

## FREDERICK BALDWIN ADAMS, JR.

Frederick B. Adams, Jr., became the second director of the Pierpont Morgan Library after the retirement of the redoubtable and flamboyant Belle da Costa Greene. She had been hired by the founder and appointed director by the founder's son, and had managed the library with skill, flair, and unquestioned authority from 1905 until 1948. But Adams could also proffer impressive credentials: he had an excellent education, a passion for collecting, the ability to express its joys and rewards, a gift for inspiring the friendship of fellow collectors, and no previous experience in library administration. During his tenure as director, the Morgan made some of its most spectacular acquisitions and completed its transition from a private library to a public institution, with research facilities, educational opportunities, and an exhibitions program.

He was born in 1910, son of Frederick Baldwin Adams and Ellen Walters Delano, a cousin of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a niece of Henry Walters, founder of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. His father and uncle ran the Air Reduction Sales Company, a highly successful business selling arc-welding devices, acetylene torches, and other welding supplies, now part of the British conglomerate BOC Group. He went to work in the family firm after graduating from Yale University *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa, and after a spending a year in England studying in Cambridge. He made the most of his English interlude by visiting antiquarian bookstores, where he developed a taste for books and manuscripts of contemporary authors. This type of collecting was considered something of an innovation at that time, when modern first editions were just beginning to compete with classics and monuments of early printing. Adams recalled having caused some perplexity in the trade by paying as much as £25 for a copy of Virginia Woolf's first book with her autograph revisions, when he could have just as easily invested that sum in a rebound copy of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Hoping to acquire one of Woolf's manuscripts, he inquired at the source and

proposed to her an 'interview with Mammon,' although he confessed that he was not sure how large or what kind of an offer he should make: 'As an innocent connected with industry in New York, I should drive a very hard bargain. As a foolish boy who has spent a great abundance of his happiest hours reading, I should be anxious and willing to give anything you might suggest. As a combination of the two, I call you at 40 pounds. . . .' This approach failed, but he did succeed in assembling a major collection of her works as well as those of Thomas Hardy and Robert Frost.

Not quite so innocently, this scion of industry built a formidable collection of radical literature, perhaps the largest in the United States and capable even of rivaling Russian holdings. What his business associates thought of his collection is not recorded, although his company stationery noted plaintively that its contracts and quotations were 'contingent upon strikes' among other natural disasters. He owned presentation copies of early communist and anarchist tracts, *Das Kapital* in original wrappers, and the first edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, along with more than one hundred later editions in various languages. He found rare documents concerning socialist movements in America, including accounts of utopian communities, pamphlets attacking private property, and circulars issued by labor unions and radical organizations such as the Black International, the International Workingman's Association, and the Industrial Workers of the World. In 1938 the Grolier Club invited him to exhibit these materials and to give a lecture, published a year later with a catalogue of the exhibition in *Radical Literature in America*, an elegant limited edition printed on luxurious handmade paper. Eventually he sold the collection to Karl-Marx-Haus in Trier, Germany, through the New York antiquarian bookseller H. P. Kraus, who described it vividly in his memoirs. Among the records he and his staff handled most gingerly was a file of papers concerned with the Haymarket riots in Chicago, containing a live blasting cap. They had to summon the bomb disposal squad to remove the explosive, apparently retained as evidence against the anarchists ac-

cused of bombing policemen who had tried to disperse the protesting workers. One of the anarchists committed suicide in his prison cell with a similar device clenched between his teeth.

When Adams became director of the Morgan Library in 1948, he was already one of the most prominent members of the American rare-book world, perhaps best known for his contributions to the book-collecting journal the *Colophon*, published with several changes in title, format, and frequency between 1930 and 1950. Adams joined the *Colophon* as a contributing editor in 1935, became a full editor in 1936, and remained in that capacity to the end, although he was probably most active in the years from 1935 to 1939, when he wrote a lively column of news and commentary titled 'The Crow's Nest.' His experience writing about recent trends in collecting served him well when describing recent acquisitions in the annual reports of the Morgan Library. His acquisitions were remarkable: incunabula, fine bindings, illuminated manuscripts, literary manuscripts, master drawings, and the Elisabeth Ball collection of children's literature, just to name one of the larger collections he obtained by gift or purchase. To provide for future acquisitions he and Junius S. Morgan founded the Association of Fellows, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1999, by presenting more than one hundred gifts to the library. The fellows have not only donated books, manuscripts, and drawings from their personal collections, but have also helped to enhance the library's scholarly and educational activities. With their support, Adams was able to modernize the library's operations and facilities with a minimum of stress on its budget and staff. Senior members of the staff remember him fondly and can testify that his many personal attainments never interfered with his tact, courtesy, and thoughtfulness.

