

LAWRENCE MEREDITH CLEMSON SMITH

Lawrence Meredith Clemson Smith, lawyer and farmer and collector and conservationist, was born in Philadelphia on October 4, 1902, the son of Lewis L. and Gertrude (Clemson) Smith. His early schooling was at Germantown Friends School, and he took a bachelor's degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1923. He then went off to England for another undergraduate degree at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he also took an M.A. before returning home to Philadelphia for a law degree in 1928, the year he was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar. He spent the next four years practicing with the firm of Roberts and Montgomery, and the year after that with the firm of Montgomery and McCracken. In those years he saw the nation slide into a great Depression. With the coming of the New Deal, he signed on and moved to Washington with his bride, Eleanor Houston, whom he had married between FDR's election in 1932 and his inauguration. There he was general coordinator of the legal division of the National Recovery Administration until 1935 when he moved to the Securities and Exchange Commission as associate counsel in charge of investigation and study of investment trusts.

With the gathering of the storm over Europe, he became chief of the special war policies unit of the Department of Justice where he remained until 1943. He then became, in 1944, chief of the economic mission to French West Africa and the next year head of the United States purchasing mission in Switzerland where a part of his job was the arrangement of train shipments in the war zones. After the war, he served early and long with UNESCO where he was on the executive committee in the late fifties and was chairman for the ten years before 1975. Because of his efforts during the war, when his family was bereft of his company, Smith became a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France, recipient of the Order of the British Empire, and he also received the

Order of the Southern Cross from Brazil where he was advisor to the United States delegation at the third meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics in 1942.

While doing all of this elsewhere, he became at home a major force in Philadelphia cultural and political life as chairman of the Board of Trade and Conventions and as a founder of the local chapter of Americans for Democratic Action, the Human Relations Commission, and the Housing Association.

Smith and his wife had means and a clear idea of how to use their money where it would do the most good in the long run. In Philadelphia where the Smiths lived winters in a delightful house on one acre in Germantown, and in Maine, where for thirty years they had been developing a working organic beef farm on 900 acres at Wolf's Neck in Freeport, the intelligent use of land was their steady aim. They saw to the setting up of Popham Beach and Wolf's Neck State Parks along the Maine coast. They were active in protecting wildlife, and at both homes they gave generously to establish the Mast Landing Bird Sanctuary in Freeport and the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center in Philadelphia. In this, the Smiths had opposition from conservative neighbors and even from Central Maine Power, but they were strongly enough in the right to come out on top. They also founded and owned the Philadelphia classical music station, which is a great boon to their city, and they formed an impressive collection of maps, atlases, globes, and marine paintings. Smith was a member of the Franklin Inn in Philadelphia, the Sulgrave Club in Washington, and the Grolier Club in New York. He was a trustee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and former president of the American Federation of Arts.

Their preference for anonymity led to Smith's never having been given proper credit for land use and policies in Maine, but a chapter in Richard Saltonstall's *Maine Pilgrimage* and an obituary tribute and editorial in the *Maine Times* for Au-

gust 22, 1975, did something to right the balance and to point out that Smith was a creative capitalist who confessed to being a socialist but one with a concern for return on investments.

Just as I was about to leave my job at this Society for one at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Smith and two other Philadelphians were chosen for the class just to be elected to membership in AAS in October 1973. At a staff meeting then I alluded to that election in the metaphor of a baseball trade, three for one. I have felt since that the humor was lost on my hearers, but I have heard since that the honor was not lost on Smith. He was thrilled to be elected and even 'huffed and puffed in pride' about it. I came to know him well if briefly at Philadelphia and found him to be a man of broad views and fixed purposes, certain always in conversation to do a great share of questioning and listening. The combination of his own fertile imagination and his willingness to grant the ideas of others gave him magnitude of mind, as his breeding gave him magnitude of body. He was a delightful companion, refreshingly free of cant while full of information of a sort to keep anyone's continued interest, for among his interests there was always room for another.

On Sunday, August 10, 1975, Smith had just walked back to the beach after a swim in the waters of the Gulf of Maine when a massive heart stoppage killed him at the age of seventy-two. He is survived by his widow who was an uncommonly close partner in life, four daughters, two sons, and eleven grandchildren. He is also survived by an army of friends in all stations in life who have powerful reasons to be angry that he should no longer be here to enjoy, for he was a natural resource for us all.

James E. Mooney

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