

Harry George Clement
1917 - 1992

Harry George Clement became a member of Friends Meeting of Washington in June, 1940. A few months later he wrote a letter to clarify his position as a conscientious objector to war. "As nearly as I can explain it," he wrote, "the war method clashes with my whole philosophy of living, with my respect for every individual who is something really greater than himself, with my feeling that we are living not for the purpose of killing and competing but for the purpose of loving and cooperating." He also wrote a letter to the President explaining his views and stating his desire to work with people to improve race relations and help the unemployed as he was doing in the work camp in Scotts Run, West Virginia. He had already been appealing to the American Friends Service Committee to support him in continuing to work with the people in Scotts Run, making many innovative suggestions for community development and economic improvement.

Born in Maplewood, New Jersey, he graduated from Dennison University. Following his work camp experience, he became a trainee for various federal agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Commerce. He also worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in China, where he survived a plane crash. From 1949 to 1953 Harry worked in United States foreign assistance programs here and in Ireland. He became vice president with Checchi and Company Consulting in Washington and, eventually, operated his own consulting firm, Clement, Smith Inc. His work took him to many Native American reservations as well as many other countries.

On December 5, 1941 he was married under the care of the Meeting to Katherine Seamore Robinson. They were separated in 1947 and divorced later. Harry was married twice more and divorced. There were no children. Katherine and his second wife, Ruby, attended his memorial service and Katherine spoke positively of his influence in her life. His third wife is believed to be deceased.

Harry George Clement died December 19, 1992, having been in retirement for several years. In his memorial service he was described by his friends as humorous and a great story teller with many rich experiences to relate. He was also characterized as being very thorough and exacting in his work and honest in his reporting whether it pleased the government agencies or not. He was not a very active member of the Meeting, but in personal conversation spoke of the importance of his membership and enjoyed discussing his Quaker convictions.