

# ALMANAC

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John Hench and Nancy Burkett

## Burkett and Hench to Retire: Council Votes Honors

They came to AAS in August 1973, about a week apart. John Hench had used the collections in his Ph.D. studies at Clark University and had also worked part-time at the library. While still at work on his dissertation, he returned to his native Minnesota to teach but was recruited back to Worcester to become AAS's editor of publications. Nancy Burkett came to AAS as assistant curator of manuscripts directly from U.C.L.A. library school at the same time that her husband, Randall, accepted a position in Worcester at Holy Cross College. Now, on August 31, 2006, Nancy and John will be retiring after thirty-three years of distinguished service to the Society.

When they arrived in 1973, AAS's entire budget was less than \$260,000 and its endowment less than \$4 million. The staff consisted of thirty individuals, and there were two hundred fifty-five elected members. Now, Nancy oversees an acquisitions budget and John a fellowship program budget that are each greater than the entire budget of the Society in 1973. The staff has doubled to about sixty, and the membership is just over eight hundred. The permanent endowment is about \$50 million, the annual budget about \$4 million. Both Nancy and John have witnessed and, in many ways, shaped the remarkable growth of AAS as a library and a research center.

At its spring meeting in April 2006, the AAS Council voted to honor these two dedicated staff members in ways that reflect their priceless contributions to the Society. A Nancy Burkett Collection, reflecting the full scope of materials collected by AAS, will be created with donations of materials from dealers, collectors, members, and friends. For the last fourteen years, Nancy has been head of acquisitions as well as

the Marcus A. McCorison Librarian. During this time she worked with hundreds of people, including many readers of ALMANAC, to build upon existing strengths in the collections and help double the acquisitions endowment. If you were among the many who shared experience or expertise with Nancy—or learned from her!—you may already know exactly the right book, print, pamphlet, manuscript, or piece of paper ephemera to donate to the library in her honor (if you have a question, please contact Elizabeth Pope at AAS). Gifts of cash will be placed in a special pool for her successor to use in purchasing items to be designated as part of the Nancy Burkett Collection. We will update gifts to this special collection on the AAS website, and they will be tagged in the online catalog so that the entire Nancy Burkett Collection can be compiled electronically with ease.

John Hench's service to the Society's academic programs will be recognized by naming the John B. Hench Post-dissertation Fellowship in his honor. John arrived in the second year of the newly created fellowship program when five fellows were invited to spend one or two months in residence. He has played a large role in overseeing the growth of the program, which now annually invites thirty to thirty-five fellows for lengths of stay varying from one month to an entire year and has expanded to include fellowships for creative and performing artists and writers. John's devotion goes beyond administration and oversight. He has made a point of getting to know fellows both professionally and personally. John developed the idea of the post-dissertation fellowship here and wrote the proposal to the Andrew W.

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## Knoles Appointed 13th Librarian

At the spring meeting of the AAS membership in Baltimore, Maryland, President Ellen Dunlap quoted from her message to the staff. "On March 17th, I wrote to the staff: 'It is my great pleasure to announce the appointment today of Thomas G. Knoles, long-time curator of manuscripts at the Society, as our next head librarian. Upon the retirement of Nancy Burkett on September 1st, he will assume her title of Marcus A. McCorison Librarian. Tom has distinguished himself for this important post in many ways—not only by his broad professional experience at the Society and his steadfast commitment to its traditional goals and ideals, but also by his progressive thinking on the prospects for its future and the respect he has earned as a true colleague to all.

