennial Gathering in 1973, then, with Steve Meredith of Atlanta, to Switzerland in 1976. They shared with Friends in Atlanta and other SAYMA meetings their experiences of meeting and learning the activities of Friends from countries around the world. Dwight and Janet Ferguson attended the Triennial in Mexico in 1985, when Janet, along with George Oldham of Asheville, represented SAYMA. Courtney and Elizabeth Siceloff went to the FWCC Triennial in Honduras in 1991 and again to the Triennial at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, in 1994.

In November 1986 Free Polazzo proposed that the Meeting donate an amount equal to 1 percent of its annual budget to the Right Sharing Program of FWCC, a practice that continued. Right Sharing provided small grants for local projects, such as cottage industry or well-building, in underdeveloped countries to enhance living conditions and to help people become more self-supporting. In May 1986 and again in August 1987 Atlanta Friends shared potlucks of beans and rice, symbolic of meals in underdeveloped countries. As part of the fiftieth anniversary observance of FWCC in 1987, they hosted a Friend from Zimbabwe, who spoke at the forum following meeting for worship. That afternoon he accompanied some local Friends to the Atlanta Arts Festival in Piedmont Park.

Other Friends attended regional meetings of FWCC. At one such gathering in Greensboro, North Carolina, Dwight Ferguson suggested holding a combined conference of three wider Quaker organizations: FWCC, FCNL, and AFSC. This unique event took place in Atlanta in September 1986. The weekend workshop was entitled "Empowering Friends to Work for Justice and Peace." Lynn Leuszler, Free Polazzo, and Annie Worth, a sojourning

Friend from Hawaii, worked intensively to organize the program, which was sponsored by five yearly meetings, including SAYMA. Some 120 Friends from southern and eastern states attended the sessions at the Lanier Plaza Motel, which later became Holiday Inn Central. The keynote speaker was a Friend from Virginia, Miriam Levering, who, with her husband, Sam Levering, was a leader in the unsuccessful drive for an International Law of the Sea Treaty.

Every summer many Atlanta Friends looked forward to the annual gathering of FGC, which met on successive college campuses during the week of July fourth. As at SAYMA, some Friends camped in tents or recreational vehicles and others stayed in dormitory rooms. They shared their varied experiences through the many workshops offered and brought back to Atlanta insights gleaned from the participation of Friends with diverse backgrounds. Several Atlanta Friends participated actively in program planning for various FGC gatherings. In 1995 many Atlantans were pleased to attend FGC in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where former Atlanta Meeting members Steve and Becky Morehouse served as overall clerks of the gathering.

11

THE MEETING'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

At the heart of any Friends meeting is the meeting for worship. As an unprogrammed meeting, Atlanta Friends and attenders gather in silence—a "listening silence"—attentive to "the beyond that is within." William Comfort, for many years the president of Haverford College, called the Quaker method of worship "the most exacting of all methods in the demands it makes upon the mind and spirit" (*The Quaker Way of Life*, p. 27). In the silence, worshipers still the inner chatter of their everyday lives, seeking to attune themselves to "that of God within."

Another favorite Quaker author, Thomas Kelly, described what is called "a gathered meeting," one where a sense of love and light and unity pervades the atmosphere. He wrote: "A quickening Presence pervades us, breaking down some part of the special privacy and isolation of our individual lives . . . . An objective, dynamic Presence enfolds us all, nourishes our souls, speaks glad, unutterable comfort within us, and quickens us in depths that had before been slumbering" (*The Eternal Promise*, p. 86). In such a gathered meeting, spoken messages usually arise from "leadings of the Spirit."

Many meetings for worship do not attain this spiritual dimension. During times of national and political crisis, messages can seem overly didactic. On occasion, a recital of woes by some troubled individual seems to be more a plea for personal therapy than for a sharing of a Spirit-led message. Some worshipers are put off by biblical references and traditional Christian terminology. Sometimes too little time elapses between messages, so that the succession of speakers jumping to their feet results in what is called a "popcorn" meeting.

This vocal ministry, an essential part of a Friends meeting, has been a persistent concern over the years. The 1970 State of the Meeting Report observed: "Meetings for Worship have been unusually meaningful this year, with a good balance of silent and spoken ministry. Although at times the messages focus on social issues, with a rapid succession of speakers, most of the meetings are more worship-centered." Discussions in the late 1970s about the Meeting's form of worship brought the suggestion that Friends "consider entering the Meeting in silence and saving conversation for the coffee and tea time after worship" (business meeting minutes, February 20, 1977). In November 1978, half an hour was set aside for "meditation before worship," to foster a quiet attitude upon entering the Meeting (calendar, November 1978). However, most Friends could not refrain from happily greeting one another and talking when they arrived on Sunday morning, and eventually the half-hour of meditation was dropped. Again in 1995 Ellen Cooney introduced a quiet "preparation for worship" before Meeting. For some time she provided those gathering in the library with printed queries and quotations from the Britain Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*.

Concern about meeting for worship always has been present. In November 1983, Ministry and Counsel Committee wrote an open letter "to members and attenders of Atlanta Friends Meeting," which began: "A great many of you have come to Ministry and Counsel concerned about the vocal ministry of our Sunday morning Meeting for Worship." The letter suggested reading the Pendle Hill pamphlet, *On Speaking Out of the Silence* by Douglas Steere, and Howard Brinton's *Guide to Quaker Practice*. Throughout the years complaints have continued about the spiritual quality of messages. Fifth Sundays in the 1990s tended to focus on some spiritual need of the Meeting. For example, in the spring of

1996, one such special "meeting for threshing" took place to discuss the subject of vocal ministry.

