

History of Memphis Friends Meeting: Part I (1950's- early 80's): A Compilation (by Robert L. Pugh, May, 2006)

Where is the container of the past-- of memory--for the off-and-on fifty years of Memphis Friends Meeting (MFM)? It's in each Memphis Friend who's joined in the experience of the Divine in her/his own very solitary, interpretive way and in the group experience of worship sharing. If you're reading this, you're likely part of the container.

Still, the memory container is full of holes. It loses far more than it keeps. It can be imagined as a net, where... "one finds it full of fish taken from the brook; but a dozen miles of water have run through it without sticking (Oliver Wendell Holmes)."

Recently, I've enjoyed casting a history net. From Friends Historical Libraries at Guilford and Swarthmore, I've been reading minutes of MFM. These minutes of meetings for worship attending to business are our carefully constructed literary memory containers.

What am I finding? To some extent, the process of "looking" at history is not rational, as each of us carries a unique "looking" frame that emphasizes and deemphasizes material. In an attempt to minimize such interpretation, I've tried to report and compile more than summarize.

This lengthy "report" may minimize several processes of-- and influences on-- the Memphis Friends in the 1950's and 1960's. The energy of discussion after discussion of where to locate meetings for worship, the feelings and disruptions around the very frequent departures of more than the majority of Memphis Friends, the geographic isolation MFM felt in the wider Quaker world, the frustrations around unity so seldom being found when social issues were brought to meetings for business (MfB's), concerns about "better provisions" for MFM children-- all of these may not be fully captured by this outline. The members who had been Quakers at other meetings in various regions of the United States (Chicago, Ohio, Indiana, New York, etc.) likely brought their biases on "what and how a Quaker is," perhaps bringing the historical residual tensions between Hicksites, Orthodox, Gurneyites, and Wilburites. Also, societal tensions and confusions around racial injustice and inequality, around fears of Communism and fears

of nuclear arms race destruction, around the Viet Nam War—all existed. And the unspoken, even subconscious tensions around gender inequity and social class inequity—all may have had influence in this small Quaker group. In the April, 1960 MfB, it's noted "It was recognized that although we are deeply concerned with the issues centering on peace and human relations, we are not united on basic Friends or Christian testimonies." While they may not have been, the small, frequently changing group of the fifties and sixties kept alive the Quaker way of experiencing the Divine, and despite several temporal breaks, it still is.

The minutes of MfB don't include the "dozens of miles of (divine) water" that have run through MFM. Yet, at the risk of using too many quotes, "all water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was (Toni Morrison)."

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Important dates

11/11/54 worship group began

9/22/57 MFM becomes a monthly meeting under Friends World Committee for Consultation, at a dinner at Hotel Chisca (29 charter members were recorded, 17 of them adults, 7 adults were new members of the Society of Friends, Attendance was 39, including visitors).

8/13/67 The final meeting disbanding MFM (until the early-70's), with four attending. The library was sent to Earlham School of Religion, \$1000 was sent to "The Meeting House Fund" at Friends General Conference, \$353 was sent to AFSC.

Names of members and attendees (with some associated information):

Ruth Mae Hudson **Churchill** and Arthur Chester Churchill (moved away around 1960, to Knoxville and then Moorehead, Minn., but still officially members of MFM in 11-64) and their four daughters, Kathryn Churchill, Marilyn Churchill, Jean Churchill, and Cynthia Louise Churchill; Margaret Callender **McCulloch** (did not reside in Memphis in 10-57 because studying at the University of Virginia, returned in Fall 58; her certificate was received from the Montclair MM just prior to the 1-22-59 MfB; started a Quaker worship group in Nashville in 1941 at Scarrett College) (*footnote 1*); Paul Ralph **Coppock** (from Chicago Monthly Meeting) and Gladys Black Coppock (*footnote 2*); Alice Rene **Deutsch** (born in Vienna, Austria in 1908, "no record of membership at Buffalo, NY, Meeting" on her MFM record, which has uncertain implications); Douglas **Hinds**, his mother, Mrs. M.E. Hinds, his sister, Patsy Hinds (moved away around 11-64); William Alton **McClellan** and Alice Heide McClellan, and their children, Susan Lynn McClellan, Alice Heide McClellan (transferred in from Elk MM, West Elkton, Ohio, moved to Milwaukee, Wis. in 1959 to work at Milwaukee County Hospital, I suspect); Fred **Binford**; Marguerite **Bicknell**; Marshall **Wingfield**; Grace and Robert **McKee**; Esther Leib **McCandless** (transferred in to MFM from Germantown MM, Philadelphia PA; moved away Fall 59 to Buffalo NY and transferred to Orchard Park MM on 10-19-61; she was our first clerk, born 1923), Clarence Edwin **Barker** and Monimia Hoak Barker (transferred in from Miami MM, Waynesville OH; moved away "the week