degree from Rutgers University. He worked as a rare book librarian at Rutgers and as a reference librarian at the Worcester Public Library before joining AAS in 1990. Since then, he has served as curator of manuscripts and AAS archivist, and from 1995 to 2000 he also served as director of reference services. As chairman of the Society's technology committee, he works with AAS staff and councilors to chart our path as we enter this new digital age for libraries; and as keeper of the archives, he is something of an unofficial historian of the Society and guardian of its rich traditions. In October 2003, Tom was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society along with his wife Lucia Z. Knoles, who is a professor of English at Assumption College, a frequent user of the library's collections, and an informal adviser to many staff and scholars at AAS on the use of technology in teaching, research, and the dissemination of information. During a sabbatical leave this year, Lucia has been developing a website on behalf of the AAS entitled "Through a Glass Darkly: Images of Race and Region in Northern Periodicals and the Letters of Freedmen and Freedmen's Teachers. Her goal is to provide readers with access to letters, broadsides, lithographs, and other primary resources from the collections of the Society arranged within an interpretative framework. She and Tom (with Rick Kennedy) published *Student Notebooks at Colonial Harvard: Manuscripts and Educational Practice, 1650–1740* in the AAS Proceedings in 2003.

Of his new position, Tom said, "Several colleagues at other institutions have already told me that I have the best library job in the world, and I'm happy to say that I agree with them. I am deeply honored to have the

*Continued page 2, column 3*



Thomas G. Knoles, Marcus A. McCorison Librarian

Personally, I'm very excited by the prospects of Tom's leadership of the library and look forward to working in close collaboration with him."

Knoles, a native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, earned his B.A. degree from the University of Notre Dame and both a Ph.D. in classics and an M.L.S.

## Mellon Challenge Update

The first year of a four-year effort to raise \$1 million in gifts for fellowship endowment and earn a matching \$1 million from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will come to an end on September 30. As of June 1, we had raised \$165,000 in cash and an additional \$80,000 in pledges to be paid by the Challenge deadline on September 30, 2009. The funds will endow a Senior Scholar in Residence and a Post-dissertation Fellowship, two positions that were instituted in 1998 with expendable grants from the Mellon Foundation.

Through the 2008–2009 academic year, the program will continue to be funded by an expendable grant from the Mellon Foundation. The Senior Scholar in Residence for the coming year is Philip F. Gura, Newman Distinguished Professor of American Literature and Culture, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his research topic is "The Club of the Like-Minded: A History of New England Transcendentalism." The first John B. Hench Post-dissertation Fellow is Jennifer Anderson, a Ph.D. candidate at New York University, whose research topic is "Nature's Currency: The Atlantic Mahogany Trade, 1725–1825."

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## New Members

The following individuals were elected to membership in April 2006..

### Carol D. Andrews

*New Braintree, Massachusetts*

A frequent reader at AAS, with wide-ranging interests in art and history. Ms. Andrews is an expert on John Ritto Penniman and author of *John Ritto Penniman (1782–1841): An Ingenious New England Artist*. She is also the author of *Survey of the Church Cemetery, New Braintree, Massachusetts*.

### Thomas Bender

*New York, New York*

University Professor of the Humanities and professor of history at New York University. Professor Bender's work has focused on the history of cities, intellectuals, and academic disciplines, and he is exploring ways of developing narratives of American history. He is co-author of *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century*, published in 2004.

### James S. Brust

*San Pedro, California*

Psychiatrist in private practice. Dr. Brust is perhaps best known for his collecting of Currier and Ives prints and for his work on the history of the battle of Little Big Horn and the earliest photographer of its site, John H. Fouch. He is co-author of *Where Custer Fell: Photographs of the Little Bighorn Battlefield Then and Now*.

### Peter T. Dumaine

*Riegelsville, Pennsylvania*

A great-great-great-great-grandson of Isaiah Thomas. Mr. Dumaine is an independent investor and a collector of American antiques. He embraces the mission of the library and has made gifts of family materials and of nineteenth-century prints, broadsides, books, and other materials.

### Dennis A. Fiori

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Newly appointed director of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Mr. Fiori served previously as director of the Maryland Historical Society and of the Concord Museum, Concord, Massachusetts, as deputy director for programs at the Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington, D.C., and as deputy director of the Maine Arts Commission.

### Edward G. Gray

*Tallahassee, Florida*

Editor of the online history journal *Common-place* and assistant professor of history at Florida State University. Professor Gray's recent works include *Colonial America: A History in Documents*; and *New World Babel: Languages & Nations in Early America and The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492–1800: A Collection of Essays*.