As an Americanist, he had less room to maneuver in the Morgan Library. Not until 1971 was it felt necessary to acquire the pioneering *History of Printing in America* (1810) by Isaiah Thomas, founder of the American Antiquarian Society. In Adams's day the library's main strengths were in an earlier era and in other coun-

tries, although it did admit some splendid exceptions, mainly in the Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts. Of these exceptions perhaps the most notable is the celebrated Cèllere Codex, an account of Verrazzano's exploration of the Atlantic coastline. Adams contracted with the Yale University Press to publish a scholarly edition of this manuscript with a new translation and an extensive commentary by Lawrence Wroth, librarian emeritus of the John Carter Brown Library. This was not an easy task. Wroth seized on this project as a rewarding occupation for his retirement years. Never at a loss for words, he piled on more notes and appendices with no thought of the morrow until Adams expostulated that he too would retire soon and needed to see the book through the press. Adams also contributed a chapter containing a new transcription of the document and an account of textual variants in comparison with other manuscripts. After persuading Wroth to submit his text, he had to appease a copy editor who thought it was 'verbose' and had ventured to make changes. Then he had to persuade his trustees to finance the larger version with a substantial subsidy to be repaid, someday, with a percentage of the profits. When he presented these terms, 'they quivered but submitted.' First proposed in 1956, *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano, 1524-1528*, finally appeared in 1970, a few months before Wroth died and about a year after Adams had retired.

His retirement years were spent in Switzerland and France, where he continued to be active in the collecting community, serving as a superbly bilingual president of the International Association of Bibliophiles, 1974-83. In his long career he held several similar positions no less distinguished and sometimes more demanding—president of the Grolier Club, 1947-51; president of the Bibliographical Society of America, 1960-2; and president of the New-York Historical Society, 1963-71. He was also a trustee of Yale University and was awarded honorary degrees by Yale, Williams College, Union College, Hofstra University, and New York University. He was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1949 and served on its National Advisory Committee in 1969.

He died at his home in Chisseaux, France, on January 7, 2001, leaving his wife Marie-Louise de Croy Adams, four daughters by previous marriages, a sister, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. To three generations of collectors he was the ideal rare-book librarian, an able administrator always ready to preach the primacy of originals in art, literature, and history.

John Bidwell

### C. E. FRAZER CLARK, JR.

C. E. Frazer Clark, Jr., of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan—book enthusiast, businessman, editor, scholar, and publisher—died on June 9, 2001, at the age of 75. He had been a member of the American Antiquarian Society since 1974. He is survived by his wife Margaret Ann, whom he married in 1953, and two sons, Douglas and C. E. Frazer Clark III.

A lifetime Michigan resident, he was the son of Colonel C. E. Frazer Clark, a public school administrator. He studied briefly at the University of Michigan before the outbreak of World War II. A volunteer for military service, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war he entered Kenyon College, where his initial interest in Nathaniel Hawthorne was spurred by one of his English professors. Thus began a lifelong love affair with the works of Hawthorne and eventually with the pleasures of book collecting. In 1957 Wayne State University awarded him an M.A. for his thesis, 'Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Artist, a Self-Portrait.'

Part of a tradition in American publishing that extends from the Knickerbocker writers to Wallace Stevens, Frazer Clark balanced a career in business with a passion for books and the written word. Indeed, in his young manhood he produced a volume of poems that was privately printed. Even after launching a series of notable publishing ventures, he acknowledged, 'It wasn't long before I realized that I was the businessman who still wanted to be

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