after Easter, 1958” to Vienna, Va., and then to N. Linthicum, Md. in 1961), their four sons, Charles Nicholas Barker, Bruce Allen Barker, Gary Wayne Barker, and Seth Edwin Barker, and their daughter, Rebecca Louise Barker, who became a birthright MFM Quaker on 2-14-57; Virginia Thomas **Schaefer** and Milton Pledger Schaefer and their two sons, Milton, Jr., and Frederick Swain Schaefer (not involved after 1-64); Myrtle Elizabeth Corliss **Nash** (transferred into MFM in 1957 from Schenectady MM, Schenectady, N.Y., was in the Rhodes College Psychology Dept. while in Memphis; in 1960, moved to Converse College, Spartanburg, SC; her husband died 11-1943) and her son, Patrick Corliss Nash, born 5-1944; John Tulon **Nix** (joined MFM 1957; in 4-1961, he left MFM and joined another denomination); William Waddy **Oursler**, Jr. and Francis Clark Burnet Oursler (moved away in June 59 “to practice half time in Winter Park, FL; Waddy was a dentist); Job Adkinson and Lucille Sutton **Conrow** and their son, J.A. Conrow Jr.; Rowland Merlin **Hill** and Barbara Charlotte Lessing Hill, and their children, Michael Merlin Hill, Rowland Albert Hill, and Patricia Barbara Hill (Hill family moved to Tenn. Wesleyan College in Athens, TN in 1958 and in 1960 to Moylan, Pa., certificates transferred 10-19-61 to Chester MM, Pa.); Eldon E. and Betty **Hoose**; Carolyn and **Art Emery** (*footnote 3*); Carol **Bell** (began attending in 1965); Samuel and Clarissa **Cooper** (left in summer 57 to be at Friendsville Academy “for the coming year”, no sign they returned); Dr. Charles Wilcox **Sheppard** (admitted to MFM on 6-21-64); Dorothy LaVerne de Moure Hewitt and William Francis **Hewitt**, PhD (came from Evansville, Ind. MM, moved to Des Moines, Iowa, in summer, 1960, ending his tenure as clerk; Dr. Hewitt moved to the College of Osteopathic Medicine in Des Moines, Iowa, prior to a 11-1-1960 letter in our archives), and four children, Alice de Moure Hewitt, Meredith Monroe Hewitt, Rosalie Godfriaux Hewitt, and Willa Francis Hewitt; Sumner **Parker**; Ethel and Mark **Gilley**; Gladys **Pugh** (in 5-57, Ethel Gilley and Gladys Pugh shared a home together); Dr. Robert Nelson **Reynolds**, Bobbye Jones Reynolds, and their daughter, Mara Sigrid Reynolds (Sigrid born 5-29-59 as a birthright MFM Quaker; In 9-61, lived in Shaw MS where Robert practiced medicine after he finished his residency at Methodist Hospital in Memphis); Aden **Field**; Sally **Phelan**; Yasue **Sawaki** (“...our one foreign Friend, of Tokyo moved away 5-58 for medical residency in New York”); Ruth and Warren **Sawyer** (Ruth Sawyer left the city 8-59); Patsy Emma **Hinds** (membership begun 4-59 by convincement, resided at 1937 Harbert); Werner **Fabarius** (who planned to marry Hinds

under the care of MFM, but the engagement ended in Spring, 1961). Mrs. **Pearson**.

List of meeting locations

(note, many monthly meetings for business followed dinner at a Friend's home)

- 11-11-1954 home of Margaret McCulloch
- Then at Evergreen Presbyterian Church (room in Educational Bldg) on second and fourth Thursday nights.
- Then 3-1956, at Quintard House, the Episcopal student center at 822 Washington Ave., at 9:30 am every first day, until summer, 1957.
- 5-15 -1956, Rhodes (then Southwestern) Psychology Bldg.
- 9-22-1957 Hotel Chisca for MFM Monthly Meeting designation
- 12-22-1957 to 9-1965 Chi Omega House at Rhodes College (MFM paid \$15 per quarter for rent)
- 1-1966, 7-1966 at the University of Tenn. Center, Memphis
- Often met at home of Margaret McCulloch, including the first meeting of the worship group and the last meeting when the 1950s-60s MFM was laid down (11-11-1954, 11-20-1958, 3-1966, the 8-13-1967 final meeting). Her addresses were 858 Whitford Place and 415 S. Reese.

List of issues/ concerns/ causes addressed at Meetings for Business (MfB) (and excerpts from several letters)

(no Clearness Committee is mentioned; some minutes were both handwritten and later typed with the two versions slightly different at times; all month-year date designations (MM-YY) are from the MfB minutes unless otherwise noted; italicized notes are RLPs)

- decision to hold monthly business meetings with exception of June on the third Thursday or in case of conflict on the fourth Thursday in the homes of members (5-56 and 8-56). Meetings for worship were at Quintard House
- on 10/10/ 56, a formal inquiry of affiliation was made to the Friends World Committee (*see much later bold note**)

- discussions about having a meetinghouse or Friends Center (9-56); established a Meeting House Fund at 11-59 MfB)
- discussion and reaction to “a letter from the Group for the Duties of Conscience of Palo Alto Meeting was presented, asking that Friends, as individuals or as Meetings, write President Eisenhower asking for amnesty for conscientious objectors. Various points of view were expressed. The meeting was not in unity in wanting to write a letter from Memphis Friends, therefore the letter was left with the consciences of individuals to deal with as each Friend sees fit.” (10-56)
- concern brought up “that Friends were tending toward too much conformity in their interpretations of Quakerism and losing originality.” (2-57)
- decision made to have a meeting for worship on a weeknight evening, once monthly (2-57)
- searched for meeting rooms to rent for months in 1957, including running an ad in the newspaper, which read “Small religious group, 30 or 40 people, desires location for worship, two or three rooms.” (the ad ran March 31, April 1, and April 2, 1957)
- established a discussion group to study Quakerism (4-57). In 8-58, decision made for Quaker study group to meet the first and fourth Fridays of each month.
- “A letter from Syracuse Monthly Meeting, concerning the responsibility of Friends to express themselves in support of the peace testimony, by suggesting suitable action in opposing the present series of H-Bomb tests, was read. The Meeting considered the matter, and decided that it should be laid upon the individual conscience what action should be taken by Friends in Memphis.” (5-57)
- hosted various Quakers who came through Memphis, including 31 Friends from Little Rock, 2-58. Nazi concentration camp victim/ speaker, Mrs. Marie Jablonowska of Warsaw, Poland, who toured the country as a guest of the Ravensbruck Foundation, and stayed in Quaker homes was in Memphis 8-31-59 to 9-2-59 and she stayed with McCulloch while in Memphis. John Barrow from Austin TX and the South Central Yearly Meeting, 10-61. Norman J. Whitney, 3-65.
- there were months of discussion about a yearly meeting, while “Memphis attitudes settled into a feeling that geographic isolation from all yearly meetings was too great, and that we come from such diverse origins that connection with any specific group is inappropriate.”(Coppock’s history

written 11/20/60). *Note: MFM never joined South Central, Southwest, or any Yearly Meeting in the fifties-sixties era.*

-someone brought up query on smoking and the use of alcoholic beverages (but left for later discussion) (10-57); *no record of it being discussed a second time.*

-concern that children be made to feel an integral part of the meeting, with two efforts planned, i.e. “the use of aids to concentration for the smaller children, specifically the inclusion of something for them to look at in the center of the room, and the development of a concern to speak to the children in Meeting occasionally.” (12-57)

-First Day School classes were divided into one each for older children and younger children (1-58)

-John Fletcher, pastor and clerk of Knoxville MM, unprogrammed, visited 1-58, with “concern that isolated Friends Meetings such as ours and his should be brought into contact” (1-58). Later, In the 8-58 minutes, it’s noted that Fletcher was also concerned with the formation of a new Yearly Meeting.