### Harold Holzer

*Rye, New York*

Senior vice president for external affairs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr. Holzer is one of the country's leading authorities on the political culture of the Civil War era. He is co-chairman of the U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and has written or edited more than 20 books and 375 articles for both popular magazines and scholarly journals.

### Frederick Hoxie

*Urbana, Illinois*

Professor of history, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Professor Hoxie is editor of *The Encyclopedia of North American Indians* and served as editor for the Time-Life Books American Indians series. He has served as president of the American Society for Ethnohistory and on the Executive Board of the Organization of American Historians.

### Brock Jobe

*Wilmington, Delaware*

Professor of American decorative arts, Winterthur Museum. He is co-author of *New England Furniture: The Colonial Era* and editor of *Portsmouth Furniture: Masterworks from the New Hampshire Seacoast*. His current research project is a study of Boston upholsterers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

### George Fenwick Jones

*Baltimore, Maryland*

Professor emeritus, University of Maryland. Mr. Jones is an internationally recognized scholar of German culture and literature and German-American studies. He is the author of numerous publications and articles dealing with the lives and culture of German colonists in America and of German-Americans throughout our nation's history.

### Thomas J. Keenan

*Wakefield, Rhode Island*

Retired cardiologist. Dr. Keenan is now devoted to the research and writing of history and genealogy, with particular attention to the American Revolution, Civil War, and nineteenth-century Irish-Americans. A collector and expert on antique violins and bows, he is a frequent visitor to AAS.

### Marie E. Lamoureux

*Spencer, Massachusetts*

Director of readers' services at AAS. In May Ms. Lamoureux celebrated her 30th anniversary of employment at AAS. Legions of scholars, genealogists, students, writers, and readers of every stripe have singled her out as a paragon of helpfulness, acknowledging their gratitude in hundreds of publications.

### James P. McGovern

*Worcester, Massachusetts*

United States Representative from the third Congressional district of Massachusetts. A Worcester native, Mr. McGovern is currently serving his fifth term and is the second-ranking Democrat on the House Rules Committee. He has been a strong advocate for education initiatives and for the preservation efforts of museums and libraries.

### Richard E. Mooney

*New York, New York*

Retired editor for the *New York Times* and the *Hartford Courant*. Mr. Mooney is writing a biography of Nathan Hale. He also curated an exhibit in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale in the spring of 2005 to mark the 250th anniversary of Hale's birth.

### Wendy Wick Reaves

*Chevy Chase, Maryland*

Curator of Prints and Drawings, National Portrait Gallery, and a Daniels Fellow at AAS in 1976–77. Ms. Reaves has written extensively on

prints ranging from those depicting George Washington to her most recent exhibition catalog, *Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings from the National Portrait Gallery*. She is a member of the Print Council of America.

### Harold R. Richardson

*Grafton, Massachusetts*

Retired teacher and, currently, master teacher with *Keepers of the Republic*, a teacher-education partnership of AAS with local area schools. Mr. Richardson is a collector of early American tools and a user of primary materials for classroom teaching. He is organizing the rich historical archive assembled by late AAS member Robert Cormier.

### Roy Rosenzweig

*Fairfax, Virginia*

Professor of history, George Mason University. One of his early books—*Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City*—is about Worcester; his latest is *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. In work with the American Social History Project at CUNY and other collaborators, Rosenzweig explores the possibilities of new technology and new media for history.

### Martha Sandweiss

*Amherst, Massachusetts*

Professor of history and American studies, Amherst College. Professor Sandweiss has a particular interest in how visual images can serve as historical documents and offers seminars that focus on the analysis of prints, photographs and other images. She is the author of *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*, the editor of *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*, and co-editor of *The Oxford History of the American West*.

### Bryant Tolles

*Wilmington, Delaware*

Professor of history at the University of Delaware. Professor Tolles specializes in nineteenth-century American social, cultural, and economic history, with a specific focus on tourism in North America and New England regional history. He is the author of *The Grand Resort Hotels of the White Mountains* (1998), *Summer Cottages in the White Mountains* (2000), and *Resort Hotels of the Adirondacks* (2003).

