

Obituaries

HOWARD MILLAR CHAPIN

Howard Millar Chapin, librarian and widely known authority on Rhode Island history, died at his home in Providence, September 17, 1940. He was born in Providence, May 11, 1887, the son of Dr. Charles V. and Anna Augusta (Balch) Chapin. He was graduated from Brown University with the degree of A.B. in 1908. During his college career he became interested in historical writing and contributed to the newspapers articles on Providence and Rhode Island history. In the year of his graduation he wrote the *Life of Deacon Samuel Chapin*, which appeared as a publication of the Chapin Family Association. After graduation he became associated with C. M. Robbins & Co., manufacturing jewelers of Attleboro, and even in that field he showed his early leaning toward research by writing a *Treatise on the Practical Enameling of Jewelry*, issued in 1911. In 1911 and 1912 he was assistant business manager of the *Providence Evening News*, which newspaper was owned by his father-in-law, D. Russell Brown.

In October, 1912, Mr. Chapin was elected Librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society, succeeding Frank G. Bates, and entered upon what was to be his life career. He did much to arrange and catalogue some of the important collections of the library, such as manuscripts and maps. Immediately he began writing upon Rhode Island history. His first publication was *The Seal, the Arms and the Flag of Rhode Island*, 1913, followed by the *Bibliography of Rhode Island Bibliography*, 1914, and *Cartography of Rhode Island*, 1915. His largest and most important work, the *Documentary History of Rhode Island*, appeared in 1916, followed three years later by a second volume, telling the history of the beginnings of the colony by accurate quotations from

original sources. For the next twenty years he produced many pamphlets and brochures on Rhode Island history: *Checklist of Maps of Rhode Island*, 1918; *List of Roger Williams' Writings*, 1918; *Report upon the Burial Place of Roger Williams*, 1918; *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars*, 1918 and 1920; *Rhode Island Court Records*, 1920 and 1922; *Rhode Island Land Evidences*, 1921; *The Tartar, the Armed Sloop of the Colony of Rhode Island*, 1922; *Ann Franklin of Newport*, 1924; *Indian Implements found in Rhode Island*, 1924; *Early Rhode Island Flags*, 1925; *Notes on the Badge of Merit of 1782*, 1925; *The Early Records of the Town of Warwick*, 1926; *Roger Williams and the King's Colors*, 1928; *Illustrations of the Seals, Arms and Flags of Rhode Island*, 1930; *Sachems of the Narragansetts*, 1931; *The Trading Post of Roger Williams*, 1933; *Specimen Pages Illustrative of the Development of Early Rhode Island Printing*, 1938. Many of these were brochures or reprints from the proceedings of various societies. He also edited the regular publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Mr. Chapin became interested in other fields of an historical or bibliographical nature. He owned a collection of about 400 books on cats, and in 1911 wrote a biographical dictionary of cats in literature under the title of *Murthy's Cattage*. This collection he disposed of to Clarence L. Madden of New Bern, N. C. His largest private collection was devoted to dogs, numbering 2300 volumes. In 1920 he wrote *Dogs in Early New England*. His collection in 1938 he gave to William and Mary College and a short-title list of the collection was printed by the College in 1938 in a Bulletin of 131 pages.

On one of his numerous trips abroad, he witnessed the rescuing of passengers from the *Titanic*, and the following year wrote a pamphlet on *The Titanic Disaster*, which was followed in 1926 by his *Bibliotheca Titanicana, a List of Books relating to the Loss of the Titanic*.

The publications of the French fleet during the Revolution interested him and he published *The Printing Press of the French Fleet* in 1914, and *Early Sea-Presses* in 1925. Still another subject

was privateering, which resulted in *Bermuda Privateers*, 1923, *New England Vessels in the Expedition against Louisbourg*, 1923, *Privateer Ships and Sailors*, 1926, *Rhode Island Privateers in King George's War*, 1926, and *Privateering in King George's War*, 1928. Heraldry and flags were other subjects which brought publications from his pen: *Colonial Heraldry*, 1929, *Civic Heraldry*, 1935, *The New England Flag*, 1930, *The Artistic Motives in the United States Flag*, 1930, *Rhode Island Municipal Arms*, 1931, and *American Municipal Arms*, 1932. Miscellaneous titles were *Cameo Portraiture in America*, 1918, and *Early American Signboards*, 1926.

The above is a formidable list of writings on varied subjects, and has been given in detail as a record of Mr. Chapin's historical achievements. He was more of a researcher than an administrative librarian or collector of books, but the sum total of his literary output forms a highly important contribution to the study of Rhode Island history.

He was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1914, and in the following year contributed to the *Proceedings* a *Check-list of Rhode Island Almanacs*. He was interested in the Society, always cooperative, and a constant donor to the Library.

Mr. Chapin married, April 10, 1912, Hope Caroline Brown, daughter of D. Russell Brown, ex-Governor of Rhode Island. She died in 1938. His health was poor during the last few years, but he still continued to write in his chosen fields. He was a man of indomitable courage and perseverance and highly regarded in the historical world.

C. S. B.

MATT BUSHNELL JONES

The death of Mr. Jones came as a shock to all of us. Our first thought was of the end of a delightful friendship and of the running battle of wit with which he kept us from taking ourselves too seriously, and then we realized what a blow the American Antiquarian Society and its sister organizations had sustained.

Matt Bushnell Jones was born in Waitsfield, Vermont, on May

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