



NOTES ON
silence

Arthur Fink '64

I'll not pretend that the silent meetings I attended during my two years at Friends were an occasion for deep spiritual experiences. They were not. Had you asked me about them at that time, I'd probably have said that they were a welcome period of mental rest, of refreshment, of time slowed down. But that was it.

I might also have commented about times the silence was broken—most often by Anna Louise Curtis telling us stories of the underground railroad, and how even Friends in New York were active in helping former slaves on their way to safety. Once, during excavation for the “new” building (now the main building, I believe) one student whispered

to another, “They’ve just found the underground railroad station” and this “news” quickly made its way around the Meetinghouse. For all I know, it might even have been true.

Of course, meeting was also interrupted at times by loud whispers as students helped each other cram for a test the next period, or otherwise used meeting as a place to catch up on academics. While such dialogue was promptly suppressed, it was never replaced with a lecture about what *should* happen in a silent Meeting for Worship. Friends, for me, was a place with a deep spiritual core, but no spiritual dogma, and that was never more true than in our silent meetings.

