

Lorraine Cleveland – Lifelong Peacemaker and Mentor to Many

Lorraine Ketchum Cleveland, a respected and cherished member of Newtown Friends Meeting for some fifty years, died on October 28, 2001, at the age of 91. She served the Meeting as Clerk, Clerk of Worship and Ministry, and as a wise and understanding friend and mentor. She served the world as an ambassador of peace.

As a child growing up in Oklahoma, Lorraine believed that the First World War was the last – “a war to end all wars.” In 1930 she was startled to learn at a Methodist youth conference of the looming possibility of another war and decided then to dedicate the whole of her life to preventing war. The Nuremberg Trials further convinced her that we have moral obligations that transcend national ones and that personal responsibility lies with each individual.

She became a war-tax refuser in 1949 in a case that eventually went as far as the Supreme Court (*Cleveland, Cadwallader, and the AFSC vs. U.S.A.*). Though the government attached her bank account for unpaid taxes, Lorraine Cleveland continued throughout her life to deduct from her federal taxes that portion that would be used for war and sent it to worthy causes.

Lorraine received her B.A. degree from the University of Oklahoma and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Tulane University. In 1944, after her husband Bill was called into service as a conscientious objector, she left her position as Assistant Director of the Oklahoma State Department of Public Welfare, where she had worked for twelve years, to join the staff of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.

During her 31 years with the AFSC, Lorraine served as one of a team of persons who pioneered community development programs in health, education, and housing in the postwar world of the 50s, and was named Director of Social and Technical Assistance Programs. She became an influential force through her work in Finland, India, Japan, Mexico, Israel, and elsewhere in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa, learning firsthand how change takes place in a society. So persuasive was her belief in the efficacy of small projects to encourage local initiatives that Rockefeller Fund executives awarded AFSC its largest grant to date, *with no restrictions* – almost unheard of, then or now.

Lorraine initiated family planning programs here and abroad and organized the distinguished working party for *Who Shall Live*, AFSC's far-reaching 1969 publication on abortion and the moral implications posed by scientific advances affecting birth and death. She had an equally influential role in the writing of *Search for Peace in the Middle East*, published in 1970.

She laid the foundation for ASFC's ongoing Voluntary International Service Assignment (VISA) program for youth, and, while living at George School, served with her husband as co-director of the first Quaker youth pilgrimage in England in 1959.

At the age of 50 she began her role as parent to pre-teenage children – daughter Rhoda from China and son Cha from Korea – who both challenged and enriched her life.

Well into her 70s Lorraine became actively involved with a California-based group, Beyond War, that was moved by the power of Albert Einstein's 1946 statement: "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." She became Beyond War's contact for the State of Pennsylvania and organized local Beyond War orientation seminars in her area. "What people need is not fear of nuclear war, but a hopeful vision and prospect that we can change our beliefs to prevent such a holocaust," she wrote. "I have worked abroad and have seen the devastation of war. It has always seemed to me that we should be able to find a better way of dealing with conflict."

Out of this perspective, Lorraine became a force in reshaping the Bucks County Peace Center, which she helped to found in 1982, from a grassroots group focused on freezing the development of weapons of mass destruction to a training center for creative conflict resolution. She formulated the Peace Center's first membership list on her early Commodore computer, nearly a decade before computers came into general use.

In her later years she received countless calls, visits, and letters from her many friends who were inspired and enlightened by Lorraine's engaging mind, spiritual wisdom, and rich practical experience. She reflected deeply on the nature of time and came to view mankind as "still in our morning hours, with a long, long future ahead of us." Her "Cleveland Chronology" of 1980 sums up well her most enduring beliefs that:

- The earth is a living organism.
- All of life is interconnected.
- When faced with despair, remain detached and dwell instead on possibilities.
- Each of us makes a difference. We create our own future.

It is with a profound sense of gratitude that we endorse this Minute in memorial to the life of Lorraine Cleveland.

Memorial Minute prepared by Nancy Strong and endorsed by Newtown Monthly Meeting on December 4, 2001.