-An AFSC “petition to President Eisenhower asking for cancellation of the nuclear weapons test was signed by individuals at the end of meeting.” While AFSC asked Monthly Meetings to support this with a written minute, MFM tabled it for further discussion. (1-58)

-“A letter from Kenneth Carroll, clerk of Friends Southwest Conference, asking us to join this conference which meets annually at Thanksgiving, and which is considering Yearly Meeting status, was read. We plan to invite him to visit us, as he suggested, early in the fall and to try to have somebody attend this conference. We also shall accept his offer of being put on the mailing list for their newsletter.” (5-58)

-Kenneth Carroll (see above) visited and met with MFM in 9-58. The minutes note “the problem of distances involved in affiliation with Friends Southwest Conference” (9-58)

-“Announcement was made of the Fellowship of Reconciliation Conference on “Christian Non-violence and Racial Tensions” to be held November second and third at LeMoyne College. A general discussion of Friends testimony in race relations followed, with particular reference to the effectiveness of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama.” (10-58)

-“The recent (nuclear) fallout in the Los Angeles area was thought to be pertinent situation for a letter to the President. The recent Geneva Peace

Talks seemed to be a step in the right direction. Esther McCandless, Fred Morrow, and Waddy Oursler were selected to write a letter on these subjects to the President, with copies to our senators and representatives.” (10-58)

-McCulloch “discussed the flux of members in a small meeting, referring to Nashville, the meeting going from three to thirty to two in several years.” (11-58)

-“A letter from Harold Chance (Friends Peace Service, AFSC) told of his visit among Friends in the West. He also spoke of the Quaker Peace Testimony. This brought up discussion of the effects of non-pacifists on peace, and the contrast between Christian and Gandhian non-violence. The difference between strategy and witness was touched on, and finally the discussion moved to the hazards often involved in social work.” (11-58)

-In the Community Activities Committee report at MfB, support for the Mary Wayne School was again discussed as well as this: “There is a need for lot maintenance of property purchased by YWCA for Negro branch on Mississippi. Also the Negro Church next to this, the Bethel Presbyterian Church, has purchased dwelling and lot adjacent, for Sunday School and activities, which need repairs. A discussion of the problems of a mixed male-female group working together followed. The feeling was that we aren’t trying to express all our concerns in one act and ignore social contacts. (Also) that more suitable projects for women could be sewing circle activities. The YWCA project offered a broader base to establish better communication of real benefit. The committee is to proceed along these lines.” “Two interracial organizations open to Friends interested in better race relations are: Tennessee Council on Human Relations (based in Nashville) and the Memphis Community Relations Council.”(1-59)

-“The annual Race Relations Conference of LeMoyne College is to be held April fourth and several members plan to attend.” (3-59)

-“Ruth Sawyer suggested a reading of Queries and Advices at the beginning of meeting for worship.” (5-59)

-“Esther McCandless mentioned the World Literacy Center here in Memphis. Virginia Schaefer has been active in this program, and Esther has been asked to contact AFSC about setting up a work camp program in this area.” (5-59). “Esther McCandless reported on a visit to members of the AFSC (in Philadelphia on June 26, 1959) to discuss their willingness and ability to undertake a project for the World Literacy Foundation. A local teenage program and/or a work camp are possibilities. The people at the Literacy Foundation have been asked to formulate a definite proposition

upon which the Service Committee can act. Members of the local meeting are interested in cooperating in this venture.” (7-59). In a report by McCandless describing the AFSC discussion of June 26, 1959, she writes: “It was recognized that in some learning situations the interracial aspect of the program would assist, in others, hinder. The question of lodging and meal planning for an interracial group in Memphis was raised, and this question will need to be answered for the AFSC to enter the scene. Is there a place in Memphis where Negro and white young people could be lodged together in safety? The usual work camp program includes time for work, worship, discussion and play together. Could this be achieved here?” (6-59) (*From minutes of 6-64, it looks like it did happen and MFM provided some support*)

-“The possibility of having a discussion meeting one or two Sundays after meeting was considered together with the possibility of studying the Bible rather than social action material. The clerk is to pole the members of the meeting to determine whether they prefer: (1) one or two meetings a month; (2) Bible study or other material.” (8-59)

-“J. Atkinson Conrow expressed his concern that the Society of Friends was no longer centering its attention on the conduct of its own members but was directed to telling others what they should do.” (10-59)

-“Fred Morrow reported that he had been named a consultant of the Southwestern Region of the AFSC and plans to attend their retreat on October 24 and 25 (1959). The meeting agreed to assume responsibility for his expenses in attending this meeting.” (10-59)

-“The clerk reported a concern of Margaret McCulloch for establishing a library in the newly opened home for dependent Negro children in Shelby County. The meeting decided to contribute \$25.” (10-59)

-“The finance committee reported that Friends have indicated that they expect to contribute \$1202 during 1960.” (11-59)

-“The meeting decided to send Myrtle and Pat Nash to the Southwest Conference at Livingston, TX, Nov 27-29 (1959) and to pay their expenses.” (11-59)

-“Margaret McCulloch’s concern about capital punishment was discussed. The clerk was instructed to ask Margaret to prepare a draft of a letter to the Commercial Appeal. (12-59). *This apparently was revised and sent, as later it’s noted* “the clerk passed around an anonymous letter received by Myrtle Nash in reply to the Meeting’s published statement on capital punishment.”