### Ira Unschuld

*New York, New York*

Private investor and money manager. Mr. Unschuld won the 1986 Margaret B. Stillwell Prize for undergraduate book collecting at Brown University for his collection of privately printed corporate histories. His collecting interests now embrace financial history more broadly conceived, from Revolutionary War bonds to papers of early industrialists.

### David H. Watters

*Durham, New Hampshire*

Director of the Center for New England Culture and professor of English at the University of New Hampshire. Professor Watters is co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of New England*. He has also published several studies of New England grave-stones and edited a volume of *Writings of Jonathan Edwards* for the Yale University Press.

### Edward L. Widmer

*Providence, Rhode Island*

Recently appointed librarian for the John Carter Brown Library. Dr. Widmer has served as director of the C. V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College and as a White House speechwriter. He is the author of *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City* and of *Martin Van Buren*, and he is co-author, with Alan Brinkley, of *Campaigns: A Century of Presidential Races*.

### Joseph Wood

*Cumberland, Maine*

Provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Southern Maine. Mr. Wood is also a professor of geography, specifically cultural geography. His research has focused on the making of the American landscape and the idea of the village in scholarly tradition, as well as on the idea of the West and development of the national road.

### John M. Zak

*Farmington, New York*

Chief executive officer of Airweld, Inc., a firm specializing in the distribution of gases for industrial purposes. Mr. Zak is also vice president of the American Historical Print Collectors Society. He is a serious and knowledgeable collector of prints by Currier & Ives, which he has collected for almost 30 years.

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### Knoles *continued*

privilege of following in the footsteps of Nancy Burkett, Marcus McCorison, and their distinguished predecessors. In keeping with the tradition they have established, I hope to be a strong advocate for the library. Towards that end, I have begun having a series of one-to-one conversations with members of the library staff to learn as much as possible about their ideas and concerns. In the coming months, I look forward to supporting the growth and maintenance of collections, to building on the excellent service to readers for which the Society is justly renowned, and to promoting the professional development of the library's remarkably talented and skilled staff."

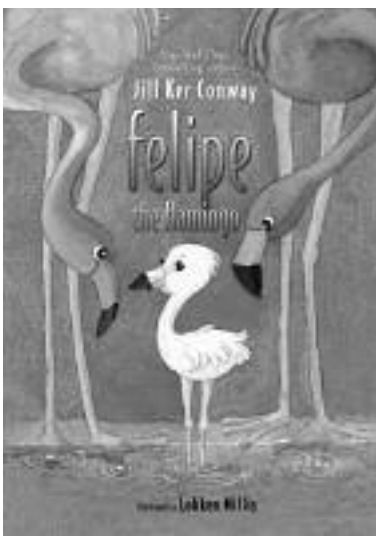
Although Isaiah Thomas founded the Society in 1812 and contributed and cataloged much of the collection that is the foundation of the library, he never held the position of librarian. The first librarian, Samuel Jennison, was appointed in 1814 and served until 1826. As the 13th to hold the position of librarian, Tom Knoles follows in the footsteps of a distinguished group of individuals who have made great contributions to shaping the institution that is so highly respected in the scholarly and library worlds today. As a student of the classics, a curator of manuscripts, and chairman of AAS's technology committee, Knoles brings a range of knowledge, experience, and talents to the evolving challenges of leading a research library in the early years of the 21st century.



## Member, Fellow, and Staff Notes

**Nicholas Basbanes**, known for his five books about books, was invited by the public affairs officer of the 3rd Corps Support Command in Iraq to the dedication of a 10,000-volume library for the 25,000 service personnel and civilian workers at Camp Anaconda, near the city of Balad. He managed to tack on a visit to Ur, the Sumerian city in lower Mesopotamia where writing as we know it began to take shape about 5,000 years ago, where the “Epic of Gilgamesh” may have been composed, and where some of the world’s first libraries were located.

In May, **Bruce Bennett** retired as publisher of the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* after a 34-year career with the newspaper. In a note to the newspaper’s staff, Bennett said that he was both saddened and pleased to retire. He will continue to serve as chairman of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce through the end of his term in December.



