

Obituaries

RICHARD MOTT GUMMERE

Richard Mott Gummere, scholar and dean, was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on August 3, 1883, son of Francis Barton and Amelia Smith (Mott) Gummere. He prepared for college at the Haverford School in Pennsylvania and then at the Marlburia School in Switzerland. Thus prepared he returned from abroad to enter Haverford College where his father was a professor of English and German and where young Gummere won the Class of 1896 Latin Prize, worth ten dollars, when a sophomore. Graduating with his class in 1902 he went to Harvard for an A.M. in 1904 and a doctorate in 1907. He then returned to his college where he taught Latin for the next dozen years and also served as assistant to the president for the last three. Turning to teaching for his life's work was natural, for he was the sixth generation in an unbroken family tradition of teaching. In 1918 he left to take on the job as headmaster at the William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia where he stayed until 1935. He then went to Harvard where he was Dean of Admissions and kept his hand in, teaching Latin and writing articles. Nearing seventy, he retired from the deanship, after a notably successful career, in 1952 and became curator of the Lowell Institute at the Boston Public Library. The next year he was at this library working on some research, and he thanked Clarence Brigham for 'the privilege of a couple of days in that splendid treasure house of almanacs' and he promised to be back soon for more. His efforts led to an article, 'The Classical Element in Early New England Almanacs,' that appeared in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* in early 1955 and was 'part of a project for research into Colonial classical influences.' Later in the year and

in the *Proceedings* of the American Philosophical Society, which had given the grant for the project, another article appeared, 'The Heritage of the Classics in Colonial North America.' The book toward which these and other articles in a dozen journals were leading was published in 1963, dedicated to his wife of fifty-five years, and entitled, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition*. It was the synthesis of his thought on the subject begun with his article on Benjamin Franklin, 'Socrates at the Printing Press,' in the early thirties. In 1967 a companion volume, *Seven Wise Men of Colonial America* was published. In it was contained a paper on Thomas Paine's alleged anticlassical bias, which article had first appeared in our *Proceedings* for October 1965. He was also the translator and editor of Seneca's *Letters*, and author of two other books on Seneca.

At the April meeting in 1957 Gummere had been elected to this Society. He was regular in attending meetings for the first couple of years; then, when approaching eighty and in the wake of an operation, he attended only the Boston meetings, traveling out to the Worcester meeting just once, that in 1966.

At the age of eighty-six Richard Mott Gummere died in a nursing home in Lexington, Massachusetts, on December 3, 1969. He leaves a son, six grandchildren, a great-grandchild, and a nephew who grew up across the street from the Society in a house where Gummere used to visit with his brother while working at the Society. He is remembered by his colleagues and friends as a 'gracious, kindly and witty gentleman in the finest sense of the old tradition.'

J. E. M.

JAMES D'ALTÉ ALDRIDGE WELCH

d'Alté Welch died tragically on January 4th, 1970. He had been wounded during an attempted robbery near the Cleve-

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.