(1-60). The published Commercial Appeal letter was read aloud (again) at the MfB in 4-60.

-“Arrangements for the meeting to help collect clothing for needy (*African American*) children and adults in Mound Bayou, Mississippi were discussed. The meeting agreed to spend at least \$75 to help the Friends Southwest Conference carry out this undertaking.” (12-13-59) On 12-28-59, it was reported that “Milton Schaefer will arrange to have a truck pick up the clothing (being collected at LeMoyne College) and deliver it.” (12-59)

-“It was decided to discuss the Parables of Jesus twice each month, probably on the first and third first days.” (12-59)

-“Patsy Hinds and Werner Fabarius have asked to be married under the care of the meeting. If agreeable to Patsy and Werner the committee will be Virginia Schaefer, Alice Deutch, and William Hewitt.” (2-60) Robert Reynolds was made chairman of the Hinds-Fabarius marriage oversight committee.” (4-60) In a 9-9-61 letter from Myrtle Nash, she notes how Patsy Hinds’ engagement with Werner was terminated Spring, 1961, and that Patsy and her mother moved to a new home in August, 1961.

-“Announcement was made that the clerk has resigned because of poor health.” (2-60)

-“Beginning with the first Sunday in March (1960), first day school will be held each first day including at least, Easter Sunday. Then the frequency of sessions may be discussed once more. Several suggestions for material were mentioned: (1) Methodist adult Bible course of discussion type, (2) Material on life of Christ. The matter was referred to the first day school committee.” (2-60)

-Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas Friends met May 6-8, 1960 at Mount Magazine Lodge near Paris, Ark. The topic was “Simplicity”. (3-60)

-MFM established an Educational Assistance Fund to aid persons who wish to go to college. (4-60, 6-60) *It appears to have only been used for one student, a loan of \$1000 for Pat Nash.*

All of this is verbatim from the MfB 4-60 minutes (handwritten version)

“Fred Morrow led discussion of actions open to those concerned for peace and for relations between colored and white persons:

-Assembling and offering for the use of persons or organizations in the community, educational materials on non-violence in the achievement of social objectives.

-Aid in preparing a series of newspaper articles on nonviolence by James Lawson, hopefully for publication in the Press-Scimitar and as a booklet for civic groups.

-attendance at the 4/29/60 organization meeting of the Memphis Chapter, Tenn. Conference on Human Relations (an equal rights group), for information so that individuals and the Meeting can decide whether to support the Conference.

-Visiting the Mary Wayne School and advising them if they wish, especially with regard to the School's relation to S.U.N.

It was suggested that the Meeting emphasize contributions to means (methods) rather than to achievement of political goals. In this way the Meeting may be able to find unity within itself and with the greatest segment of the community. It was recognized that although we are deeply concerned with the issues centering on peace and human relations, we are not united on basic Friends or Christian testimonies.”

(4-60)

-“The clerk attended the 5/2/60 meeting of the Memphis Ministers Association. He was welcomed, although only full-time ecclesiastical workers are eligible for membership. The Association's Social Action Committee (E.V. Underhill, chairman) as part of its continuing assignment in race relations, recommended to Memphis ministers and congregations that they rededicate themselves in Christian love, and be calm and willing to investigate in episodes of tension. The clerk recommended that the Meeting continue to be represented at MMA meetings, that we should attend also the Negro ministers' organization, promoting closer relations between the two associations when possible; and that we try to reach an interdenominational lay group (e.g. a council of churches).” (5-60)

-“Some members or attendees participated in the fifth annual conference on intergroup relations, at LeMoyne College, 5/7/1960.” (5-60)

-“The action of the Friends worship group in Nashville, Tennessee, was discussed (see Friends Journal, 4/9/1960, p. 233). Our meeting may wish to contribute to Nashville Friends for their use in connection with racial tensions there. The clerk is to communicate with Hibbard Thatcher of the Nashville group regarding his possible visit to Memphis.” (5-60). (*Note in 5-2006, Thatcher is ill, but still one of the weighty Quakers of the Nashville Friends Meeting*)

-“Ministry and Counsel and Overseers brought to the Meeting their concern over the state of the Meeting...(namely) “...that repeated obstruction of the business of the Meeting by a small minority be seriously questioned. In a discussion of the state of the Meeting it was agreed that the Meeting can and should make public statements on matters of concern to Friends, as had been recommended by Overseers and Ministry and Counsel. If we actively and earnestly pursue a strategy, we are more likely to agree on tactics. Concentration on tactics, on the other hand, will lead and has led to disunity in our meetings for business. All the Meeting can agree—and those present agreed—that “Our concern is for brotherhood, equality and peace.” This could be the test of a public statement, under the heading, “FRIENDLY PERSUASION.” (6-60) (Present were 8 Friends- Hewitt, the Nashes, the Ourslers, Parker, and the Schaefers.)

-Studied, visited, deliberated, and then supported a nursery, the Mary Wayne Day Nursery School, which was the “largest nursery in the state for Negro children, with 63 children from ages two to six.” (*This was MFM’s main service project in the 50s-60s and usually amounted to \$200 a year: 1959, 1960*)

-agreed on “a stand against capital punishment” to be given to the Shelby County state legislators (1-15-61)

-to study/ evaluate Memphis Juvenile Court in comparison to other Juvenile Courts (4-1961), but nothing was done (6-61)

-to write Senator Gore and get more information about the U.S. surplus food program and consider the Fellowship of Reconciliation recommendation “to offer grain to famine-stricken Red China” (4-61). But the meeting wasn’t in unity & took no stand (5-61)

-When J.T. Nix joined another church, 3 Friends were asked to go and meet with him (5-61), but he was not interested in Friends visiting (6-61)

-lending \$1000 from an educational loan fund to student, Pat Nash, to attend the Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire (6-61, 3-66). At least her mother, Myrtle Nash, repaid some of this to the meeting. (In 1966, minutes note that so many previous minutes are missing from 1962-63, one can’t determine if the whole loan was repaid)

- a letter of thanks, 10-18-1961, from John Barrow (Austin TX) from the South Central Yearly Meeting, after he had visited MFM (to Patsy Hinds, who was clerk in 1961):

“I heard and I sensed some of the problems of your Meeting. You have more than your share. And when I was with Margaret McCulloch, I learned more details. I am certainly glad that I didn’t get away without seeing her, both for what she was able to tell me about the Meeting and for an account of her unusual work.”

