

Margaret Parton Hussey, 1885-1981

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10964 Newsletter

#### A MEMORIAL

Palisades lost one of its most distinguished and colorful residents August 9 when Margaret Parton Hussey, correspondent in India and Japan for the New York *Herald Tribune*, died at her home in Snedens Landing after a long illness. The veteran newspaperwoman and author, who was 66 years old, was the widow of Comdr. Alfred Rodman Hussey (U.S.N., ret.).

A memorial service has been planned for Sunday, September 13 at 2 p.m. in the Rockland County Quaker Meeting House, 60 Leber Road, Blauvelt. In lieu of flowers, friends may send contributions to the Palisades Free Library Lem Britter Fund.

At a time when women correspondents were a rarity, Margaret Parton, as she was known professionally, was filing stories from remote Hunza in Central Asia, from Gandhi's funeral cortege and from General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo during the Occupation. In her 12 years as a correspondent, reporter and book reviewer for the *Herald Tribune*, she covered perceptively a wide range of assignments, from politics to human drama, from U.S. military government in Japan to the celebrated murder trial of Dr. Sam Sheppard in Ohio and the formation of the United Nations in San Francisco. Her Asian beat included two years in Japan and five years in India, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

A forceful personality who didn't hesitate to express her opinions, she was less than enthusiastic about the current agitation on behalf of women's rights. She was rather proud of having made her way in a field that did not easily yield its male dominance. She was proud, too, that her mother, Mary Field Parton, had escaped a Victorian upbringing to become a radical labor reporter. Her father, Lemuel F. Parton, was a well-known San Francisco newspaperman and columnist.

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#### (A Memorial)

Margaret left her beloved *Herald Tribune* in 1955 to take a job as associate editor of the *Ladies Home Journal* in Philadelphia. During her seven years there her byline frequently appeared on feature stories in the magazine's series, "How America Lives."

She was the author of three books: *JOURNEY THROUGH A LIGHTED ROOM*, a memoir; *THE LEAF AND THE FLAME*, a distillation of her life in India as a journalist, wife and mother, and *LAUGHTER ON THE HILL: A San Francisco Reminiscence*. She was also co-author with Dr. Paul Dudley White of his autobiography, *MY LIFE IN MEDICINE*.

Mrs. Hussey, who graduated with honors from Swarthmore College in 1937, was also a contributor to various publications, including *Mademoiselle*, *Look*, *The Reporter*, *Saturday Review*, *McCall's*, *Woman's Day*, *Reader's Digest*, and the *New York Times*. She was recognized for her outstanding work by a Pulitzer Prize nomination and by the New York Newspaper Woman's Club, the Woman's Press Club of New York City, the English-Speaking Union and the New York Newspaper Guild. In addition, she won a Benjamin Franklin Magazine Citation and the Sidney Hillman Foundation award.

Mrs. Hussey was a member of P.E.N., Overseas Press Club of America, Phi Beta Kappa, Sierra Club, Society of Friends and the Silurians. She also was a trustee of the Palisades Free Library.

In 1955, while assigned to India, Margaret Parton married Eric Britter, correspondent of *The Times* of London, from whom she was divorced. Their only child, Lem Britter, died of Leukemia when he was 17 years old.

Mrs. Hussey died in the 200-year-old farmhouse purchased by her parents in the 1920's from Mary Tonetti. Many a lively intellectual discussion has gone on under the grape arbor there overlooking a two-acre meadow. Among the visitors to the Parton home have been such figures as Carl Sandburg and Burl Ives.

Snedens Landing was important to Margaret Parton Hussey throughout her life. She returned to live here permanently after the death of Comdr. Hussey in 1964. He had been a member of the Government Section of SCAP in the Occupation of Japan and had made important contributions to the writing of the Japanese constitution. In the new phase that ensued, Margaret Parton not only continued to write but also became a consummate gardener whose flower beds were admired by all who saw them.

*Ed. note: The above article was written as a fitting tribute to a very close friend by Marguerite Brown Gundlock of Closter Rd., Palisades, N.Y.*