In spite of such concerns, the Meeting has had many inspiring messages, and on occasion develops a theme weaving together the messages into what seems truly a "gathered meeting," with minds and spirits tuned to "the inner Light." Those worshipers who do not speak also contribute to the richness of the meeting by their silent presence week after week. The silence of such Friends is in itself eloquent. Ralph Spillman, that unassuming English professor, was a constant example of such a Friend. Arriving early on First Days, he took his customary seat beside the fireplace at Quaker House, setting the tone for those who followed him into the room. Another silent Friend was Irene Ferguson, who never spoke in meeting. Yet after the rise of meeting, no one was as diligent as Irene in greeting and welcoming newcomers and remembering their names.

Once in a while unforgettable worship experiences of an unpleasant nature occur. Chatting together at a women's group meeting in 1994, several old-timers recalled an especially bizarre meeting for worship one Sunday in the late 1970s. Plumbing in an upstairs bathroom was leaking, and water dripped through the ceiling onto Suzan Kenworthy's head as she sat holding baby Lauren. Near Suzan a woman was muttering in an audible whisper about her insurance agency. A middle-aged, homeless woman known to the Meeting began one of her lengthy speeches, talking in a shrill, didactic tone. Suddenly an ear-splitting scream erupted from a child who came bounding down the stairs and into the meeting room. The little girl had punctured her finger with a stapler in First Day school. The woman troubled about her insurance agency bolted out of the room, screaming, "They hate me! They hate me!" The speaker ended abruptly and rushed after the screaming woman. Although it was still early, meeting broke with a sense of relief.

Another amusing incident occurred one muggy summer Sunday. Quaker House was not air-conditioned, and even with the windows open, the room became so hot and stuffy that people wiped perspiration from their foreheads and tried to cool themselves with improvised paper fans. Peg Kaiser, seeking a little coolness, found a seat in front of an open window, where she might feel the few puffs of air drifting in from the shady yard. Deep

into the worship hour, a movement caught the eyes of some who faced Peg across the room. Peg could not see resident Joan (Thompson) Newland's cat, who during weekdays slept in the offering plate on the piano. The cat jumped silently from the roof to the fire escape just outside, then leapt through the window and landed on Peg's shoulder. Peg let out a surprised gasp and, flailing her arms, tossed the cat to the floor. The cat threaded its way through the legs of worshipers and fled the room.

Other distractions sometimes disturbed worship. When Friends moved from the sunporch into the living room to provide more space, latecomers slamming the front door and people milling in the hall created noisy distractions. Interior doors were then installed in the arched passageway between the hall and the living room. If the doors were closed when latecomers arrived, Friends were directed to go around the building to the outside door of the sunporch. As the Meeting grew, though, these late arrivals would fill even the sunporch. At one point, a public address system was tried to help those on the porch hear messages from the living room, but this proved to be unsatisfactory. No total solution was found until after the move to Decatur.

Meeting for worship traditionally ends when the clerk, or person designated to serve as clerk, initiates handshakes among those present. A new custom was introduced in 1970, described in the State of the Meeting Report: "The last few minutes of Meeting have been devoted to prayers and concerns for those in need, and the Committee on Ministry and Counsel feels that this has drawn members and regular attenders closer together in a new interest and concern for one another." Patricia Westervelt especially encouraged this custom, which became known as "Holding in the Light." Some Friends resisted this practice, while others felt that the Meeting just "faded away" without it (business meeting minutes, June 18, 1978). Lengthy descriptions of unhappy situations, illnesses, and the like were discouraged; but most people have felt the period of holding in the Light to be deeply meaningful rather than an empty ritual. Some of the objections were overcome when the announcement was expanded to invite people to express joys and gratitude, or to utter messages that had not "ripened" during meeting for worship.

Certain concerns have recurred over the years in connection with meeting for worship. Latecomers have been an ongoing

annoyance for many persons. In October 1981 meeting for business addressed this concern with the following minute:

> Friends are reminded that Meeting for Worship is the most significant event in the practice of the Religious Society of Friends. It is the occasion each week when most of us can gather together and open ourselves to the Spirit and to each other. It is essential to the well-being of the community that all of us attend regularly and arrive on time to participate fully in the Meeting for Worship. Recognizing that we may all, on occasion, have good cause for being late, to do so frequently introduces a divisive quality into the Meeting, which discourages the full development of messages and inhibits the experience of the "gathered meeting." All members and attenders are therefore urged to be regular and prompt in their attendance.

So persistent was this problem that in February 1985 a meeting for threshing was held specifically over the concern for latecomers. It was agreed that doors to the meeting room would be closed five minutes after the hour, opened at 20 minutes (later changed to 15 minutes) for children to leave for their First Day school classes and for latecomers to enter, then closed again until rise of Meeting. The practice has remained basically the same. While the Meeting was gathering temporarily at Horizons School, another problem arose. With no hallway where they could wait, those who failed to arrive on time sometimes had to wait in rain or mud or cold outside the gymnasium where meeting was taking place.