“I am somewhat concerned about Aden Field. He seems to have a good idea of Quakerism and would make a very good member if he ever came to where he wanted to join. But he is not being exposed to a typical meeting or, maybe, one that can help him mature in Quakerism. I’m sure that you have this concern too and will do what you can. But you’re certainly up against a terrific job. I won’t forget soon; and if there is ever any way I can help, please call on me”

-a letter, 11-18-1961, from Myrtle Nash, implies meetings for worship are on alternate Sundays

-concern raised by Friends Southwest Conference about whether FCNL was “unwittingly supporting Communist efforts” in China, Cuba, etc.” (1-62)

(Note: No minutes yet found in period after 1-62 and before 2-64, but it appears there was no MfB between 4-62 and 2-64, from a comment in the 2-64 MfB minutes.)

-a letter, 12-10-1962, from Margaret McCulloch

-“Perhaps it may prove for the best that the Memphis Meeting has come to this numerically low point, so that the will to pretend to be more than we are may perhaps be faced with facts too obvious for even the most determined worshipers of “The Image” to keep up such pretense. For surely until pretense is gone the Holy Spirit cannot enter.”

“The few that are here plan to meet one Sunday a month for worship at the sorority house at Southwestern where meetings have been held. I do not know whether they will carry out this plan. I continue to pray for them and for all that Friends stand for and to wait quietly for more leading or opening.”

“Meantime I continue in active worship and membership at the little nearby (Negro) Presbyterian Church where I had joined with approval of my

home meeting before the Memphis Meeting began. It is good to see it quietly growing with reverent and sensible people who now fill it to capacity every Sunday and overflow on occasions.”

“Memphis is in a kind of slack off in “race relations” at the moment. For one thing, so many objectives have been obtained so fast. For another, I think the University of Mississippi explosions have made members of both races here very content with a bit of quiet, peaceful consolidation of progress already made. Saturday I was invited to lecture briefly to a graduate seminar in education on Community Organization. It was a pleasant occasion and a number expressed their interest in what was to them “a new world” of knowledge about the very city they live in.. I was interested to see many Negro teachers taking advantage of this opportunity of Saturday classes to further their graduate study and to see how normally and amiably they were treated by the white students. Taxicabs have just recently been desegregated and I rode in on a Negro cab.”

-a letter, 2-24-63, from Margaret McCulloch:

-It’s clear MFM chose not to be part of South Central YM

-notes how “the very smallness of the (MFM) group here and its pathetic struggles gave a family like feeling...”

-“Peter Lippman of S. C. AFSC office has been here to see about the possibilities of Quaker Work groups here this summer. This is still undetermined so in the confidential stage...”

-Meeting for worship is once a month, first Sunday, 9:30 am at Chi Omega House.

-Virginia Schaefer is officially clerk in this 2-63 period

-“Due to the withdrawal from active participation of Virginia and Milton Schaefer, a new treasurer was chosen to replace Milton Schaefer. Charles Sheppard was appointed by the meeting to be our new treasurer.” (2-64)

-the “Southern Committee of AFSC” had a summer program/ work camp of some type in Memphis in 1964, which MFM contributed to (6-64)

-contributed to burned churches in Mississippi, but later was concerned about “the dangers of building more segregated churches and the fragmentation of building more small churches.” (1-65). Then two Friends decided to go to Jackson MS to see the situation firsthand before MFM would make contributions. (2-65). Charles Sheppard did go prior to 7-65 &

gave a report to meeting. On 9-65, it was decided to give up to \$50 to the Committee of Concern in Jackson, MS.

-Wrote a statement on Quaker Peace Testimony (2-65), sent it to congressmen and senators (4-65), and hosted Norman J. Whitney to come to Memphis for a discussion of Friends Peace Testimony on 3-3-65; however a blizzard kept many away. Whitney was a board member and National Secretary for Peace Education for AFSC, also directed the Syracuse NY Peace Council for 20 years. One Memphis Friend, Art Embry, went to Washington and had some contact and confrontation with “our senators and congressman” who “seemed to feel that they could do little more than follow the leadership of the President at this time.”(5-65)

-discussed and agreed with the actions of Art Emery’s 30 day fast “to protest the U.S. War in Vietnam...with the exceptions that he not knowingly carry the fast to the point it becomes detrimental to his health and that members of the meeting are opposed to the military involvement of all parties in the war in Vietnam as well as the United States.” (1-66)

-Provided \$50 towards travel expenses for Carolyn Emery to attend Friends Conference and Peace Vigil in Washington, DC in February 1966. Charles Sheppard attended this too.

A leather record book was bought, likely with this opening page:

“Be it recorded that members of the Society of Friends and others living in Memphis, Tennessee have been meeting for worship after the manner of Friends for three years and have applied to Friends World Committee for recognition as a Monthly Meeting. Friends World Committee has sent Joseph Karsner and Robert Wixom to consult with us and has felt us ready to assume the responsibilities of a Monthly Meeting.

Therefore, on 22 September 1957, in company with Raymond and Sara Braddock and John Eliot, appointed by Friends World Committee to be with us at this time, we are accepting the responsibilities which the status of a Monthly Meeting involve.”

