

JOHN SEDGWICK LEA, SR.
(1910-1987)

John Sedgwick Lea, a member of the Meeting since September 1952, died on November 17, 1987. When he joined the Meeting, he was not a member of any Meeting or church. But the Lea family had been Quakers, owners of flour mills on the Brandywine River north of Wilmington, Delaware; many of them were long resident on farms in the Sandy Spring area. Among earlier family members was Elizabeth Ellicott Lea, author of a Quaker cookbook, *Domestic Cookery, Useful Receipts, and Hints to Young Homemakers*, that went through nineteen editions from 1845 to 1874, and was again reprinted in 1982. Elizabeth Bentley of Sandy Spring Meeting was one of John Lea's grandmothers. John and his wife, Jane Goetz Lea, began to attend the Friends Meeting of Washington when they lived in Bethesda, and were friends of the Fletcher and the Oehser families. Their daughter, Mary, was in the First Day School; their son, John Lea Jr., was not, as he sang in the boys' choir of the Washington Cathedral. Jane Lea used to help with the First Day School. When the Leas became members, Charles Preston was Clerk of the Meeting. They later moved from Bethesda to Cleveland Park.

John Lea was born in Syracuse, New York attended Amherst College, and was a graduate of Columbia University. He had been on the faculty of Penn State College, teaching English, before becoming in 1944 a civilian employee of the Fort Belvoir research laboratories of the Army Corps of Engineers. In 1950 John Lea began as an editor and then assistant chief of the editorial and publications division of the Smithsonian Institution, from which position he retired in 1975. He subsequently worked at the National Geographic Society as part-time research reports editor until 1984.

In the later years of his life, John Lea devoted much time to assisting in completing the building of the Washington Cathedral. He served as recording secretary of the building committee, and as assistant clerk of the works, acting as an archivist to see that all records were completed and preserved. He was helpful in several ways to the Sandy Spring Friends School, also. He was generous with his time and knowledge, and much beloved of friends and neighbors. Because of his connections with the Cathedral, his memorial service was held in the Bethlehem Chapel on November 20, 1987. Most of the service was after the manner of Friends. John Lea was comfortable with the Friends manner of worship and valued the silence.

The sympathy of the Meeting is with Jane Lea, John's wife, and with their children, John S. Lea Jr. of Bristol, Vermont, and Mary Patterson of Boston, Massachusetts.