Former AAS Council chairman and former Smith College President **Jill Ker Conway** has written her first children’s book. *Felipe the Flamingo* recounts the adventures of a young flamingo who is left behind while his flock migrates to find more food. The book is published by Fulcrum Publishing, the Colorado-based company headed by **Robert C. Baron**, who succeeded Ms. Conway as AAS Council chair.

In November 2005, the Museum of American Finance, whose founder and chairman is **John Herzog**, signed a lease on 30,000 square feet of space in the landmark former headquarters of the Bank of New York at 48 Wall Street. Renovations are under way, and the museum is scheduled to open in its new location by the end of 2006.

Not one to shy away from a challenge, **David M. Kahn** has recently

stepped down as executive director of the Connecticut Historical Society to take on the job of director of the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans. Kahn said that the opportunity to help an historic institution rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was an assignment he could not pass up.



**Edmund S. Morgan** (above), who is the Society’s longest-serving member, was recognized with a special citation by the 2006 Pulitzer Prize Committee “for a creative and deeply influential body of work as an American historian that spans the last half century.” He was in pretty good company; the other special citation went posthumously to Thelonious Monk.

In his first year as superintendent of schools in Pittsburgh, **Mark Roosevelt** won school board support for a sweeping reorganization plan designed to cut costs and boost student achievement. The reorganization of elementary and middle schools sets the stage for what Mr. Roosevelt calls other difficult measures: a “comprehensive reform agenda” targeting a fragmented curriculum, an overhaul of poorly performing high schools, and the enlistment of public support for raising test scores.

*Wordplay*, a lively documentary on crossword puzzles and the people who love them, premiered in January at the Sundance Film Festival. The film uses the career of **Will Shortz** as a focal point, from his love of puzzles as a boy to his shepherding of the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament each year in Stamford, Connecticut. Shortz said the film has left him pleasantly puzzled at how crosswords resonate emotionally with people.

While in Stamford for the Crossword Puzzle Tournament, you could also visit The Print Research Foundation, created by **Reba and Dave Williams** to provide research facilities for the study of prints made by American artists during the last 150 years. The Foundation maintains files on over 2,000 printmakers and houses the more than 5,000 prints in the Williams collection.

### John and Nancy *continued*

Mellon Foundation that launched it with expendable grants and then led to the award of a challenge grant to endow it permanently. We will need to raise \$375,000, to be matched dollar for dollar by the Mellon Foundation, in order to endow the John B. Hench Post-dissertation Fellowship in perpetuity. Gifts for this effort from John’s friends will be greatly appreciated.

Anyone who has come in contact with Nancy and John knows how much they will be missed. They have made their own legacies through their dedication and hard work, but we hope that many of their friends will contribute toward the permanent honors that are being created to recognize their service.

## Books and Their Owners

What to do when the book you receive is not as described in the quote or catalog listing? In some cases, you celebrate because what you have received has much more research value than the seller realized. This has happened twice in recent months.

The first such book is Jabez Earle’s *Sacramental Exercises or, The Christian’s Employment, Before, At, and After the Lords Supper*. Boston: Reprinted by T. Fleet, for Samuel Gerrish, 1715. It is not included in the Evans bibliography of early American imprints. AAS purchased it in February 2006 with income from the William S. Reese Fund and the NEH Challenge Fund.

The dealer, who was careful to list the physical defects of the book, described it as “early calf spine, patterned paper boards, covered later with cloth, which has been partially removed.” There was no reference to any readers’ marks. In fact, however, the book is a research treasure for scholars interested in the history of the book.

