

## LYMAN HENRY BUTTERFIELD

Lyman H. Butterfield, historian, biographer, first editor-in-chief of *The Adams Papers*, who died on April 25, 1982, was elected a member of this Society in 1951. He attended its meetings regularly, read several papers, served on the Publications Committee, and was an unfailing source of ideas and generous support. His first contacts with the Society, which he later called 'a powerful and . . . helpful agency devoted to promoting the best kind of learning,' were to inquire of Clarence Brigham about marginalia in books from Thomas Jefferson's library and about letters of John Witherspoon, about whom he was then preparing a small book.

Lyman was born in Lyndonville in western New York on August 8, 1909, the son of Roy L. and Ethel (Place) Butterfield. His father was a high school teacher and principal, one of those old Americans who could put his hand successfully to almost anything. Butterfield senior had a profound knowledge of aspects of early American history, especially that of the Mohawk Valley; after his retirement he was town historian of Hartwick, the small village near Cooperstown where an eighteenth-century Butterfield had built a house; he bought it back for the family in the 1940s.

Lyman was graduated from Harvard College in 1930. He remained in Cambridge for graduate work in English, received a master's degree in 1934, but, finding the conventional route to a Ph.D. unsatisfying, he left Harvard to teach English literature at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

In 1944 a hitherto unknown letter of Dr. Benjamin Rush describing the inauguration of Franklin (later Franklin and Marshall) College in 1787 was offered for sale. Lyman got the college to buy it, prepared it for publication, and saw it issued in a handsome little volume. Work on this book intro-

duced Lyman to the late colonial and early Federal period of American history and to one of its most vigorous personalities. He conceived the idea of publishing a selection of Rush's surviving letters. *Letters of Benjamin Rush* was published in two splendid volumes by Princeton University Press in 1951. They were, one reviewer declared, 'edited with impeccable scholarship and taste,' and they have proved to be an incalculably rich, hitherto little used or known body of materials for the history of the early Republic; and, as subsequent years have shown, have stimulated much new research and writing.

Meanwhile, Lyman had joined Julian P. Boyd, then librarian of Princeton University, in 1946 as assistant editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, which Boyd was organizing. Lyman's wide bibliographical knowledge, his quick sympathy for the people and events of Jefferson's age, and a clear, forceful literary style made him an invaluable collaborator. During the five years he spent at Princeton, in addition to his editorial work on the Jefferson Papers, Lyman published a number of articles on Rush, Jefferson, and their contemporaries, and on the larger problems of historical editing.

In 1951 he became director of the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg. In this position Lyman established a newsletter (which he wrote in its entirety, and even took a turn at the mimeograph machine, inaugurated the Institute Book Prize, compiled the first issue of *Readable Books*, and conducted a series of conferences on research needs and opportunities in aspects of early American history. Several conferences resulted in small historico-bibliographical volumes that stimulated scholarly inquiry into important but neglected topics.

As the expiration date of the Adams Manuscript Trust approached, Lyman's counsel was sought, with that of other scholars, on the future of the Adams family papers. The decision was made to publish a generous portion, and Lyman was named editor-in-chief of the project in 1954. His task was of

daunting size and complexity. With only a small staff, he had to organize several hundred thousand manuscripts of every kind, cope all the while with a steady stream of new documents as members of the family brought in their holdings to the office, and comb distant archives and collections for Adams and Adams-related materials. The bulk of the collection at the Massachusetts Historical Society was microfilmed in 608 reels. In 1961 the first volumes in the series—John Adams's diary and autobiography—appeared. By the time he retired in 1975, Lyman had edited or overseen the editing of twenty volumes.

*The Adams Papers* was envisioned by its editor "not simply as a contribution to the history of an eminent American family or even simply to the history of a growing nation, but as a substantial and enlightening chapter in the history of humanity during the age just antecedent to our own." This humanistic quality was displayed also in editorial practice. Lyman was careful and accurate, of course, but not finicky. He preferred the intelligible and likely between two versions or possible readings. He did not hesitate silently to correct unimportant or fortuitous errors, for he knew that men do not deliberately write nonsense, and was confident that the editors' knowledge of the writers and their subjects should count for something. Of the great collection he brought to light and life he wrote sensibly, 'Not everything written by every Adams to any other Adams deserves perpetuation in print.'