Committee structure

The committee structure established at the October 24, 1957 business meeting:

-Overseers (met with people who wished to be members of MFM)

- Committee on Ministry and Counsel
- Finance Committee
- First Day School Committee
- Quaker Study Group Committee
- Meeting Place Committee
- Community Activities Committee

Clerks

Esther Leib McCandless (mid-1956 to Oct 58)
 Waddy Oursler, Jr. (Oct 58 to May 59)
 Myrtle Nash (June 59 to Feb 60; resigned because of health problems)
 William F. Hewitt (Mar 60 to July 60 when moved to Des Moines, Iowa)
 Sumner Parker (July, 1960 until March, 1961)
 Patsy Hinds (1961)
 Virginia Schaefer (1962-63)
 Eldon E. Hoose (Jan 64 until 7/17/66) (The meeting loaned him \$175 from the Educational Loan Fund and it was to be repaid by Jan 1970. This was at his final meeting as clerk)

Number of people attending meetings

In 1954, 10 adults and 10 children involved, but sometimes only three, four or five gathered.
 When MFM becomes a monthly meeting on 9/22/57, 29 charter members were recorded, 17 of them adults, with 7 adults new members of the Society of Friends; Attendance was 39, including visitors).
 In a 1-60 MfB, 11 attended. In 4-60 MfB, 15 attended. In the final meeting in the sixties (8-13-1967), only three attended.

Annual Contributions/ Budgets

Contributions for 1957	\$ 849
Contributions/ Budget for 1958	\$502/ \$642
Contributions/ Budget for 1959	\$815 estimated/ \$642.50 actual budget
Balance, Dec. 31, 1959	\$ 317
Contributions pledged for 1960	\$1052

Receipts, 1960	\$1585	
Receipts, 1965	\$ 775	
Budget for 1966		\$650
Final balance in 8-1967	\$1353.41	

Newspaper article: “Strolling, with Eldon Roark,” 7-29-59:

“J.A. Conrow, 3541 Watauga, is a Quaker. While chatting with him this morning we got on the subject of religion, and he told me about the very satisfactory arrangements the local group has made. They meet every Sunday morning in a sorority house on Southwestern campus. They sit together for an hour, shake hands, and leave. No sermons, no speeches. No ceremonies. No collection. Sometimes a member may be moved by the spirit--“may feels a concern” about something--and may get up and say a few words, but that doesn’t happen often. And when it does, his remarks are brief.

“As they sit together in silence, they think about God, eternity, friendships, the wonders and beauties of nature, the poetry of life, kindness, humility--good constructive thoughts.

“Since you don’t have a sermon or any program, and since you just sit quietly, why do you go?” I asked Mr. Conrow. “Can’t you sit quietly and meditate at home?” “Yes, you could,” he said. “But the main point is you probably wouldn’t. There are so many distractions, so many things to do. By going to meeting, we are assured of a quiet hour in which to collect our wits and ease nervous tension.”

“He also pointed out that there is a fellowship of spirit in their meetings.”

Library

Patsy Hinds was librarian until she moved away after 10-64, then it was in the home of new meeting librarian, Charles Sheppard. When the Meeting was laid down in 1967, the library was sent to the Librarian, Earlham School of Religion.

Final meeting 8-13-67

Attending were Charles Sheppard of 7 N. Ashland Rd (acting clerk for the meeting), Margaret M. McCulloch of 415 S. Reese, Alice Deutsch of 45 S. Idlewild. The only other member of MFM “in good standing” was Myrtle Nash who had moved away to Dept of Psychology, Kiuka College, Kiuka

Park, NY. Total financial assets were \$1353.41. The decision was to send a check for \$1000 to the Meeting House Fund, Friends World Committee, and to send MFM records to the same body's records at Swarthmore Historical Library. Remaining funds were sent to AFSC. Books and pamphlets were sent to Librarian, Earlham School of Religion.

***Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)**

FWCC, founded in 1937, is the oldest organization whose goal is to bring Quakers with different views together (T. D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, 2003). *By choosing to affiliate with the unification-oriented FWCC, the young Quaker worship group of 1956 likely best accommodated to their "diverse origins" (as Coppock described them).* Friends United Meeting (called the Five Years Meeting between 1902 and 1965, concentrated in the Midwest, branched from the Wilburite Friends), Friends General Conference (founded in 1900 by Hicksite Friends), and the Evangelical Friends were all rather specific branches of the Religious Society of Friends. FWCC wasn't.

MFM chose not to be a part of a yearly meeting

Neither MFM minutes nor correspondence indicate that MFM ever joined a Yearly Meeting in this fifties-sixties era.

A 4-17-83 letter from Margret Hoffman, Austin TX, the archivist of South Central Yearly Meeting, or Southwest Conference as it used to be called, notes "I looked through our Yearly Meeting archives and could find no mention of this (MFM being part of SCYM)." A 2-24-63 letter from Margaret McCulloch also makes clear that MFM chose not to be part of South Central Yearly Meeting.

MFM did frequently deliberate over whether to join SCYM and was in correspondence with SCYM.

Relevant excerpt from Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (2003), p.62.

"Even as many older meetings declined, new ones were founded. These fell into two categories. One was made up of unprogrammed meetings and

worship groups, nearly all of them in urban centers or university towns. Such meetings had begun to appear in the 1920s and 1930s, but they exploded in number after 1950. They usually came into existence when a Quaker family moved to a place where no meeting existed. Friends, through an advertisement in *Friends Journal* or less formal contacts, found others interested in Quakerism. This core group would begin to meet either in a private home or in some other facility, often a Protestant church. Dozens of such meetings have been formed in the last half century, although not all have survived.”

Coppock’s early history excerpts from the 7-page history of Memphis Friends Meeting written by Paul R. Coppock on 11/20/60.

“There came to be a group combining Friends, the Wider Quaker Fellowship, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In the winter of 1948 a group from Nashville, led by Cecil and Fran Thomas, accepted an invitation to come to a Memphis gathering at LeMoyne College. A newspaper announcement brought out more prospective meeting members than any of them had thought were here, although Nashville visitors were more numerous than Memphis residents. Extended discussion of a regular meeting were fruitless. Margaret McCulloch had been active in this group several years and Paul Coppock attended the LeMoyne gathering.”

