

JESSE BAER YAUKEY
8-13-1897 to 9-23-1981

Jesse B. Yaukey was a tower of strength. Tall, deep-voiced, ragged, the hand he extended so readily in friendship was large, Often he seemed the strong silent type, yet out of his silences rumbled words of wisdom, courage and solace. At the Bethesda Christmas pageant, he usually played one of the three kings, towering like a guardian angel over the manger scene. And such a guardian was he to the many, many endeavors to which he gave himself.

Born in Elbrook, Pennsylvania in 1897, Jesse was not a lifelong Quaker. To those who know him in Washington, Bethesda and Sandy Spring Meetings, as First Day School teacher to several generations of high school students at Florida Avenue through his many years of service to FCNL (twenty of them as Treasurer) and from his faithful attendance and devoted service to the Yearly Meeting, Jesse Yaukey was *Mister Quaker*.

But he had lived half a lifetime before he came to Friends in the early 40s, including College at Ursinus, Central Theological Seminary, later a Master's at Teachers College, Columbia and thirteen years as a Missionary with the German Reformed Church in Human Province, China.

In China, Jesse and his wife Grace, whom he met there, encountered Henry Hodgkin, a British Friend. What Hodgkin taught reinforced Jesse's dissatisfaction with missionary proselytizing and he increasingly turned his attention to service through the hospitals and, particularly, simple village clinics - a sort of early "barefoot doctor" concept. Out of his love for the Chinese people and his experiences with that ancient culture grew new tolerance and a conviction that there are many ways to God. He eventually found a spiritual home with Friends.

Jesse undertook a new career after his return from China in 1935. First as an administrator with the U.S. Public Health Service and then as statistician and research supervisor with the United Mine Workers welfare and retirement fund, he gained the experience and talent with figures which served Friends so faithfully. Yet Friends do not remember him as primarily a "numbers man." We took those talents for granted as we recognized in Jesse great spiritual strength and love for humanity.

A founding member of Bethesda Meeting, Jesse continued to serve the Friends Meeting of Washington also as long as Bethesda was a preparative meeting. He was on almost every committee of each of his Monthly Meetings and from the 1940s was continuously to be found serving on one or another Yearly Meeting committee. He was representative to the American Friends Service Committee and for fourteen years was a member of the Central Committee of Friends General Conference. He played an active role in the uniting of the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings and, after his retirement in his mid-seventies, was, from 1973 until just before his death, Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting and, ex officio, on Trustees, Representative Committee, Stewardship and Finance and the Supervisory Committee. Perhaps no Friend gave more of time and talent to the Yearly Meeting during its crucial first decade than Jesse Yaukey.

Jesse's Christian faith was strong, his biblical training deep, his convictions compelling. With deep convictions go passions. Jesse's voice could shake with the depth of his concern but always

there was love and respect for opposing views. He controlled his impatience and his anger, and the strongest expression one was likely to hear was his annoyed "Oh pshaw." when a familiar face came to mind and he couldn't call the name.

Jesse loved children -- indeed persons of all ages. He was always ready to visit a First Day School class to share his experience -- of China, of Friends, of whatever was of interest to them - with every age. His resonant voice joined in whenever there was a carol sing or a gathering for hymns. And his robust laugh could be heard on so many occasions - when someone else was funny, when his own delightful humor provoked laughter or when he sensed the comedy in his own inadvertent word or act. That he could laugh at himself says much for his humility for, strong and willing leader that he was, Jesse was a modest and unassuming man, ready to serve as called with little regard for personal status.

Jesse was ageless, yet to those who have known him in Friends' circles, always a "weighty Friend". So much that he did was unobtrusive yet, when he no longer does it, so sorely missed. He died on September 23, 1981 at the age of 84. His wife Grace, three children and eight grandchildren survive him as well as enduring contributions from his devoted life of service. We all miss him.