Following meeting for worship, visitors are introduced. This is followed by announcements, another source of unending frustration. As early as 1970, business meeting minutes observed, "the length of announcements is detracting from the worship experience" (business meeting minutes, October 18, 1970). The calendar/newsletter in November 1983 stated, "Announcements after Meeting are becoming a real problem. There are too many of them and they are too long. If you must make an important announcement of interest to most of those present, keep it brief and to the point, and avoid speechmaking." Especially unwelcome were verbal announcements about cats or dogs for adoption, apartments for rent, or workshops and concerts totally unrelated to the Meeting. These, it was agreed, should be posted on a bulletin board.

A practice that has found favor from time to time is that of placing brief announcements on a 3-by-5 index card, to be handed in advance to whoever is clerking the meeting. However, it proved difficult to control additional announcements. In 1996 the Meeting experimented for a three-month period with no announcements, except for those pertaining strictly to the Meeting itself, and all announcements were placed on a bulletin board in the hall. No consensus was reached on the matter, and brief announcements on 3-by-5 cards have been permitted. Some Friends express the feeling that announcements enhance a sense of community and help to identify individuals and the causes with which they are associated.

Another controversial matter has been music and the use of hymns. Many members and attenders come from church traditions where music has been an important part of worship. For a time in the early 1970s early arrivals clustered around the piano in the library at Quaker House and joined in singing hymns. After much discussion, the piano was moved into the meeting room, where singing just before Meeting seemed more a part of the service. Some described singing as an "effective prelude to an hour of worship together" (State of the Meeting Report, 1972). Others disliked it, and when a replacement pianist failed to volunteer, the practice was discontinued. For two or three years in the new meetinghouse, a few Friends again gathered around the piano in the library to sing hymns before meeting for worship, but this practice was never consistent. According to the 1980 State of the Meeting Report, a music committee was set up to deal with the matter of music as a part of worship. Among the various suggestions and experiments, the only one carried out for any length of time was regular group singing after meeting on fifth Sundays. This, too, was discontinued. Carol singing has always been a part of Christmas parties, and occasional music programs have been introduced into other scheduled events.

As the Meeting expanded, some Friends wanted to have a smaller, more intimate meeting for worship. Occasionally this wish for a smaller meeting led to scheduling an early gathering before the regular 10 A.M. one, but this created problems. First Day school schedules presented complications, and people miss visiting with one another during the coffee time after Meeting.

For several years in the mid-1980s, a number of those preferring a smaller meeting assembled at Kathy Johnson's "Casa Blanca." The nearness of this "little meeting" to Quaker House enabled those attending to walk down to the larger meeting in time for announcements, coffee, forums, and meeting for business. During 1979 and 1980 Friends experimented with a Wednesday evening worship group, which for a while drew as many as 15 people (State of the Meeting Report, 1979). Midweek Friends Meetings took place in the 1980s at Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Atlanta. They were shifted to the new meetinghouse in the early 1990s, then moved to the AFSC office on Piedmont Avenue in 1996, where more people who worked downtown could attend. In the new meetinghouse, those wishing a smaller worship group regularly met in the library at the same time as meeting for worship in the large meeting room.

By 1993, the State of the Meeting Report commented, "It's been a long time since the Meeting could fit into the sun porch of the Fairview Road Meetinghouse; and our present Meeting room [on West Howard Avenue], beautiful though it is, can be intimidating when filled with so many worshipers. We can feel the Presence of the Spirit when two or more are gathered—but what about 200?"

Deepening Spiritual Dimensions

Always there has been a desire for more opportunities to delve deeply into the meaning of Quakerism. The need for nurturing the Quaker tradition was fostered through the Quiet Days which John Yungblut held, through the Faith and Practice suppers and Friendly Dialogues of the 1960s and 1970s, and through workshops, retreats, and guest speakers. "A need was felt for more opportunity for adults in the Meeting to share and examine their basic religious beliefs," said the State of the Meeting Report for 1980. The following year this need "was addressed by an ongoing discussion of Leonard Kenworthy's book *Quakerism*, a John Woolman study group, a daylong retreat, and midweek worship sharing. Our Quaker heritage lecture series continued with a talk on John Woolman and on Rufus Jones, each led by a highly qualified speaker" (State of the Meeting Report, 1981). Study groups called "Quaker 101" or Seekers' Series have attracted many

newcomers to a wider acquaintance with Friends. A Seekers' Series in 1991 attracted 70 participants (State of the Meeting Report, 1991). At various times Bible-study groups and discussion groups have supplemented this pursuit of the Spirit. The ongoing Monday evening Adult Discussion Groups often considered questions of Quaker beliefs and actions.

Meeting retreats have become another vehicle for this search for deeper meaning. The first record of a Meeting retreat was in July 1960, held at Quaker House. Guest speakers Paul and Louise Pfeutze from the University of Georgia led a study of the Gospels. In December 1981 a large group from the Meeting attended a daylong retreat at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, a Trappist center in Conyers, Georgia, on the theme: "Sharing Beliefs—Creating Community." In March 1983 John Yungblut returned to lead a weekend retreat called "From the Inward to the Outward." Another well-attended daylong retreat took place at the Glenn Memorial Education Building at Emory in 1984. Courtney Siceloff introduced weekend Gathered Meeting Retreats one spring, following his experience at a workshop led by Mary Hopkins at Friends General Conference. At his invitation, Mary Hopkins conducted weekend retreats for Atlanta Friends in 1988 and 1989. The practice continued, with retreats held in secluded woodland surroundings near Atlanta such as Ignatius House or Timberidge Conference Center. These retreats were led in turn by George and Elizabeth Watson (1990); Bob and Pat Lyon (1991); Arlene Kelly (1992); John and Penelope Yungblut (1993); Barry Morley and Pat Loring (1994); Mel and Beth Keiser (1995); and John Punshon and Johann Maurer (1996).

