

Walker chose not to return to the family investment firm after the war, but became instead the treasurer of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. He kept his hand in business as chairman of the board of the Galveston-Houston Company, a director of both the Fort Worth Transit Company and the Hollingsworth & Vose Company, and as an inactive member of the Boston Stock Exchange.

Walker's collecting interests ran at first, he once wrote, to 'Americana of the Colonial and early Federal periods—furniture, silver, ceramics and glass—rounding out a collection started by my father in 1900.' Election to the American Antiquarian Society came at the semiannual meeting in 1954. He was not especially active in the Society, attending only seven meetings in the quarter century he was on its rolls. He was as well a member of the Club of Odd Volumes, the Walpole Society, and the Essex Institute of Salem, among other associations.

In later years, Walker dispersed his collection of Americana through gift and sale and he began buying objects in Spain, where he spent six months of each year. Within the last decade, he became interested as well in the graphic arts.

Guy Warren Walker died April 18, 1978, after a long illness. He is survived by his second wife, the former Leila S. Stevens, whom he married in 1960, and a daughter, Judith W. Mixtell, by his first marriage, to the former Nancy Sturgis Vose, who died in 1959.

John B. Hench

WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL

Walter Muir Whitehill, a member of the American Antiquarian Society since 1942, died, aged seventy-two, in Boston on March 5, 1978, after a brief illness. These bare facts cannot reflect the sense of loss, bereavement, and shock felt

by so many; one of Walter's acquaintances remarked that it was similar to suddenly having the State House or the Boston City Hall removed from the horizon.

Outlining Walter's career, character, and accomplishments proved a difficult task for newspaper men, television reporters, editorial writers, and those colleagues of Walter's in organizations who wish to pay appropriate tribute. Walter himself had difficulty, at times, in defining his career and interests. In one Harvard class report he gave his occupation as scientist, in the next it was listed as archeologist, then museum administrator, then librarian, and, finally, historian, director and librarian. All accurate descriptions, no doubt, at particular times in Walter's life. Fortunately for us, Walter also defined his career in another Harvard report in which he said that it had been divided into three sections: a decade of research on Spanish mediaeval subjects (mainly in Spain), another decade devoted to maritime and naval history between the Peabody Museum of Salem and the Navy Department, and three decades centered around Boston institutions. In this fiftieth anniversary Harvard class report, Walter emphasized the importance of the role friends had played in his life and about whom he wrote so charmingly in *Analecta Biographica* (1969). For perhaps all of us remember Walter best for his wide circle of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues, both national and international. Surely, Walter's pleasure in his friends was another of his most happy characteristics. Upon several occasions when asked what he had felt his greatest talent was, Walter responded that he felt it was his ability to be able to place the right person in the right position at the right time. Despite the fact that, inevitably, some of Walter's swans turned out to be geese upon closer inspection, there is no doubt that by his being able to see that the right person had the right task nourished and supported numerous institutions and scholarly undertakings. Another characteristic was his determined support of

anyone to whom he felt responsibility, perhaps a trait carried over from the days he spent in the navy.

It is obviously impossible to enumerate all the activities, accomplishments, and involvements of this highly talented and energetic scholar. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on September 28, 1905, the son of Walter Muir and Florence Marion (Williams) Whitehill, he received his degree from Harvard with the class of 1926, a master's degree in 1929 and his doctorate from the University of London in 1934. During 1926-28, he was a tutor in the Department of Fine Arts at Harvard and Radcliffe and in the summer of 1927, he went to Spain for the first time and began work on Spanish Romanesque architecture and manuscripts which he carried on during the years 1928-29. From 1930 until the spring of 1936, his base was in Barcelona which he found a convenient center for work upon the art and history of the eleventh century in Spain. This resulted in his first published works including a history of eleventh-century Spanish architecture. Economics and political events intervened in Walter's career as a mediaevalist and in the spring of 1936 he returned to the United States and settled with his family in North Andover expecting to go back into American academic work. In the autumn of that year, he was appointed assistant director of the Peabody Museum of Salem. By 1939, he had published two volumes on New England naval history and was the editor of *The American Neptune* and already involved with the numerous New England organizations to which he devoted so much of his life. In November 1942, Walter was granted military leave and went on duty at the Office of Naval Records and Library, Navy Department, where he was on active duty for nearly four years. He became librarian of the Boston Athenæum in the summer of 1946 leaving active duty as a commander having received letters of commendation from Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations, and Chief of Naval Intelligence.