There were two other starts and stops in 1950 and then in 1951-52 of small groups meeting in homes.

“Changes began in 1954. Esther McCandless, who sometimes had gone from Memphis to Nashville to take part in Quaker worship, found other Friends in Memphis...A picnic was held, 10/17/54, near the home of Clarence and Monimia Barker attended by the six Barkers, ...Virginia and Milton Schaefer and their two sons, Paul and Gladys Coppock, and Esther McCandless.”

“This was quickly followed, 11/11/54, by a meeting at the home of Margaret McCulloch, at which there was a decision for regular meetings. Arrangements were made to use a room of the Educational Building of Evergreen Presbyterian Church, on the second and fourth Thursday nights.”

“The potential membership was 10 adults and 10 children...Sometimes only four or five gathered together, yet the group was more firmly established.”

“In order to meet every week and on First Day, arrangements were made for the use of Quintard House, an Episcopal student center then at 822 Washington. This allowed the beginning of the custom of meeting at 9:30 on each First Day during the Third Month of 1956, a custom that has continued.

“Passing months brought subtractions and additions for the little group...Several visiting Friends built up the feeling of an established meeting and Esther McCandless was made clerk.”

“In a business meeting, 10/10/56, with 11 adult Friends and eight attendees taking part, a formal inquiry on affiliation was made to the World Committee.”

“There were months of discussion about a yearly meeting. Memphis attitudes settled into a feeling that geographic isolation from all yearly meetings was too great, and that we come from such diverse origins that connection with any specific group is inappropriate. This was the feeling expressed in answering standard queries of the World Committee and in extended correspondence.”

The organization meeting of the new Memphis Friends Monthly Meeting “was held at the YWCA, 9/22/57, followed by dinner at Hotel Chisca. The World Committee was represented by Johan Eliot of Little Rock and Raymond and Sara Braddock of Waynesville, Ohio...29 charter members were recorded, 17 of them adults. Seven adults were new members of the Society of Friends. Attendance was 39, including visitors.”

“If diversity was strength then the Memphis Meeting would be unusually strong. We have a few representatives of families with many generations of Quakers and several convinced Friends. Those with previous Quaker associations look back to unprogrammed meetings and to pastoral churches, to the General Conference and to the Five Years Meeting. Some have lived in the South many years and others are newly arrived from other climates. There is some concern for brotherhood with Negroes and there is also concern for brotherhood with white Southerners. Both enthusiasm for

religiously motivated activity during each hour of life and the placid attitude are represented. For a portion of the membership this meeting is a center for worship and a potential center of social reform and for another portion the maintenance of a Memphis site for Quaker worship is a doubtful undertaking requiring the full use of our abilities. Sometimes the differences seem too much for such a small vessel to contain.”

“While other meetings have some degree of the handicap of members who arrive, carry a heavy part of the responsibility and suddenly depart to another part of the map, the Memphis meeting is especially influenced by incoming and outgoing of college and university teachers. The even tenure of farm families in rural meetings, or of city meetings where numerous Friends long have been established, is unknown to this group.”

1970's-early 1980's

-a 11-7-84 Letter from Nelson Fuson:

In early 70's, MFM "sprung up again as a worship group, then as a Preparative Meeting under the care of Nashville Monthly Meeting, with the Nashville committee of contact, for a number of years, being Tina Coffin, Hibbbard Thatcher, Nelson and Marian Fuson. "In the last couple of years (1982-1984), their group has dwindled again and I'm not sure whether they are meeting or not."

(If Fuson's "early 70's" statement is accurate, and if Ruth Boaz's "early 1984" statement is accurate, then there's been a Quaker presence of some type in Memphis since the mid-1950's except for the period between 1967 and the early 70's.)

In Mina Fields Johnson's reflections (May 2006), she notes that in the fall of 1977, a colleague of hers at Shelby State Community College, Lyall Sherrred, invited her to attend a Quaker meeting with Lyall and his wife. "We met in the home of a couple from New Jersey whose name has vanished from my memory...I don't remember who else was there. I do remember meeting at Minna Thompson's home on Sunday evenings. (Also at..) Eleanor and David Bowman's, Margaret McCulloch's, and also at my apartment in Raleigh and later in the house I rented on Lemaster Street. The problem was that there was no structure; I went out of town for the summer and when I returned I didn't reconnect with the group."

Mina worked on her doctoral dissertation in Denver and returned to Memphis in December, 1983. She notes:

"When I got back to Memphis in December, I called the people I remembered from the 1970's—Mary Ann Brondi and Eleanor Bowman—and invited them to a meeting in my living room on Walnut Grove. Rob Sangster and Marjean Liggett were there. Jo Chickering who was a member of a Vermont Meeting worked at Memphis State. She met Ruth Boaz in Dan Marshall's office. Laura Bowman's mother put an ad in Friends Journal looking for Friends in Memphis. One of the Denver Friends saw the ad and sent it to me. I think Bruce Stanley, a professor at Rhodes College, saw the same ad."

Ruth Boaz's reflections in a letter of May 7, 2006:

-notes that meetings resumed in early 1984 with Ruth, Jo Chickering, Eleanor Bowman, and Mina Fields Johnson. Meetings were on Sundays, in

the Education Building of Evergreen Presbyterian Church. MFM has met continuously since this time, she notes. In early 1984, Chickering left Memphis. Not long after this, Bowman left, moving to Huntsville AL. Rob Sangster joined Mina and Ruth in Meeting for Worship. Later, Bruce Stanley, Lyall and Vivian Sherred joined. The meeting then moved to the Alumni Building of Rhodes College.

Minutes for MfB on 9-8-1985:

-Held at home of Bruce Stanley and Nancy Sparks.

-Present were Susan Penn, Ron McDonald, Lyall and Vivian Sherred, Ruth Boaz, Bruce Stanley, Nancy Sparks, Thurston Hughes, Jene Teal, Jan Condren, and Mina Johnson.

