

## FRANK H. TEAGLE, JR.

Printer, town crier, tree warden, all 'round good citizen of Woodstock, Vermont, peace activist, recycler par-excellence, collector of miniature books and ephemera, enthusiast for all good works—such words hardly describe the busy, charismatic person who was Frank Teagle.

Frank was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 26, 1914, to Frank and Alice Wright Teagle. (Frank, Sr., was the brother of Walter Clark Teagle, for many years the president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.) Following his college years, Frank found work in the printing offices of Frank Berry (of the American Type Founders) and Horace Carr, who shared space in the Caxton Printing Company building owned by George Adomeit, father of our late member, Ruth Adomeit. In fact, the Teagle and Adomeit families were neighbors, and Frank and Ruth sustained a close friendship for more than sixty years, lasting until her death in February 1996.

Following World War II, during which Frank served in a topographic unit preparing maps for the invasion of Normandy, he moved in January 1946 to Woodstock, Vermont, to work at The Elm Tree Press. Thenceforth, Frank would make the town of Woodstock his own, an affiliation that lasted until his death on February 19, 1997, at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

The Elm Tree Press had been established in 1906 by the Dana brothers, Edward and Joseph. The press, although never becoming a large operation, gained a reputation for well-printed, interesting books, perhaps the best-known being *The Old Librarian's Almanack*. The almanac was a hoax engineered by Edmund Lester Pearson and John Cotton Dana. It purported to be a facsimile of a 1773 New Haven imprint and was filled with admonitions written by 'Jared Bean,' such as, 'So far as your Authority will permit it, exercise great Discrimination as to which

Persons shall be admitted to the use of the Library. For the Treasure House of Literature is no more to be thrown open to the ravages of the unreasoning Mob, than is a fair Garden to be laid unprotected at the Mercy of a Swarm of Beasts.' Its publication in 1909 caused a considerable stir and it was widely reviewed. The revelation of its true nature caused great amusement to some and to those who had been fooled by it, no small embarrassment. In any event, the Dana brothers continued at The Elm Tree Press until Edward sold it in 1942. William E. Rudge, 3rd, managed the press, his associates being Ray Nash, Robert Dothard, and Frank Lieberman. Although the press continued to produce excellent and significant work, its finances were unstable, and in 1945 the press was bought by a Woodstock lawyer, Paul Bourdon, from the local bank. At this juncture Frank Teagle appeared in Woodstock as the operator of the press. He remained in charge of The Elm Tree Press through the ownership of Robert Dothard, 1951-57. During this period, in 1955, Teagle married Rhoda Walker French, and in 1957 he and Rhoda purchased the press, continuing its traditions of excellent typography and content until 1972, when the press was destroyed by fire and they retired from printing.

Productions of the Teagle's press consisted of well-designed ephemeral pieces of a local nature and of small, well-printed pamphlets and books. Among them was a periodical containing material written by Mrs. Teagle that related to the history and current activities of Woodstock. Typical publications included a book on the Woodstock native entitled, *The Vermont Heritage of George Perkins Marsh* by David Lowenthal, *Vermont's Eight Bells of Paul Revere and Family* (another of Frank's many interests) by Edward Stickney, and a history of the old cemetery in Blue Hill, Maine. Teagle was not only a collector of miniature books, he was a publisher and printer of them as well. Frank was 'Peter Putter' of the Lilliputter Press and as such issued a number of miniatures at The Elm Tree Press. One of them, *A Little Cookie Book*, was a collaboration with Ruth Adomeit that was finally (Frank wrote that he

'puttered for 9 years!') issued in 1960 at a cost of \$2.00 a copy. In 1968 he and Ruth, in association with Robert Massmann, reprinted *The News-Letter of the LXIVMOS*, a miniature journal published from 1927 to 1929. The papers of The Elm Tree Press and a comprehensive collection of its imprints are held in Special Collections at the Bailey/Howe Library of the University of Vermont.

