

ETHEL BETTY LINTON SNYDER
1899 - 1988

In 1899, Ethel Betty Linton Snyder was born into a Quaker home in Wilmington, Ohio. Following her graduation from Wilmington College, she entered Columbia University in New York City, where she earned a master's degree in education. She remained in New York to begin her teaching career, serving for several years on the faculty of the Ethical Cultural School.

Betty Linton was active in Young Friends, and her early interest in international and intercultural affairs took her to the World Youth Peace Conference in Helsinki in 1928, with an accompanying visit to the Soviet Union. Her involvement in the global community brought its rewards: it was at the International Student House in New York City that she met Harold Snyder, whom she married in 1934. Their first child, Anadel, was born in New York, and their second daughter, Merida, was born in Washington after Harold's work with the American Friends Service Committee brought them to this city.

The Snyder family became active in Friends Meeting of Washington, and Betty's creative energy and teaching skills were put to work in First Day School and in the Social Order Committee. She became one of those who were instrumental in initiating a project both innovative and shocking to Washington of the 1940s --an interracial Bible School. Because there was not sufficient space in the meetinghouse for the Bible School to meet, a search among area churches began. This attempt to bring black and white children together, even for the purpose of Bible study, was rejected by many churches before it found a home at All Souls Unitarian Church.

Betty's dedication to children led her into work with the Girl Scouts; she assumed many regional responsibilities in addition to her role as troop leader. In 1953, her reputation as a dedicated volunteer supported her decision to return to work, and she was appointed a district director of the Girl Scouts. For 15 years she trained leaders and staff and directed the day camp programs. One Meeting member recalls a time that the member was unable to accompany her young daughter on a winter camping trip. Betty, acting on her conviction of the equality of all persons, approved the appointment of the child's father as an official troop leader. He made the trip with his daughter and continued to serve as a Girl Scout troop leader.

Following World War II, Betty and the girls accompanied Harold to Europe where, as a representative of the American Council on Education, he served as adviser in the re-establishment of the school systems. Her interest in other cultures and her love of people continued to make Betty an ideal teammate during the years that she and Harold lived in India. While Harold served as the South Asia International Affairs representative for the American Friends Service Committee, Betty assisted in the many conferences for diplomats --arranging housing needs, conducting meetings for the spouses, adding those personal touches that make such meetings memorable for the participants. Betty Linton Snyder is remembered by friends and family for her devotion to Harold, and she is remembered for herself: optimistic and full of life, possessed of a warm and outgoing personality --her sparkling manner matched only by her sparkling blue eyes. Her death on 17 March 1988 has not dimmed these memories; she is treasured most by those who knew her best.