

MARY ELIZABETH PIDGEON
8-2-1890 to 11-24-1979

Mary Elizabeth Pidgeon was born Eighth Month 2nd, 1890 on her family's farm located in Wadesville, Clarke County, Virginia. She died Eleventh Month 24, 1979, at Friends House, Sandy Spring, MD. Educated at Friends School, Waterford, Virginia, George School, and Swarthmore College (B.A. 1913), she received her Master's degree in political science from the University of Virginia (1924) and did further graduate work at the Federation Universitaire International, Geneva, Switzerland (1925) and at the University of Chicago (1926-27).

Becoming interested in women's suffrage during her college days at Swarthmore, she used a large part of her life to implement her deep concern for the rights of women as individuals. Initially, she worked in Virginia in both Charlottesville and Richmond in university, organizational, and governmental areas. Moving to Washington in 1928, she began her service with the U.S. Women's Bureau from which she retired in 1955 as Chief of the Research Division.

A member of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends by birthright, she became a charter member of the Friends Meeting of Washington in 1930, continuing in membership there until her death. She was faithful in attendance at Meetings for Worship and Meetings for Business and at all Committees too which she was appointed. She served as Recording Clerk At Monthly and Quarterly Meeting levels. Minutes written by Mary Pidgeon are examples of explicit accuracy coupled with beauty of expression. The forthrightness of her spoken ministry in Meeting for Business and her close attendance to right leading when speaking in Meetings for Worship were treasured by those who knew her.

She cared deeply about the spiritual life and was convinced of its importance. She had a wide knowledge of poetry and religious literature and shared that knowledge generously. She loved gardening and flowers, fields and mountains, the quiet, and all beautiful things. She had intuitive understanding in great measure and was always generous in sharing her spiritual insights with others. At the Memorial Meeting held in gratitude for the life of Mary Elizabeth Pidgeon on 12th Month 8th, 1979, a quotation from Meister Eckhart was given which was a favorite of hers. It is appropriate in speaking of her life:

“Up then, noble Soul! Put on thy jumping shoes, which are love and intuition, and overleap the worship of thy mental powers, overleap thine understanding, and leap into the heart of God.”