

## *Obituaries*

### LAWRENCE HENRY GIPSON

Lawrence Henry Gipson, historian, was born in Greeley, Colorado, on December 7, 1880, the son of Albert Eugene and Lina Maria (West) Gipson. Growing up in the Rockies, he graduated from the University of Idaho, where he had distinguished himself as a student and as a long-distance runner, in 1903. The next year he was teaching assistant at the University and then in 1904 he left the West for England where he was in the first batch of Americans at Oxford as Rhodes Scholars. He later recalled having then been in a debate on the British Empire where he soon felt at a loss for facts and resolved to correct that lack. After taking another B.A. there in 1907, he came back to America and to a professorship at the College of Idaho where he remained until 1910, spending part of this time honeymooning with his bride, the former Jeannette Reed. For the 1911-1912 academic year he was at New Haven as a Farnham Fellow at Yale getting started on his doctorate. He then took a job at Wabash College where he stayed until 1917 with summers spent doing research in the libraries of Chicago and teaching at the University. He returned to Yale as a Bulkeley Fellow, finished up his doctorate on Loyalist Jared Ingersoll during that academic year, and got his Ph.D. in 1918 at thirty-seven years old. He then returned to Wabash, saw his dissertation published to win the Justin Winsor prize of the AHA, and remained there until 1924 when he went as department head to Lehigh University. In 1927 he made an arrangement with the administration that freed him from committee duties and he started on his history of the British Empire before the American Revolution.

In the next ten years he had finished three volumes in long-hand but had no prospects for getting them published until his brother back home in Caldwell, Idaho, printed them. At fifty-six years old then, an age when most historians are looking forward to retirement, Gipson began to plan the research for the rest of this massive work which, with the publication of the fifteenth volume late last year on his ninetieth birthday, took him the next thirty-odd years. Publication problems had been eased by the interest of Alfred A. Knopf who published the rest of the volumes including revisions of the first three. As they were being published, Gipson was awarded, in 1948, the Loubat Prize for his first six volumes and two years later he got the Bancroft Prize of the AHA for the next volume. Arriving at the proper age for retirement, in his case seventy-three, he became research professor emeritus in 1954, and continued with his work which by 1958 was listed in a bibliography that included about seventy books and articles. Among his honors in that period were a number of honorary degrees, a Harmsworth professorship at Oxford, and also the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1962.

In the early fifties, Clifford Shipton wrote Gipson to thank him for having sent along a book, closing the note by saying that in his own classroom work he lectured along the lines of 'your great history.' At the April meeting in 1956, Gipson was elected to membership in this Society, and exactly a year later he delivered a paper, 'Aspects of the Beginning of the Revolutionary Movement in Massachusetts Bay.' It appeared in an expanded form in our *Proceedings* even though he protested that it was really designed and written as a chapter in his tenth volume. He was reluctant to do anything that might hurt the sales, given the 'great financial stake that Alfred Knopf has in the series,' and Lehigh and the Rockefeller Foundation had also put a financial stake into the work. Whoever bore the cost, it was a true benefaction to scholarship, for Gipson's volumes are indeed monumental in every sense of the word.

In 1961 Gipson delivered a paper at our Boston meeting, speaking on the move toward colonial union in 1754. During the sixties Gipson corresponded with us here and attended our meetings on occasions when he could get away. Getting away was not easy, for he was kept extraordinarily busy with his study of the Empire. He also had the presidency of the Conference on British Studies and other chores to help occupy his time. In spite of all the pressures, including that of a hospitalized wife, he kept steadily to his routine which included a very long walk back and forth from home to his office in the library every day. Routine worked and Gipson finished his volumes and then started on a history of the first hundred years of Lehigh University where he had thrived for nearly half those years.

Last winter Gipson had been hit by a truck near his home and limped away with a damaged foot and a real scare. The foot healed, and in March he started on his way to Worcester for a meeting of the Program for Loyalist Studies for which he was a member of the American advisory board. Ninety years old, he took the bus to New York, stayed overnight with Robert East, Director of the Program, and the next day the Easts and Gipson had a delightful drive up to Worcester. The following day, Gipson, East, and I drove into Boston for a meeting of the Colonial Society at which we and Andrew Oliver served as a panel on the Loyalists. When we got there, the wind up Beacon Hill was so strong it nearly blew Gipson over, so East and I virtually carried him into the building. The session went very well and Gipson was properly lionized. The next evening, those attending the Worcester meeting were at our home and Gipson continued to be the center of attention. Tired out from his efforts he rested the next day while meetings were held at the Society. On Sunday morning my wife Elsie and I took our children down to the hotel, bundled Gipson into the car, and started for the Boston airport. As he had overslept, missed breakfast, and had only some toast that Mer-

rill Jensen and Clarence Ver Steeg had given him to keep him going, we stopped at a doughnut shop on the way. At the airport, before the other passengers boarded, the children and I took him to the plane where they got to see the cockpit and I got to see that Gipson was settled for the trip. Overloaded with courtly expressions of deep gratitude and our goodbys said, we went back to the terminal where Elsie reported she had been asked by other passengers, curious about his special treatment, whether he were a famous man. She had told them that he was famous, yes, but that, more importantly, he was a very good man.

This very good man, half a year later, on September 26, 1971, died in his sleep in a nursing home to which he had recently gone. His wife to whom he had been married for nearly sixty years, had died in 1967, and he was survived by a sister, Margaret Gipson, of Caldwell, Idaho. He had stayed the long distance well indeed.

J. E. M.

#### RAYMOND SANGER WILKINS

Raymond Sanger Wilkins, judge and collector, was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on May 24, 1891, son of Samuel Herbert and Marietta Burke (Rowell) Wilkins. He spent his early learning years in the public schools of Salem and after graduating from high school there he went to Harvard with the Class of 1912 where he majored in government, held for his senior year a Group I Scholarship, managed the lacrosse team for a time, and took his degree cum laude. He then went across the street to the Law School where he was editor at the law review and where he took his LL.B. degree, also cum laude, in 1915 and was admitted to the state bar that year. He went right into a Boston law firm until during the First World War

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