

CABOT COVILLE
1902 - 1987

Cabot Coville, a member of this Meeting for three decades, died on February 16, 1987. He was a convinced Friend. Born on March 25, 1902, in a house on California Street not far from the site where our Meeting House now stands, he knew Quakers from his early years. His family counted among their friends the Sidwells and Mary Vaux Walcott, painter of flowers. Later, after his graduation from the old Central High School and from Cornell University, he knew some Japanese Quakers and also our member Gilbert Bowles, during his sojourns in Japan as a member of the United States Foreign Service.

Cabot Coville's twenty-seven years in the Foreign Service were spent more in Japan, and in Japan-related assignments, than in any other area. During the second World War he also had posts in the Philippines (accompanying the High Commissioner in his escape from Corregidor by submarine in 1941), in Lima, Peru, in Rio de Janeiro, in Washington, in London, and in Stockholm. His own natural inclinations, and his diplomatic career, made him a strong advocate of bringing all humankind together. He took an active part in preparations for the San Francisco Conference of 1945, where the United Nations was born, and was present at the conference itself. He also had a significant role in Japan after the war in planning for the organization and democratic development of that country. His last post was as Consul-General in Halifax. He chose early retirement from the Foreign Service in 1953, and soon settled again in Washington.

When he became a member of the Meeting, Cabot Coville said that he had for some years already felt himself a Friend. "The essential," in his words, "is illumination by the quickening spirit. . . . There is that within each one of us which is best nurtured and brought out in the common seeking of the Meeting." The Meeting knew him especially as one profoundly committed to the improvement of relations among the peoples and nations of the world. During the 1960s Cabot Coville served as a member of the committee on international conferences of the American Friends Service Committee. He was also a trustee of the Sidwell Friends School.

Within the Meeting, Cabot Coville was especially helpful in the Committee on Ministry and Worship. Meeting members were grateful, too, for his gentle strength when he sat on the facing bench as head of Meeting for Worship.

He is much missed.