

Obituaries

LEROY ELWOOD KIMBALL

LeRoy Elwood Kimball of Tompkins Cove-on-Hudson, New York, died on November 27, 1962. He was born in Flint, Michigan, on October 31, 1888, the son of Gustavus S. and Marie (Guy) Kimball. Mr. Kimball graduated from Albion College in 1910. He earned a Master of Arts degree from New York University in 1917. The Doctor of Laws degree was awarded him in 1935 by Albion and in 1956 by New York University.

Following a year spent as city editor of *The Albion Evening Record*, in 1911 Kimball became assistant bursar of New York University, at which institution he remained until his death. He was appointed bursar in 1920; comptroller in 1925; and vice-chancellor and comptroller in 1945. Upon his retirement in 1956 he became vice-chancellor and comptroller *emeritus*.

In addition to his heavy responsibilities at the University, Kimball was active in scholarly circles, serving as president of the Bibliographical Society of America from 1948 to 1950; the Association of American Colleges from 1951 to 1952; the Modern Language Association in 1954; and of the New-York Historical Society from 1956 until his death. He was also an officer or trustee of several business and eleemosynary organizations in New York.

Mr. Kimball was elected to this Society in April, 1937, after several years of association with R. W. G. Vail, librarian of this institution. Their voluminous correspondence touched chiefly on Charles Brockden Brown whose works Kimball collected, "Mad" Anthony Wayne, and

American art. A year after his election Kimball presented a paper before the society on the Bradford, Vermont, globe maker, James Wilson. Later, he attended a number of annual meetings and was a frequent contributor to our book funds.

Mr. Kimball is survived by his widow, Gipsy Robinson Kimball, and a brother.

M. A. Mc.

FREDERIC GERSHOM MELCHER

Fred Melcher was one of the truly great and influential figures in the American book trade, but to us in these parts he was rather the last link with the Boston book business of the carriage-trade days, with the authors, dealers, sellers, and buyers who are only famous names to our generation. He was born in Malden on April 12, 1879, a son of Edwin Forrest and Alice Jane (Bartlett) Melcher, and was brought up in Newton Center, then a country village. He was educated in the Newton public schools with M.I.T. in mind, but because of "hard times" went instead to work for Lauriat in 1895. That chapter of his life is delightfully narrated in his article, "A Boston Bookstore at the Turn of the Century" in our *Proceedings* for April, 1956. Nothing better illustrates his genius than his recognition of the quality of Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives Tale*, and his order for five hundred copies which was the match which touched off that author's career.

From Boston, Mr. Melcher went to Indianapolis in 1913 to be manager of the W. K. Stewart bookstore. There he began his activity in library circles, and there his sweet and gentle charm, so unlike the aggressiveness of some other men of business, made him welcome in the less competitive circles of the book world. The fact that Mrs. Melcher, the former Margaret Fellows, was an author of distinction helped to bridge the gap.

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