

writing history, she had a deep understanding of the inseparability of libraries, scholars, and learning. She appreciated just as clearly that, whether local or national, libraries and museums are the conservators of our cultural patrimony. Her leadership and support of the Library Company as well as other libraries and museums in Philadelphia and Bucks County greatly enriched the cultural life of our metropolitan community.'

John C. Van Horne

ALEXANDER J. WALL, JR.

Alexander J. Wall, a former President of Old Sturbridge Village, died on January 8, 1999, in Augusta, Maine, at the age of eighty-seven. Al was a long-time administrator of several institutions devoted to the preservation and interpretation of American history, and he was involved in the national leadership of the American Association for State and Local History and the American Association of Museums.

After graduation in 1934 from Columbia University, he received museum training at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and joined the New-York Historical Society library staff where his father was librarian-director. Al traveled with him to Europe to study museum exhibitions as part of the planning for the 1939 addition to the NYHS library building.

He was introduced to New England collectors on visits to Edna Little Greenwood's restored eighteenth-century house at Time Stone Farm in Marlborough, Massachusetts. Edna Greenwood's circle of book friends included Wall, Sr., Lawrence Wroth, and Clarence Brigham, who wrote that Al's father, who was elected a member of the Society in 1925, 'was the moving spirit in entertainment and sociability.'

Al married Fannie Elizabeth Lerch in 1941 and saw active duty as a captain in the Army Air Corps during World War II in the

official history section of the Air Corps in Denver. He became director of the New Jersey Historical Society after the war and in 1956, was recruited by Frank Spinney, then president of Old Sturbridge Village, to become curator at the Village. After Charles van Ravenswaay left the Village for Winterthur Museum in 1966, Al was chosen president, the position he held until his retirement in 1977.

Al's museum career spanned a notable period in the development of historical organizations and preserved historic sites in the United States, years that saw significant changes in what is often called 'the art of interpretation.' One of his first challenges at Old Sturbridge Village was a hitherto undocumented one-day strike by some of the staff in the Craft Demonstration Department. They wanted the Pliny Freeman Farm to be more than a static museum display and asked that a larger number of interpreters be hired and trained to conduct a daily round of recreated farm work. The dispute was settled, and a year later Al approved the development of an extensive historical agricultural program.

History museums, especially those like Sturbridge, with its collection of building and objects, became more widely accessible to the general public and presented historical perspectives for non-specialists and a growing number of interested scholars, teachers, and students. They were drawn to exhibits like the Village's working farm, the restored Asa Knight Store, and study of documents, artifacts, and nearly forgotten work processes at the Museum Education Center. The completion of these museum buildings during the 1970s was a highlight of Al's tenure. Russell Baker once wrote that reminiscing is a national defect, yet remembering these projects is an irresistible topic for those on the Village staff and for those who went on to work in other museums and in academic positions, libraries, and historic preservation organizations. Take the Pliny Freeman Farm, for example. It helped make people think for themselves about changing land use, gender work roles, energy needs, and growing food for a living; Sturbridge's research and operational program added to understand-

ing of New England agricultural history, horticulture, geography, and social history. Al was part of the planning and implementation of the historical farm, and he was confident of the success of its innovation.

Al also was part of a group of men and women in the early 1950s who succeeded in helping other historical agencies and local history societies in the United States and Canada improve their organizations through the meetings, workshops, and publications program of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Between 1953 and 1972, Al served AASLH in many capacities, as secretary, council member, Awards Committee chair, vice-president, and president.

In 1965 he received a fellowship to study in Scandinavia. The museum seminar and field study he took part in was sponsored by the Fulbright program and the American Association of Museums and concentrated on folk culture and 'open air' museums in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.

He was selected by the American Association of Museums (AAM) to serve on its Accreditation Commission in 1970 and was its chairman from 1973 to 1976. He was an enthusiastic advocate for accreditation, and his compilation of the policies and procedures of the AAM's accreditation program from June 1970 to May 1981, completed in 1981, continues to serve as a valuable guide. Among his writings about the accreditation program for *Museum News*, the article titled 'Demystifying the Accreditation Process,' explaining in depth how the program and commission function, is still the primary resource for the administration of accreditation. This national program for professional museum self-evaluation has helped many institutions that differ widely in type, size, and sources of support.

Al was also a vestryman of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Southbridge, served as a trustee of Harrington Memorial Hospital, and was active in the Southbridge Rotary Club. He and his wife were among the founders of the Southbridge Playreaders, a group born forty years ago from a sense of the remoteness of

Southbridge and Sturbridge from the New York City and Boston stages.

Al is survived by his son, Alexander J. Wall III, M.D., his daughter-in-law, Kathleen, and two grandchildren.

Barnes Riznik

HARRY ANDREW BLACKMUN

Harry Andrew Blackmun, the ninety-eighth associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, was born in Nashville, Illinois, on November 12, 1908, the son of Corwin Manning and Theo (Reuter) Blackmun. As a small child, Blackmun moved with his family to Minnesota and grew up in a working-class neighborhood in St. Paul. His father engaged in a number of businesses, at one point running a hardware store. It is well known that one of Blackmun's childhood friends was Warren Burger, the future Chief Justice of the United States, at whose wedding he served as best man. Blackmun attended Harvard College on a scholarship provided by the local Harvard Club. Majoring in mathematics, he graduated in 1929, *summa cum laude* and the owner of a Phi Beta Kappa key. He stayed on in Cambridge in order to attend the law school, from which he graduated in 1932. He returned to Minnesota to become clerk to Judge John B. Sanborn, of the federal appeals court for the Eighth Circuit. After this stint, he taught for a year at the St. Paul (now William Mitchell) College of Law, Burger's legal alma mater.

Blackmun then entered upon the first of the three major phases of his legal career, joining the large and prestigious, multibranch Minneapolis law firm of Dorsey, Colman, Barker, Scott and Barber. Among his clients during the sixteen years he worked in the firm's office in Rochester, Minnesota, were the Mayo Clinic and this writer's parents, Philip S. Hench, a Mayo rheumatologist, and Mary Kahler Hench. In 1950 he left the Dorsey firm to become

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