Though amply absorbed by the Adams project, Lyman found time to serve on countless commissions, committees, and boards—among them the National Historical Publications Commission, the Council on Library Resources, committees of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the boards of the *New England Quarterly*, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, and *The Papers of Benjamin Latrobe*. He was especially interested in everything about archival preservation and publication, and, in company with Boyd, Philip M. Hamer, and Oliver W. Holmes of the National Historical Publications Commis-

sion, made a lasting contribution to archives policies and practices in the two decades after 1955. At the beginning of his career he had proposed that a union catalogue of Rush's letters be created; had served the Antiquarian Society as an advisor to its 'Index to Manuscripts of Prominent Americans, 1763-1815, in Book Auction and Dealers' Catalogues'; and in his later years he proposed to an international conference of archivists that something like a world union catalogue of collections be compiled. 'The only way one can repay one's predecessors,' he remarked simply, 'is by helping one's successors.'

Lyman had no conventional hobbies or recreations. He did not play golf or tennis; did not fish, garden, or climb mountains; nor did he drive a car. But he would happily add to the major tasks at hand some minute inquiry, such as the history of the versions of Benjamin Franklin's famous epitaph or the career of Elder John Leland, which he recounted to this Society in 1951. He particularly enjoyed preparing keepsake tributes for friends and colleagues like Boyd, Walter M. Whitehill, Harold Hugo, and Stephen T. Riley; and they in turn compiled and printed one for him: *Butterfield in Holland: A Record of L. H. Butterfield's Pursuit of the Adamses Abroad in 1961*.

Ill health and failing sight forced Lyman to retire in 1975. His strength returned sometimes—he traveled to New Haven in 1978 to speak, without notes or a cane, on an occasion honoring Harold Hugo—but only for short periods. He had hoped to occupy his retirement with a study, long cherished, of eighteenth-century diaries; and he wanted very much to write a full exposition of the editorial philosophy and methods of his mentor Julian Boyd; but sustained work was impossible. He did, however, share in writing in 1979 the introduction to a collection of letters (then but recently discovered) that Benjamin Rush wrote his fiancée during their courtship.

Lyman was married in 1935 to Elizabeth Anne Eaton of Cleveland, Ohio. In addition to working from time to time in the Jefferson and Adams editorial offices, Betty Butterfield had

a career of her own as the successful organizer and manager of the Bryn Mawr Book Store in Cambridge. She died in 1978. The couple had two children: Fox, chief of the *New York Times's* Boston bureau, and Hester. A memorial service for Lyman was held in the Massachusetts Historical Society on May 27, 1982, and the tributes spoken at that time have been printed in that Society's *Proceedings*.

Whitfield J. Bell, Jr.

### STUART CAPEN SHERMAN

Stuart C. Sherman died in Falmouth, Massachusetts, on April 8, 1983. He will be remembered among his colleagues and friends for two things which dominated his career, books and whales. Born in Amherst, Massachusetts, on October 30, 1916, he came to Providence at the age of five when his father, Clarence C. Sherman, became the assistant librarian and later librarian of the Providence Public Library. Following graduation from Moses Brown School, Stuart attended Brown University, receiving his A.B. in 1939. While at Brown he took the seminar given by Lawrence C. Wroth, the librarian of the John Carter Brown Library, and it was at Mr. Wroth's suggestion that Stuart decided to attend the Library School at Columbia University, from which he received his B.L.S. in 1940. After a summer at the New York Public Library he moved to Baltimore as branch librarian in the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library. He was married in 1941 to Mary Elliot Thompson; they had two children, Nancy and Robert.

In 1943 Stuart returned to Providence where he was successively branch superintendent, assistant librarian, and associate librarian of the Providence Public Library until becoming librarian in 1954. Fourteen years later, in 1968, he accepted the invitation of David A. Jonah, director of libraries of Brown

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