-“Mina Johnson reviewed briefly the history of the Memphis Meeting. During the late fifties and early sixties, Memphis had a full-fledged monthly meeting; it was part of the South Central Yearly Meeting (*I believe this is incorrect*). This (Memphis) Meeting was laid down in 1967. A new meeting which was started in the mid-seventies achieved Preparative Meeting status under Nashville Meeting in 1979. This Meeting was laid down 10 January 1982.”

-“Mina Johnson agreed to serve as acting clerk and Bruce Stanley as treasurer. Vivian Sherred and Ron McDonald will serve with Mina on the Ministry and Oversight Committee.”

-“Potluck dinners will be held on the first Sunday of each month at 5:00 pm in homes.”

-“Regular meeting for worship for business will be at noon the second Sunday of each month.”

Footnotes on McCulloch, Coppock, and Emery

Footnote 1 Re. *Margaret Callender McCulloch*

--From “A Brief History of Friends in Nashville-- 1926 through 1980” by Nelson Fuson:

“While the Nashville Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends was officially established in January, 1963, its roots go much further back.

“Quakers came to Eastern Tennessee beginning in about 1820, coming from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, etc., but there is no record that they came as far west as Nashville.

“In 1926, Thomas Elsa Jones and his wife, Esther Jones, came to Nashville, Tom to be President of Fisk University. He brought some other Quakers here during his 20 years at Fisk, including Homer and Edna Morris, Gladys and Irving Parker, Jim and Nancy St. John, Kenneth and Elise Boulding, and John and Rusty Sweitzer. Informal Quaker meetings for worship were held on Fisk campus and in Friends' homes, but not to compete with the Sunday morning Fisk Union Church service which everyone attended at that time. In 1941, Margaret McCulloch, who taught at Scarritt in the '40's, started a Friends worship group in Nashville. Others besides the Fisk group who participated included students Hibbard Thatcher and Ed Burroughs. Walter Hoose, writing in the late 50's, fills in a vignette of history at that time as follows: "...Representatives from various Friends groups in the South Central area met in October, 1942, facing the mutual concern of a world at war and seeking a means of continuing friendship which would unite them in the light and love of God. Delegates from Friendsville, TN, Charleston, WV, and from Lexington, Louisville, and Berea, KY, met with members of the Nashville Meeting and others to discuss a means of increasing spiritual unity of Friends in the area and to study the implications of Civilian Public Service and other social action.

“At this time the Nashville Meeting assumed the responsibility of editing The Monthly Epistle of South Central Friends. The Epistle furnished a medium of expression for personal and Meeting concerns, and its spiritual ministry was of immeasurable value to those who were isolated or were unable to attend regular Meetings. When the transfer of a number of members of Nashville Meeting made it impossible for the remainder to carry on publication, it was with deep regret that the Epistle was laid down after nearly three years of service.”

McCulloch headed/founded The Opportunity Foundation Corporation (1962-1976) “The Corporation worked to help residents of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee to further their education and to alleviate discrimination by health, education and welfare agencies.”. The OFC archives (1500 items) are located in the Archival and Manuscript Collections Relating to the Lives of Women in New Orleans, The Newcomb Foundation and the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women. The archival documents include bylaws, minutes, accounts and financial statements, correspondence, scholastic and testing records, photographs, and clippings.

<http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/~wc/guidetocollections/amistad81-90.html>

McCulloch has one book for sale at ANTIQBOOK:

MCCULLOCH, MARGARET C. Segregation: A Challenge to Democracy
Nashville: Race Relations Department, American Missionary Association
Division, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches, Fisk
University, (1950). 8vo. Wraps. 39 p..

Also 5 items in the archive of Warren McCulloch, the well-known
cybernetics theorist, are identified with the name Margaret McCulloch, 1949.
Is this the same woman and is this her father?

An endowment/ scholarship in her name, valued at \$12453 in 2003, is held
at Memphis Theological Seminary

Footnote 2 Re. *Paul Ralph Coppock*

Chicago Monthly Meeting (Orthodox), Illinois Meeting Minutes show his
birthdate as 31 Mar 1907, parents as Homer J Coppock and Mabel Cary
Coppock, and that he was oldest of five siblings. He authored three Books:
Coppock, Paul. *Memphis Sketches* . [Memphis] : Friends of Memphis and
Shelby County Libraries, [c1976]

Coppock, Paul. *Mid South Memoirs (The Commercial appeal) / by Paul R.
Coppock ; compiled by Joan Cannon*. [Memphis: s.n.] , 1983.

Coppock, Paul. *Paul R. Coppock's Mid-South / edited by Helen M. Coppock
and Charles W. Crawford*. Memphis: West Tennessee Historical Society,
c1985-c1994.

Recently West Tenn. Historical Society has purchased 400 sets of the late
Paul R. Coppock's books on Memphis and Mid-South history. "The Society
made this purchase in order to resell them at bargain prices as boxed sets.
Coppock's wonderful historical essays were published in *The Commercial
Appeal* over several decades and, excluding of the *WTHS Papers*, they
probably comprise the best single source of Mid-South history available
anywhere." (See WTHS website). WTHS has a scholarship: The Paul R.
Coppock Scholarship. U of M History Dept also has a Paul R. Coppock
Scholarship Trust, with Chas. Crawford serving on its board. (Unknown if
this is same as the WTHS one)

Footnote 3 Re. *Art Emery, Jr.*

An AE, Jr. of Baltimore, Maryland, is associated somehow with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an interfaith and international peace organization.

More research needed:

- David Ciscel's reflections
- See minutes from Guilford College archives, beginning 9-8-1985 and our in-house archives for same period
- Photograph sites related to significant dates and Meeting locations, before the buildings are destroyed.
- Ask all to contact anyone from the earlier era and request their written reflections.
- Maybe write Art Emery, Jr. in Baltimore and see if he's the same and if so, ask for his reflections.
- Visit New Orleans archive regarding more information on McCulloch. See if Memphis Public Library has her book.
- Search libraries for copy of The Monthly Epistle of South Central Friends, from the 1940's
- See if FWCC has any correspondence with MFM archived

Rlp May 2006