A series of informal Fall Family Retreats began in 1985 at Hard Labor Creek State Park. These served as much to build a sense of community as to deepen spiritual insights. Business meeting minutes for October 1987 commended the efforts of Cindy Stark Reid in facilitating a successful retreat at Hard Labor Creek, which became the location for subsequent such gatherings. Smaller groups sometimes meet at the Ferguson cabin on Lake Burton.

Another consistent effort to enrich Friends' knowledge and understanding of Quaker tradition has been the Meeting library. Throughout the years, and with various Friends in charge, additions to the library have focused on Quaker philosophy, history,

and enduring social concerns. From time to time specific donations to the library have honored the memory of individuals who have made significant contributions to the Meeting—for example, George Hendricks, who died in 1979, and Bill Shields, who died in 1995. Members and attenders are constantly encouraged to check out (and return!) books.

The Ministry and Worship Committee (formerly known as Ministry and Counsel) is the focal point for the spiritual health of the Meeting and for changes that take place. Although other committees are open to interested attenders, this committee is composed only of Meeting members, usually about 12 in number. Its primary concerns are meeting for worship, marriage, membership, and memorial services for deceased members. At times it has seemed a catch-all for many other responsibilities, as listed in Chapter Five.

When the Caring Committee was formed in 1978, it began to help Ministry and Counsel with its responsibilities toward members and attenders. Following the move to the new meetinghouse, the duties of the two committees were spelled out at a special meeting for business in July 1992. Ministry and Counsel was renamed Ministry and Worship, and the Caring Committee became Care and Counsel. The division of work between them was defined in the following description:

> These two committees have a common purpose—to help build and maintain a community which unites all in the Meeting in a shared spiritual life, and which inspires all to walk in the Light. Ministry and Worship is concerned primarily with what happens when the Meeting gathers for worship or business. Care and Counsel is concerned primarily with the spiritual well-being of the Meeting's individual members and their connection with the community.
>
> All in Meeting are called to care for one another and for the Meeting. The two committees described here foster and focus that caring in a spirit of commitment and love. Their common purpose is central to the life of the Meeting.

"Clearness committees," which deal with specific situations and relationships, are a responsibility of these committees. Ministry and Worship has continued to name clearness committees for persons planning to marry and for those applying for membership in Meeting. Care and Counsel has undertaken responsibility

for clearness on problems that individuals are having. The basic approach is never to give advice, but rather to help persons articulate and clarify the issues involved in a situation.

Care and Counsel took over administration of the Discretionary Fund, established in 1965 to provide "grants or loans to members or attenders who are in financial distress." Disbursement of such funds is on a strictly confidential basis and occurs after consultation among the applicant, the clerk of Care and Counsel, and two appointed members of the committee. Care and Counsel also assumed the responsibility for arrangements for memorial services at times of death. The committee carries on the task begun in the 1960s by Ministry and Counsel of maintaining a file of individual wishes concerning final illness and death, including simple burial or cremation. The committee also has continued the practice of presenting a candle and candlestick to Friends who are moving away, a custom initiated by Becky and Bob Lough when they first moved to Atlanta in the early 1980s.

Care and Counsel continues to take major responsibility for persons who are sick or bereaved, and to build a sense of community through the Friendly activities described in the preceding chapter.

Marriage Procedures Explored

Many marriages have taken place under the care of the Meeting. Marriage procedures are the province of Ministry and Worship, and certain problems have arisen through the years. No stranger case ever occurred than the so-called "ditto wedding" in 1973, involving a young couple who, in retrospect, were not ready for marriage. The clearness committee admitted that it had not been diligent in preparing them. The bridegroom lovingly spoke his vows. Then the bride, shyly beautiful in a homemade, gauzy white gown and wearing a crown of daisy chains that she had woven minutes before the ceremony, simply shrugged her shoulders and murmured, "Ditto." Those present at the wedding were aghast. Shortly after their wedding, the couple separated. Ministry and Counsel blamed itself and resolved never again to benignly nod approval to any proposed marriage under its care.

Marriage procedures generally follow SAYMA's *A Guide to Our Faith and Practice,* which Atlanta Meeting helped to write after

much lengthy discussion among the various meetings involved. Approved at the 1990 Yearly Meeting, the SAYMA document uses the term "marriage." However, a current of nontraditional commitment by couples was running through Atlanta Meeting even before that time. In December 1986 Janet Minshall Roache and Free Polazzo brought to Meeting their request for historic "right joining," a term used by George Fox in the 17th century, when Quaker "marriages" were not sanctioned by the English courts. Janet and Free did not want to file a county marriage license and were adamant that the term "right joining," rather than "marriage," be used. Janet explained their position in an article in *Friends Journal* (July 15, 1987):

> We wanted to make as full and deep a commitment to one another as two people could make—a spiritual commitment in the presence of God and our Friends to remain loving and faithful to each other. Both of us felt that State sanction or license was irrelevant to that commitment.

Janet pointed to the early Quaker belief that "right joining in marriage was God's work alone and could not be accomplished by priest or magistrate or anyone else."