The front fly-leaf is inscribed: “Sally Manwarings Book — Presented her by Miss Mary Kettle — who Died — March 28th 1798 Aged 85 years.” We have identified a Sally L. Manwaring, who was born in Connecticut in 1797/8, so this book may have been a gift to her as an infant by Mary Kettle. On the next page, in a different hand, there is a powerful meditation addressed to the “Reader” on how to read the text within so that it “shall also make lasting impressions on thy mind.” The book also contains the printed bookplate “Library of Elizabeth Holt Goldthwaite, No. 284.” Goldthwaite was a nineteenth-century Unitarian leader. Three other manuscript ownership inscriptions contribute to the tracking of the book’s history: Mary B. Bradley, Lucretia Manwaring, and “Charles M. Tayntor — Decr 9, AD 1892 — Manchester, Connecticut, U.S. America.”

The binding, described in the dealer’s brief reference as “covered later with cloth,” is actually a patterned, white, satin-like paper. Although now in tatters and dirty, it must have been quite elegant when fresh. It was clearly pasted over the original boards by an inexperienced hand. One is tempted to surmise that Miss Kettle “wrapped” the little book thus when she presented it as a baby present to Sally Manwaring.

The second book is Robert Russel’s *Seven Sermons, on Different Important Subjects*. Philadelphia: Peter Stewart, [1791]. Like the first book, it is not entered in the Evans bibliography. We purchased it in April 2006 with income from the Woolsey Fund.

In this case the dealer described it accurately as “contemporary boards, worn and detached, amateurishly sewn into later rough cloth, with cellophane tape repairs to cloth. Pastedowns and endpapers with extensive early inked annotations, inscriptions, and doodles.” Our close examination of the book shows that every blank leaf that precedes or follows this text is covered with handwritten inscriptions. Among them is “Johan Bolles his Book when this you see Rember me Jonathan Bolles Westminster 1799” and “Westminster March the 31 day 1807 Simpson Hammond and Mary Hammond thir book.” These inscriptions demonstrate dual ownership of a book (Simpson and Mary), as well as its passage among members of a local community. Nathan and Lemuel Bolles and Jedediah Hammond are also named. Both the Bolles family and the Hammonds settled in Westminster, Vermont, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Perhaps because of this book’s travels among multiple members of at least two families, the additional cloth cover was sewn on to protect the boards underneath.

Recent scholarship on the history of the book has begun to examine how authors, texts, and readers exist in relation to one another. One manner by which to explore these relationships is through the marks that readers left in books. The significance attached to such manuscript inscriptions in printed texts has varied through the years, depending on who examined the book. Book dealers and librarians often preferred a “clean” text, unsoiled by signs of usage. The obvious exception was when a famous reader had marked a book, in which case the text took on added value as an association copy. Current theory, however, provides an alternative view—that the manner in which readers marked their books can give important clues to the ways they read a text, appropriated the words of an author, and/or related to their book as a material object. The Society’s catalog clearly identifies all these ownership marks.

Elizabeth Pope

Research Assistant, Acquisitions Department

In accepting his Oscar for best adapted screenplay on March 5, 2006, Larry McMurtry said,

*And finally I’m going to thank all the booksellers of the world. Remember, “Brokeback Mountain” was a book before it was a movie. From the humblest paperback exchange to the masters of the great bookshops of the world, all are contributors to the survival of the culture of the book, a wonderful culture, which we mustn’t lose.*

This passionate declaration reminded Ellen Dunlap that AAS had some unfinished business with Mr. McMurtry. He had been elected to membership in 1989 but neglected to accept the offer. She wrote to remind him that he belongs with the eight hundred other book lovers who make up the Society, and he replied, “Of course I’d like to be a member.”

Among the historical membership we have former presidents, Nobel Peace Prize and Pulitzer Prize winners, and several who have been awarded MacArthur Foundation “genius” grants, but Mr. McMurtry is our first Oscar winner.



## Permanent Legacies

The American Antiquarian Society received seven bequests during the past year, totaling nearly \$300,000. The Society's policy is to add all bequests to the endowment unless another use is specifically directed. Some of the bequests received in 2005 were designated by the AAS Council for endowment of fellowships, earning matching funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### Bequests were received from the following individuals in 2005:

Margaret S. Butterfield	Charles H. Sawyer
Harriet B. Heaney	Arthur F. Schrader
Eustella F. Langdon	Norman L. Sharfman
Kathryn L. C. Preyer	

The members of the **Esther Forbes Society** listed below have indicated that AAS is in their estate plans. If you have made provision for AAS in your will, please let us know, and we will enroll you in this group.

