

Behind the formidable scholar and servant was a unique person. He was an individual with a spirit as active and spritely as the youngest of kittens. He approached historical or policy matters of any dimension the way a kitten approaches a ball of yarn. He worried it and worried it until it was completely unraveled. He pounced on a problem with equal vigor and joy, and when he finished, like a kitten with an unraveled ball of yarn, he was off in quest of new challenges and puzzles. Little wonder that his long career saw him involved in so many matters. But Rodman Paul will be remembered not only for his scholarship but also for his elegance of thought, the care with which he responded to requests for his judgment, and the consideration with which he treated his colleagues, not only his peers but earnest newcomers to American history as well. He represented the best of what it means to be a gentleman and a scholar. For those who knew him, the encounter was a privilege. Even during the period of his failing health and limited activities, he was always open to requests for assistance and he was willing to set his own research aside to help others.

Paul always regretted that distance separated him from the activities of the American Antiquarian Society. He told Marcus McCorison that he had enjoyed working at AAS while writing his dissertation at Harvard. Residing long in California, he could only maintain his contacts through his acquaintances who were active in the Society and through reading its *Proceedings* and other publications. He felt honored to be a member, spoke of it often, and was the kind of individual who represented the Society's membership in its truest sense.

Martin Ridge

JOHN HOWLAND GIBBS PELL

John Howland Gibbs Pell was at the time of his death on October 13, 1987, the senior member of the American Antiquarian Society, having been elected to membership in April 1930 at the surpris-

ingly young age of twenty-five. This early distinction, in recognition of his justly acclaimed biography of Ethan Allen, was followed throughout his long and useful life by numerous honorary degrees, awards, and citations for public service and achievement. He had a capacity for work and the talent and energy to pursue a variety of diverse interests with notable success, as businessman, historian, educator, and historic preservationist. His enduring passion, however, from boyhood to the end of his life, was Fort Ticonderoga and its remarkable museum and library.

John's father, Stephen H. P. Pell, began the restoration of Fort Ticonderoga in 1908 and devoted the remainder of his life to the task and to the work of building the Fort's specialized collections, which are in some respects unrivaled today for rarity and completeness. On the death of Stephen Pell in 1950, John succeeded him as president of the Fort Ticonderoga Association, a nonprofit educational corporation. John customarily spent regular intervals during the year at the Fort, overseeing the management of the thousand-odd acre site; and it was while at his Ticonderoga home for the final week of the Fort's season, absorbed in the work he loved best, that his death occurred, suddenly and unexpectedly, at the age of eighty-three.

John's life-long historical interests were shaped by a truly unique family heritage. An ancestor, William Ferris Pell, a merchant whose business interests required frequent travel between New York and Montreal, became fascinated by the romantically somber ruins of Fort Ticonderoga, observed in passing, on a deserted promontory on Lake Champlain. As Crown lands, the ruins and the garrison grounds had vested in the State of New York following the Revolution; and the state in 1790 had deeded them to Columbia and Union Colleges for support of their educational purposes. William Ferris Pell leased the land from the two institutions in 1816 and four years later purchased the property outright. He built a summer home there, which he called Beaumont; and in 1826, the year after this burned, he built the Pavilion, which stands today and is occupied in summer by his descendants. In-

terested in horticulture, he began the restoration of the beautiful old garden laid out in 1756 by the French as the *Jardin du Roi*; and at the same time, he took measures to curtail the depredations to the fort ruins, which for years had served as a convenient stone-quarry for the local settlers. Thus began a remarkable pioneering effort in the preservation of one of the nation's foremost historic landmarks and a unique stewardship that has been carried on for well over a century and a half by generations of his descendants. The succession of John Pell's son, John Bigelow Pell, to the presidency of the Fort Ticonderoga Association assures the continuity of a public-spirited family tradition in the interest of an important national trust.

John Pell was born in Southampton, Long Island, on August 9, 1904, and was educated at St. Paul's School and Harvard. In 1929, he married Pyrma Tilton and they had two children, Sarah Pell Dunning and John Bigelow Pell. John managed to combine a successful career as a financial consultant with a generous commitment to public service both before and after World War II, in which he was on active duty as a naval officer. From 1962 to 1964, he served as chancellor of Long Island University and was at various times a member of numerous educational and governmental bodies, including the Council of the New York State University at Plattsburgh; the Commissioner of Education's Committee on New York State Museums; the Interstate Commission on the Lake Champlain Basin; the Julliard School of Music; and the Seaman's Church Institute. He was a Winston Churchill Fellow and throughout a busy life continued to research and write in the field of American colonial and Revolutionary history.

At the time of the bicentennial of the American Revolution, John's earlier success as chairman of the Federal Commission for the Hudson-Champlain Celebration and his leadership in so many historical organizations over a long period of years made him the natural choice for chairman of the New York State Bicentennial Commission. The outstanding results achieved by the commission, with a large state-wide membership representing regional

interests, bear witness to John's leadership, exercised with characteristic modesty and patient good humor. Concurrently with the work of this body, John served with unflagging energy and dedication as a member of the New York City Bicentennial Commission and produced memorable results as chairman of the Fort Ticonderoga Bicentennial Committee.

John had a host of friends whose lives were enriched by the charm of his company. To these, and to the many organizations that benefited from his broad experience and humane leadership, his death is an irreparable loss. His familiar presence will be particularly missed at Fort Ticonderoga, where over the years, in his quietly friendly way, he had personally greeted thousands of visitors from all parts of the country. He took great pleasure in welcoming people to the Fort and discoursing on the stirring history of the place, commenting with wide-ranging knowledge on the multitude of artifacts displayed in the museum. Among the latter is the small bronze flint and tinder box found by his father when playing among the ruins as a boy a hundred years ago. It was the inspiration of this discovery, as his father liked to recall, that ultimately set him on the path of his life's work.

The last time we were together, a few days before his death, John expressed keen disappointment at not feeling quite up to accepting an invitation, as senior member of the Society, to lead the academic procession in the Society's 175th anniversary ceremonies. He was happy to have completed work recently on his biography of Philip Schuyler, the labor of many years; and he said he was happy as well to be at Ticonderoga on one of those incomparably beautiful Adirondack autumn days remembered from the earliest years of his childhood as all too fleeting.

J. Robert Maguire

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