After three long sessions with the clearness committee appointed to confer with them, the couple sent their request through Ministry and Counsel to meeting for business. Opposition quickly developed. Some felt that after questions raised in the Meeting's early days about the legality of Friends' marriages, ignoring the legal requirements now would jeopardize future alliances. Others wondered what message living together without legal grounds but approved by the Meeting would give young Friends. One person even used the term "adultery" and promised to leave the Meeting if it approved the joining. Following an intense, emotional meeting for threshing, business meeting in February 1987 approved the right joining under the care of the Meeting, at the same time urging Friends to examine further the Quaker process of marriage. The right joining, held March 10, 1987, was a ceremony created by the couple, a "blending of Quaker unprogrammed worship, Jewish prayers, and ancient women's traditions" (*Friends Journal*, July 1987). At this time Janet replaced her surname Roache, with her maiden name,

Minshall. She is a descendant of the Minshalls who came to Pennsylvania with William Penn.

Perhaps the wrenching discussion involved in right joining eased the way for a subsequent examination of same-sex marriage. Homosexuality among some members and attenders of Atlanta Friends Meeting had become generally accepted since it was first discussed in the early 1970s. By the late 1980s it became evident that the Meeting might be asked to approve same-sex marriages under its care. Momentum for gaining approval for such a step began in the Adult Discussion Group. Documentation from other Friends meetings that already had approved such action was explored. Adult Discussion Group participants talked convincingly with key people in the Meeting.

At the April 1990 meeting for business, Ministry and Counsel proposed a minute, stating: "The Atlanta Monthly Meeting affirms that the process of marriage under the care of the Meeting should be available to all individuals, including members of the same sex." The committee suggested a month of further consideration to acquaint the entire membership with the proposal. A forum was held to air possible concerns. Many were surprised by the ease with which unity seemed to be reached. One Friend was not sure that everyone was aware of the issue, in spite of publication of the suggested minute through business meeting and the newsletter. The following minute was approved in June 1990:

> The Atlanta Friends Meeting affirms our willingness as a Meeting to hold celebrations of loving commitment under our care. We intend to follow the same customary and careful process of arriving at clearness for any couple who should wish to unite under our care, regardless of sexual orientation, when one or both of these partners participate in our community. We are aware of the diversity of attitudes toward the term "marriage" and leave to the couple the characterization of their relationship—whether a celebration of marriage, commitment, or joining. The Meeting acknowledges the certificate signed by the couple and those present at the ceremony as the witness of Friends to the couple's spiritual union. Mindful that only the heterosexual couples among us have the right to legally sanctioned marriage and its privileges, the Monthly Meeting asks Friends, and particularly couples preparing for marriage, to examine how best to respond and bear witness to the inequalities still present in the legal system.

The Meeting discussed whether the minute should be given to various news media, and decided to submit it to three major Friends publications. The following month, Sandra Beer, assistant clerk, reported that she had informed the religion reporter of *The Atlanta Constitution* of the minute. Some qualms were expressed; but after a discussion "at length," the

> Meeting came to the following understanding: Consistent with the principle of One Standard of Truth, the Atlanta Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends conducts its business honestly and openly. All decisions of the Meeting are open to the public and general press. The Meeting welcomes news coverage of all of its activities, including the minute on marriage.
>
> On the other hand, we request that the press respect the privacy of individuals involved with some sensitive issues (meeting for business, July 1990).

Soon afterward the Meeting was asked to approve a same-sex marriage under its care for Karen Shaudys and Carol Wicker. A clearness committee was formed to meet with the couple, and meeting for business approved the marriage. However, in order to adjust to family plans, the marriage took place on December 31, 1990, at Horizons School, before the end of the customary waiting period. The clerk sent a letter of introduction for Karen and Carol to the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, meeting where they were moving. This event set a precedent for several same-sex marriages that subsequently took place under the care of the Meeting.

Failure to observe the waiting period proved to be a serious problem for many Friends. During the business meeting in March 1992, while discussing another marriage, an acrimonious debate broke out about marriage procedures in general. Feelings were hurt, and tears were shed. The young couple awaiting approval of their marriage were bewildered by the controversy that had erupted. However, they forgave Friends and had a beautiful wedding under the care of the Meeting. In the meantime, Ministry and Counsel was asked to reconsider marriage procedures under the care of the Meeting.

For the next six months, Ministry and Worship (so designated in July 1992) wrestled with this issue. Finally in January 1993, the committee outlined proposed procedures for marriage under the care of the Meeting, reaffirming a waiting period between the

request and the ceremony. Briefly, the process that was established requires a letter from the couple to the Meeting, through Ministry and Worship; a report to business meeting that such a letter has been received; appointment of a clearness committee; a report to Ministry and Worship by the clearness committee after meeting with the couple; approval of clearness by Ministry and Worship, which then reports to meeting for business. If business meeting approves, the Meeting then sets up an oversight committee to assist in plans for the ceremony. Thus the procedure requires two months or more to complete. Wedding invitations should not be ordered until final approval is given.

With changing attitudes toward traditional marriage, other variations have taken place under the care of the Meeting. In 1991 Perry Treadwell and Judith Greenberg held a celebration of commitment, rather than use the term "marriage." Bryn Houghton and Vince Brown celebrated a joining. Lynn Leuszler and Georgia Lord observed a ceremony of reaffirmation, as did John Ball and Sandy Mershon, both in 1996. The 1991 State of the Meeting Report said simply, "We rejoice in this wide variety of unions held under the care of our Meeting."

Meeting for Business

If Ministry and Worship is at the heart of the Meeting, the implementation of its decisions falls upon meeting for business. Quakers have a strong belief in their tradition of making decisions by consensus, more appropriately called "a sense of the Meeting." Yet there are times when this sense seems impossible to achieve. Strongly held and strongly expressed opinions can lead to lengthy and bitter arguments and hard feelings.

