

Obituaries

MERRILL MONROE JENSEN

Merrill Jensen, Vilas professor of history at the University of Wisconsin until his retirement in 1976, died in Madison on January 30, 1980. Born in Elkhorn, Iowa, July 16, 1905, he earned his first degrees at the University of Washington and his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin in 1934. He taught at Washington, edited the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, and in 1944 was historian with the Army Air Force. In that year he came as an associate professor to the University of Wisconsin, was promoted to a professorship, and served as chairman of the history department from 1961 to 1964. In 1949-50 he was Harmsworth professor of history at Oxford and in 1960 a visiting professor at the University of Ghent. As visiting professor at the University of Tokyo in 1955 he began his long and influential association with the promotion of American history in Japan. The Organization of American Historians honored him with the presidency in 1969-70. The many scholarly organizations of which he was a member included the American Historical Association, the British American Studies Association, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the American Antiquarian Society, to which he was elected in October 1969.

Professor Jensen was a leading authority on the American Revolution. His publications include *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison, 1940), with two later editions: *The New Nation: A History of the United States during the Confederation, 1781-1789* (New York, 1950), chosen by the History Book Club as a main selection; *The Making of the American Constitution* (New York, 1964); *The Founding of a Nation* (New York, 1968); and *The American Revolution within America* (New York, 1970). He edited a series of important and useful

documents. These included *American Colonial Documents to 1776* (Vol. 9 of *English Historical Documents* [London and New York, 1955]); *Documentary History of the First Federal Elections*, sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission, the first volume of which was published in 1976, with two additional ones in press; and *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, of which he became editor in 1970. Three volumes have been published in Madison, and fifteen or so additional volumes are planned, which his associates are continuing. Appropriately, Professor Jensen was asked to address the Congress of the United States on the Bicentennial of the first day of the meeting of the first Congress.

Jensen's concern for the development of American history overseas was especially notable. He gave seminars at the University of Tokyo and the University of Kyoto, and many lectures in other Japanese universities. From 1962 to 1972 he was a member of the advisory committee of the American Studies Conference Board on International Exchange of Persons, the State Department agency in charge of the Fulbright program. In 1962 he was advisor to the American Delegation at the Second Japanese-American Conference on Cultural and Educational Exchanges, held in Washington, D.C. Professor Jensen influenced a number of able young Japanese in his field, all of whom became loyal and devoted friends and productive historians in early American history. At Wisconsin Professor Jensen attracted able students, many of whom are among the leading authorities in the period of the American Revolution. He encouraged them to do their own thinking, but their work as a whole, together with that of his students in Japan, may be thought of as the Jensen school.

Merrill Jensen in 1929 married a high school sweetheart, Genevieve Margaret Privet, who survives him, as does their daughter Julianne (Mrs. David G. Pease of Philadelphia). Professor Jensen had a vivid, affirmative personality, warm and outgoing. A great out-of-doors man, a craftsman and builder of

skill and imagination, he was also a devoted and informed lover of music and art. He was a critical scholar deeply appreciative of America, a true citizen of the world, and a remarkable human being.

Merle Curti

BERTRAM WALLACE KORN

Bertram Wallace Korn, rabbi, navy chaplain, and historian, was born to Manuel and Blanche (Bergman) Korn in Philadelphia on October 6, 1918. His early education was in the public schools of Philadelphia. He later attended the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University, and in 1939 graduated with an A.B. and honors from the University of Cincinnati. Following rabbinical studies at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College, he was ordained in 1943, and from 1943 to 1944 was rabbi at the Government Street Temple in Mobile, Alabama. From 1944 to 1946 he served as a navy chaplain in China. He remained in the chaplain corps through the rest of his life, attaining the rank of rear admiral (the first rabbi to do so) in 1975. From 1946 to 1949 Korn continued his work toward a doctorate in Hebrew Letters at Hebrew Union (awarded in 1949) and spent the year 1948-49 as an assistant professor there.

Korn returned to Philadelphia in 1949 to become senior rabbi at the synagogue in which he grew up, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia's Elkins Park suburb.

Korn's work as a historian paralleled his career at Keneseth Israel. His interests centered on Jewish-American history with special emphases on the history of Jews in the antebellum South and on southern Jewish printers, publishers, and booksellers. Among his prolific output of books, articles, and research notes were *American Jewry and the Civil War* (1951), *Jewish Roots in America* (1953), *Eventful Years and Experi-*

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