Anonymous (6)	Linda F. and Julian L. Lapides
Robert Charles Baron	Sidney Lapidus
Lynne Zacek Bassett	Deborah and Jay T. Last
Mr. and Mrs. Philip C. Beals	Kenneth G. Leach
Karl Lombard Briel and Dorothy Mayne Briel	Patricia and David Ledlie
Mary Cable	Gerda Lerner
Jill K. Conway	Mason I. Lowance, Jr.
Henry B. and Jane K. Dewey	Marcus A. McCorison
James and Carol Donnelly	C. Jean and Myles McDonough
Mrs. Bradford F. Dunbar	Richard P. Morgan
Katherine L. Endicott	Jane P. Neale
Joseph J. Felcone II	Robert J. Petrilla
Catherine M. Fennelly	William S. Reese
Cheryl Hurley	Justin G. Schiller
Fran and Howard Jacobson	John D. Seelye
Marianne and John Jeppson	Frank S. Streeter
Martha Knight	Professor Michael West

## Madeira, M'dear?

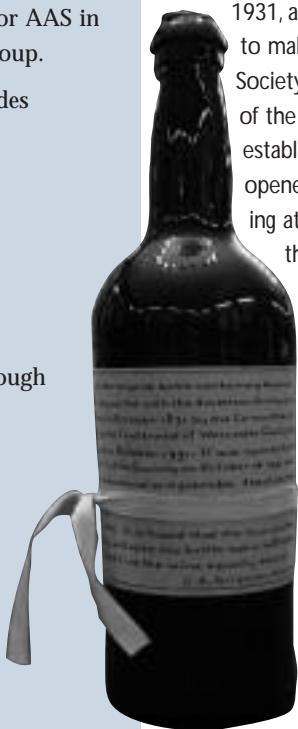
When AAS librarian Tom Knoles got his CD version of the New Yorker, he took advantage of the search feature and found that James Thurber had written about AAS in the April 25, 1931, "Talk of the Town." Thurber wrote about the dilemma the Society faced in 1931, in the prohibition era, when the time rolled around to sample a bottle of fine old Madeira, which had been left to the Society by a member for opening at the bi-centennial of Worcester County. The problem was that former president of the United States Calvin Coolidge was president of AAS, and Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Arthur P. Rugg was vice president of the Council, and neither could very well preside at a ceremony in clear violation of the law of the land.

His curiosity piqued, Knoles went to the Proceedings for 1931 to learn how this delicate situation was handled:

"At a meeting of the Council of the American Antiquarian Society on September 18, 1931, a committee, consisting of Mr. Brigham, Mr. Bullock, and Mr. Gage, was appointed to make arrangements for the proper observance of the responsibilities of the Society in connection with the deposit in October 1831 of a report by the committee of the Worcester County Historical Society on the Centennial Anniversary of the establishment of the County of Worcester, and a bottle of Madeira wine to be opened and examined at the expiration of one hundred years." At an informal gathering at Mr. Brigham's house on Wednesday, October 14th, the following members of the Council: Messrs. Bowen, Lincoln, Dewey, Winship, Brigham, Gage, Blakeslee, Kellen, Bullock, Morgan, Taylor, Barton, and Higgins, together with Mr. Vail, the Librarian, met. "The company then repaired to the Council room in the Society's Library. The bottle of Madeira was in the centre of the Council table. Mr. Lincoln presided over the gathering ... the bottle was opened by Mr. Taylor. Somewhat to the surprise of the members of the Council present, the wine was found to be sound and palatable and must have been of excellent quality to have stood the test of one hundred years!

"The major part of the 1831 Madeira was left in its ancient bottle and being fortified and replenished by a later vintage, has been recorked to remain in the custody of the Society for another hundred years, when perhaps the state of society will permit of a more ceremonious celebration."

Coolidge and Rugg were both notably absent. The bottle of Madeira is still on the premises.



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