Walter continued as editor of *The American Neptune* and retained close ties with the Peabody Museum of which he was made a trustee in 1950. To his wartime service, Walter owed the continued friendship of many naval officers and also his hearty dislike for life in Washington, D.C. Another result of his naval service was assisting Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King in the preparation of his published memoirs. Return to civilian life brought other institutional responsibilities including service as president of the Old South Association, vice-president of the North Andover Historical Society, work with the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia, cabinet keeper of the Massachusetts Historical Society, trustee of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Fruitlands, and Wayside Museum, and innumerable others.

He also was a member of the faculty of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, an associate of Lowell House and Allston Burr Senior Tutor of Lowell House at Harvard. He became librarian of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, president of the Club of Odd Volumes, and chairman of the Institute of Early American History and Culture, and member of the administrative board of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin and the Adams Papers. In 1953, he became a trustee of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, another responsibility which continued to his death. Institutions outside of Boston claimed his attention. He was devoted to Marlboro College in Vermont and to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. His efforts on behalf of so many organizations were recognized by honorary degrees from the University of New Brunswick, Washington and Jefferson, Northeastern, the University of Delaware, Merrimack College, and William and Mary, among others.

A seemingly fluent and easy writer, Walter's list of publications is far too long to include here but perhaps he was particularly proud of *Boston: A Topographical History* and

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History. Walter charmed the Proprietors of the Boston Athenæum with witty and learned annual reports; perhaps his greatest accomplishment for the Athenæum was making the institution internationally known and recognized. He retired from the Athenæum in February 1973 in hopes of having more time for writing in North Andover. Despite his efforts to reduce outside commitments, the list of offices and obligations he held at the time of his death was, to ordinary mortals, almost unbelievable.

No memoir of Walter Whitehill should omit mention of his marriage in 1930 to Jane Revere Coolidge, their two daughters, Jane Coolidge Rotch and Diana Laing, and five grandchildren. All of the Whitehills' friends delighted in the happiness of their marriage, their joy in being together, and in the ways they complemented each other. The interest and pride expressed by Walter about his grandchildren was an additional happiness to his friends.

Walter was a man of definite opinion, strong in what he liked as well as in what he abominated. The poet David McCord contributed a listing of Walter's likes and dislikes to the bibliography of Walter's writings which was a gift to Walter by friends upon his retirement from the Athenæum in 1973. The only item on the list with which any might quibble was a statement that Walter liked staying at home. But home in Andover was very much a part of Walter's heart and personality despite the extensive travel and days away. The memorial service at the Church of the Advent, Boston, was filled to overflowing with Walter's friends and admirers; he was later buried in a graveyard at Monticello, the home of Jane Coolidge Whitehill's ancestor, Thomas Jefferson. But what must not be forgotten about Walter is that his real memorial is in the city of Boston where his concern and energy helped to protect, renew, refresh, and increase the dimensions and beauty of this city. It was Walter's skill in

working with a variety of people and organizations that helped with the preservation of buildings such as the Sears Crescent but it was also Walter who helped the city to have the vision to commission an outstanding new City Hall by fine architects working in a contemporary style.

He was a devoted member of the American Antiquarian Society serving as a Councillor from 1952 until he was elected Secretary for Domestic Correspondence in 1974 which post he occupied at the time of his death. He was our Society's delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies, a speaker at its meetings and a contributor to its publications and to its funds as well as being regularly present at Society meetings and committee meetings. He will be sorely missed here as he will be in Boston and in the other communities and institutions to which he devoted so much of his life.

Rodney Armstrong

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