An individual objecting to a decision can "stand aside," recording only his or her disagreement. At times, however, no such yielding takes place; and no sense of the Meeting develops, thus precluding any action. It is incumbent upon the clerk of the Meeting to be sensitive to various feelings and opinions and to recognize when a time of silence may help to move the Meeting beyond consensus to what is referred to as "corporate discernment" of what Friends consider continuing revelation.

After meeting for business shifted in October 1967 from Sunday evenings and settled upon the third Sunday of the month

after meeting for worship, attendance greatly improved, and many more people took part in Meeting for Business. Discussions continued to drag on and on; and certain controversies, such as the place of music in worship, seemed impossible to resolve. The State of the Meeting Report for 1981 expressed "a concern that Business Meeting be conducted in a more worshipful manner, with less talking and more listening." Friends were asked to "seek recognition" from the clerk and to stand when speaking. Issues increasingly were referred to committees, which then reported their recommendations. Meeting for business was opened by the reading of a query from one of the versions of Quaker *Faith and Practice*, followed by the customary silence which opens Friends meetings. The name "meeting for worship for business" was also adopted to encourage a more worshipful attitude toward the business to be transacted.

Nevertheless, such controversies as described over marriage procedures, or subsequent divisions over establishing a Friends School, continued to cause great dissension from time to time. The June 1987 calendar contained a response from the Adult Discussion Group, trying to focus on the spiritual quality of meeting for business. Workshops on clerking and conflict resolution were scheduled, and persons attending the 1987 fall retreat at Hard Labor Creek returned with a series of queries attempting to focus the diverse opinions expressed.

Topics on the customary agenda at any meeting for worship for business include reports from Ministry and Worship, the meeting treasurer, Religious Education, Social Concerns, Oversight, and other committees, as needed, along with special topics under consideration. The Oversight Committee has become an important group, supervising use of the building and needed repairs, relations with the resident, and emergency matters that arise.

Defining Membership

Over the decades, the issue of membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting led to many discussions and rewriting of guidelines, never staying settled for long. Guidelines for membership written in 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984, 1986, and 1994 have survived.

Although some individuals have thrown up their hands in frustration and even have suggested that the Meeting have no official membership, Atlanta Friends have chosen to grapple with the issue, rather than give up on the concept. Historically problem areas have been types of membership offered, procedure for becoming a member, membership of children, membership statistics for SAYMA, what to do about inactive members, and keeping permanent records of members.

Decisions of the Atlanta Meeting, especially regarding membership for children, reflect some of the confusion through the years. This was due partly to the growing number of new participants (members and attenders) who felt an urgency to move ahead in the light of immediate circumstances, rather than to adhere strictly to *Faith and Practice* guidelines. The Meeting's ambivalence also reflects the larger Society of Friends' questioning of "birthright" membership.

When the Atlanta Meeting became official in 1951 its original *Faith and Practice* was written. At that time there were only adult members. As children of members were born, they were considered members of the Religious Society of Friends. By 1963 Friends generally were examining this practice; and Philadelphia *Faith and Practice*, in its 1961 revision, stated that the recording of birthright children "may be waived at the request of parents who oppose the rule for reasons of conscience." It advised that children of 12 and over could then apply in the same way as adults.

Atlanta Friends debated at length the procedure for children's membership. The procedure adopted January 16, 1994, allows parents who are members to list their children under 12 as associate members if they so desire. Children 12 and over, as they approach maturity, may decide for themselves whether they wish to become full members; and, if they wish to do so, they are to follow the same procedure as adults. This requires a letter to the monthly meeting requesting membership, as previously described.

During the Meeting's first 25 years, contrary to Friends' traditional practices, keeping accurate records of members was not given high priority. After 1970, when SAYMA became the official yearly meeting, each SAYMA meeting was assessed a certain per-member fee. This forced Atlanta to look more carefully at its

roster. Each year Ministry and Counsel had to make a determination of its members and to make a corresponding contribution to SAYMA. But it was not simple. Atlanta Meeting had many full-time participants who were not official members. To be fair, the SAYMA estimate should reflect the number of members and regular attenders. This calculation process became increasingly difficult. Ministry and Counsel realized that the Meeting was "paying for" a significant number of inactive members. The committee composed a form letter to send to those considered inactive, inquiring whether they wanted to remain on the roster or be dropped. The tone of these letters was criticized by some. Those who responded negatively or not at all were "released." Sometimes the dropped names were mentioned in meeting for business; most often they were not. In some years, more individuals were eliminated than were added to the membership roll.

No consistent method of keeping permanent records of members has existed, and there are large gaps in information. In 1975, Ministry and Counsel set up a membership book, using standard Quaker membership forms from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Most pages of that book have survived. In the 1990s Mary Zimmerman took on the task of updating membership records. She found that it was not always possible to fill in the gaps of information.

Janet Rinard and Emily Calhoun (Wilson), with help from Mary Zimmerman, began serious archiving of old Meeting records. Emily was an early Meeting member and professional archivist. These records are preserved in the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania), and in the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia). Janet made an enormous contribution in compiling and preserving records in an orderly manner, including two large albums of clippings, while she worked with the History Committee from 1993 to 1995 between sojourns in her native Oregon. The History Committee consisted primarily of Janet Boyte Ferguson, Janet Rinard, Elizabeth Hendricks, Peg Kaiser, Harry Lefever, and Claudia Stucke. For several years they worked on the Meeting's history, with significant assistance from Perry Treadwell, Jane Zanca, Mike Mykel, Paul Edenfield, and Pat Michaelson.