The press did not absorb all of Frank Teagle's abundant thought and energy. For years he was the elected tree warden of the Town of Woodstock. In the fall of 1994, with his eyes failing from the plague of macular degeneration and with his mind awirl with unfinished projects, he resigned the office of Woodstock's unofficial town crier. For thirty faithful years Frank wrote on a slate blackboard, placed near the foot of the town common, the notices of public events, snow conditions at the town's ski tows, and other multitudinous announcements of public interest. To the blackboard, Frank added a clock and a thermometer. When an iron bridge that spanned the Ottaquechee River was condemned, residents of a portion of the town were forced to take detours to reach the town center. Frank led the campaign to replace the bridge with a replica of the covered bridge that had once stood at the same river crossing. In 1971 Frank, always an environmentalist, became a committed recycler. In order to save a sheet of paper, Frank replied, always wittily and at length, to letters addressed to him by writing his responses on the sender's original letterhead. Actually, this tactic is a entirely sensible one because, when reviewing correspondence (as your memorialist has done for this note), one finds the whole story in one fell swoop! It was said that Teagle would cruise the dank alleys of Woodstock to assure that his fellow citizens were properly doing their duty, as regards recycling at least. About the year 1983 (no need to be too precise), he and Mrs. Teagle established the Howfirma Foundation. Its purpose is to support good works—the needs of children, history and historic preservation, conservation, and peace—in Woodstock and its hinterlands. Recently, among

its 414 grants (totaling \$156,900) was one of \$10,000 and another of \$21. Both Mr. and Mrs. Teagle were active members of the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce. Frank and Rhoda Teagle's work was never done, and Woodstock is much the better for their loving nurture of the community.

Teagle was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society in October 1977, following several years of association and correspondence with the undersigned concerning the history and restoration of the ancient wooden press located at the Vermont Historical Society (both of us being trustees of the Society). Frank was distraught by the fact, contrary to local legend, that the old press could not be proved to be the machine brought in 1639 to Harvard College by the Rev. Jose Glover and used there by the Green family printers. It can be shown, however, to be the first press used in Connecticut from 1714 and at Windsor, Vermont, in 1783. Nonetheless, Frank persisted in his attempts to renovate the press into workable condition, a task fraught with troubles. Its new marble bed was too high to admit type beneath the platen. Finally, Elizabeth Harris of the Smithsonian and Clinton Sisson, who had restored Isaiah Thomas's press at AAS, declared that the Vermont press was so weakened by dry rot that it ought not be put to the stress of printing. To make matters worse, after two years of work, Frank pried the types of the 1778 Thanksgiving broadside, a reproduction of which he planned to print in celebration of the introduction of printing into Vermont (well, actually Dresden, Vermont, before and after known as Hanover, New Hampshire). His interest in the history of printing led him to give his 1820 Acorn hand press to the Shelburne Museum, which, he long thought, needed to exhibit a nineteenth-century printing office.

Several years before his death, Frank asked the librarian of this Society if AAS could use certain of his books on printing. The response was, of course, promptly affirmative and a list was sent indicating which titles would be helpful in Worcester. In 1991 Frank sent us sixty-five excellent works. Although Teagle never

attended a meeting of the Society and may never have visited AAS, he was a constant and generous donor to the annual fund. His gifts of friendship, enthusiasm, faithfulness to his beliefs, and devotion to his craft and its history constitute a legacy that will long be treasured in his adopted home town and state, and at the American Antiquarian Society.

Marcus A. McCorison

### PAUL MARKHAM KAHN

Paul Markham Kahn, who was elected to the Society in 1987, died on March 10, 1997. He was born in San Francisco, California, in 1936 and was raised in nearby Marin County. A graduate of Stanford University in the class of 1956, he received an M.A. and Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Michigan.

Paul pursued his professional career as an actuary in New York City and later in Los Angeles and San Francisco. It was during these years that he made a comprehensive collection of historical books, manuscripts, engravings, maps, newspapers, and photographs about Hawaii.

Paul Kahn's interest in the field of Hawaiiiana began after visits to Honolulu relatives and friends of his mother, Alexandrina Markham Kahn. Her grandfather, William Archeson Markham, came to Hawaii in 1847 and was married to Konale Kapule of Kipuhulu, Maui.

'I bought my first books from the late San Francisco bookseller Warren Howell,' Paul said a few years ago. 'He was my principal advisor and dealer early on. He taught me to buy the best material available.' Paul Kahn was a farsighted collector. His interest in Hawaiian language imprints, an important part of his library, led him to purchase in 1969 part of the collection of the late Sir Lester Harmsworth.

Paul was methodical and usually acquired the best copy avail-

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