Religious Education in the Meeting

Many early challenges that faced the Meeting have remained fairly constant: adequate space and the use thereof, adequate numbers of volunteer teachers, appropriateness and relevance of curricula, and the diversity of spiritual experience and belief throughout the Meeting and within its many families. Despite changing times and larger numbers of young people in the Meeting, the mission of the Meeting's Religious Education Committee is much the same as it was 30 years ago: to give young people grounding in Quaker history and principles of worship and living, and to encourage strength and independence while fostering a sense of responsibility and community. Other challenges, however new, have sadly become all too common in the world, some of the most obvious being violence, teen suicide, and alcohol and drug use. Unfortunately, these problems confront all young people today, and Quaker children are not exempt.

Religious Education is not just about preparing for meeting for worship or membership in the Meeting; it is about the business of living a life guided by the Inner Light. The Religious Education Committee has implemented innovative approaches to balancing young people's needs for independence, experience, and guidance: Several Young Friends (middle-school and high-school age) are members of the Religious Education Committee. Thanks to the efforts of Karen Morris and Maggie Hasbrouck, in October 1996 Young Friends began their own monthly meeting for worship for business (for students in grades 3 through 12) following potluck after Meeting. During that first year, Anne Morris and Clare Stucke were co-clerks, Joshua Klein-Kuhn was alternate co-clerk, and Priscilla Ewen was recording clerk. An Oversight Board for Young Friends' Activities was also formed that year, with several Young Friends included as members of the board (business meeting minutes, September 1996): Maura McGuigan, Anne Morris, Wesley Morris, Clare Stucke, and Emily and Sarah Woodall. And through the simple joys of playing together, even the youngest children are helped to learn the crucial skills and values of cooperation, negotiation, respect, and concern for others. Duanne Kaiser has devoted her skills and energy to the spiritual nurturing of the Meeting's preschool-age children (in addition to organizing the children's summer program), year after year. And

Nita Hinely also faithfully has served for many years as caregiver to the infants and toddlers in the nursery.

Friends are always working to keep the Meeting experience alive and relevant for the Meeting's young people, which sometimes means experimenting with traditional procedures. For years it was the custom to keep children in meeting for worship for half an hour, approximately half the time allotted for silent meeting, with the idea that a shorter period would not allow sufficient time for centering down. After consideration, it was decided that the midpoint break was too disruptive and that the half hour set aside for First Day school was not enough (and that, for some children, 30 minutes of silence and trying to keep still was too much!). So, in the late 1980s, the practice was changed to have the children in silent meeting only for the first 15 minutes. In 1993, at the suggestion of Jeremiah Gold-Hopton and others, the Religious Education Committee received Meeting approval for its present practice: On the first First Day of each month only, the children leave their First Day school classrooms and quietly enter the already centered meeting for the final 15 minutes and remain until the end of the worship period, thereby experiencing a settled, contemplative meeting, the "holding in the Light," and announcements at meeting's end. And, since first First Days are customarily potluck meetings, the young people can be included in the huge circle that wraps around the entire meeting room following meeting and preceding the community meal. (On all other First Days, children attend meeting only for the first 15 minutes, then go to their classrooms.)

The Religious Education Committee has held forums to encourage input from parents (and others) into children's religious education and to discuss such topics as the appropriateness of Bible study, diversity of belief among Meeting families, etc. Betsy Eggers, assisted by Linda Garrettson, conducted several successful workshops to train First Day school teachers. The committee has also struggled with the question of how Friends can refer to God without using gender-specific pronouns or the impersonal "it."

Religious education, however, is not all serious business. Children of all ages attend fall retreats, children's weekends at the Ferguson Cabin, SAYMA, and Friends General Conferences. Young Friends travel to youth retreats with other meetings. Vol-

unteers from the Religious Education Committee traditionally have organized the intergenerational Christmas party, where Friends contribute warm mittens and hats for those in need, and gather to sing carols, eat chili, and make holiday decorations. Sometimes Friends decorate outdoor trees and shrubs with edible ornaments (such as popcorn garlands and seed-covered pinecones) for the birds. This tradition began at Quaker House and has continued to the present day—even while the Meeting was temporarily housed at Horizons School, where a living Christmas tree was planted in the backyard, a gift of thanks for leasing space while the new meetinghouse was being built.

It is not an exaggeration to call the new meetinghouse "the house that the children built." Although they did not actually participate in its construction, their increasing numbers and needs certainly contributed to the decision to relocate to more spacious quarters: The number of children in the Meeting increased from 48 in 1965 to 120 (and growing) in 1996.

Like children of other religions, Quaker children embrace some of their faith's ideals more readily than they do others. For instance, "simplicity" is fine when it means wearing comfortable clothes; it's not such a welcome notion when it translates into, "You can't have a TV in your room" or "No, we're not getting Nintendo for the meetinghouse."

Perhaps, as activist and pediatrician Benjamin Spock suggests, it is the appeal of the forbidden fruit. Peace, for example, is a traditional Quaker ideal. But sometimes Quaker children seem almost fascinated by violence. Young people sometimes enjoy talking about the films that they aren't permitted to see; and whether or not they are allowed to play them, children sometimes rationalize the violent content of some video games with the "good-over-evil" argument (giving the teacher or parent an opportunity to point out that this same argument is used to justify the waging of war). Even when presented with a Bible story, children sometimes go right for the gore. Georgia Lord observed that, when her class of late-elementary-school-age children reenacted the story of Moses in the bulrushes, she was overwhelmed by the number of volunteers eager to play the parts of Egyptian soldiers who slew the Hebrew infants.

The Meeting's young people have taken advantage of a variety of service projects, both within the Meeting and without. Ten-

year-old David Leuszler designed the Meeting's first Web page, giving the Meeting greater access (and accessibility) in coming to terms with the Information Age (business meeting minutes, August, 1996). Young Friends have spent several work weekends at Penn Center on South Carolina's St. Helena Island, led by Althea Sumpter (who grew up in the Penn Community), Karen Morris, and Jeremiah Gold-Hopton. Many young people have taken part in recycling programs, donating the proceeds to a local day care center for the children of homeless families. Elementary-school-age children eagerly share their considerable talents and energy by making colorful greeting cards to send to people in Meeting who would appreciate a little more Light in their lives.

The Young Friends make and sell sandwiches and health-conscious snack foods before the monthly business meetings, a practice that not only raises money for Young Friends' activities but also raises blood-sugar levels and probably contributes to a more harmonious business meeting. These are just a few examples of how the Meeting benefits from its young people's taking an active role in their community and how vital the children are to the life of the Meeting.

Looking to the Future

The enthusiasm of the Meeting's young people attests to the ongoing vitality of Atlanta Friends Meeting. This renewed energy seems a fitting outgrowth of the new meetinghouse. The old familiar faces were gradually disappearing from the old familiar benches. A new leadership, no less dedicated and vigorous, was taking over direction of the Meeting's affairs.

Still the question raised in meeting for business in November 1996 presents a recurring challenge: "Have Atlanta Friends lost their vision?" Historically they had risen to many a challenge over half a century. In 1951 the little fledgling group became officially a Friends meeting. In 1959, as the civil rights crisis loomed in the South, with nationwide support they boldly purchased Quaker House to establish a regional center for traditional Quaker concerns over race and segregation. In 1970 they created an exemplary draft counseling service for conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War.

Ensuing years found Atlanta Friends as groups or individuals pioneering in community action and tax resistance. With U.S. government pressure on Central American peoples, they declared the Meeting a sanctuary for persecuted refugees. They dared to sell Quaker House when it no longer met their needs. Although homeless, they embarked on construction of a new meeting-house. Many members helped to establish a Friends school embodying peaceful lifestyles and humanitarian concerns. They affirmed the right of homosexuals to marriage ceremonies and carried out a Listening Project to help bridge local barriers toward acceptance of persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

Where will that "leading of the Spirit" in which Friends believe take them next? Perhaps they will continue to struggle with the question that John Yungblut, as program director of Quaker House, posed quixotically 30 years ago: How can we be "at once a school of contemplation and a hotbed of nonviolent revolutionaries?" With some trepidation but no little excitement, Atlanta Friends face the challenges of the approaching millennium.

SOURCES

(taped interviews and reminiscences)

Diary of George Hayes, dating from 1943

"Boyte interview, 1977": Janet Boyte (later Ferguson), interview with Emory and Margaret Via, Bob and Patricia Westervelt, and George Hendricks

"Berea tape": Tape made at Friends General Conference in Berea, Kentucky, 1981, with John Yungblut, Dwight and Irene Ferguson, and Betty Burford

"1985 reminiscences": Tape made at Quaker House, 1985, recording reminiscences of Don Bender, Emily Calhoun, Dwight and Janet Boyte Ferguson, Alvin and Martha Gaines, Elizabeth Hendricks, Peg Kaiser, and Ralph Spillman

"Treadwell interview": Perry Treadwell's interview with John Yungblut in Virginia, 1988

"Rinard interviews": Janet Rinard's interviews in 1993 and 1994 with various members and attenders, including (but not limited to) Don Bender, Mike Mykel, Joan Thompson, Perry Treadwell, and Harriet Treadwell (Unfug) (dates are given when known)

"1994 reminiscences": Notes from reminiscences of Friends gathered at the home of Harry Lefever in 1994: Elizabeth Hendricks, Peg Kaiser, Janet Ferguson, Harry Lefever, and Bob and Patricia Westervelt

"Ferguson interviews": Janet Boyte Ferguson's interviews with various members and attenders; various dates

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Quakers traditionally have sought solutions other than war for conflicts. They have opposed slavery in many forms. In the midst of World War II, in what then was the racially segregated city of Atlanta, Georgia, a small group began what would become the Atlanta Friends Meeting. A decade later the U. S. Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation plunged them into the Civil Rights movement. Quakers throughout the nation contributed to the establishment in 1959 of a Friends Center in Atlanta, with the fledgling Meeting as its nucleus. Atlanta Friends were among the earliest supporters of Martin Luther King, Jr., in the community, and pioneered projects in school desegregation. During the Vietnam War, they were the focal point in the Southeast for a draft counseling service. Since those days the Meeting has moved from Quaker House, its initial sedate Tudor home, to its present modern meetinghouse. This is the story of that evolving Meeting.

"Here we shall raise our Meetinghouse as a sanctuary and hospice, where all may be welcomed and affirmed in simple dignity, and where our children and their children after them may grow in their faith." Covenant for the New Meeting House 4/8/90

—Tom Bertrand

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