

Obituaries

WALLACE HUGH CATHCART

Wallace Hugh Cathcart, director of the Western Reserve Historical Society, died at his home in Cleveland, September 6, 1942. He was born at Elyria, Ohio, April 2, 1865, the son of Salmon Hart and Eliza (Chamberlain) Cathcart. He was graduated, with the degree of B.S., at Denison University, Granville, Ohio, in 1890. Throughout his college course he served also as librarian, drawing upon his boyhood experience as clerk in an Elyria bookstore. After leaving college, he was associated for seven years with the Taylor-Austin Company, Cleveland booksellers. He then left the firm to join the Burrows Brothers Company, one of the leading firms of booksellers and publishers in the Middle West. Here he remained for seventeen years, successively secretary, vice-president and general manager, and building up a high reputation as a bookman and an authority on Western history.

In 1913 he retired from commercial life to become the director of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, of which he had already been president for seven years. In the twenty-nine years that Mr. Cathcart administered the affairs of the Society, he trebled its collections, both in its library and its museum, gathered remarkable accessions of manuscript material, and inspired financial support, without which no Society of its kind could flourish. His enthusiasm and his persistence in collecting are shown in the manner in which he built up his Shaker collection. He travelled to every Shaker community in the eastern part of

the country, inducing the remaining members of that sect to deposit their manuscript and printed records with him, and thus saving for posterity a vast amount of material which certainly would have been lost. He followed the same method in gathering other important collections, visiting newspaper offices all over the State to obtain Ohio files, and persuading church organizations to entrust their early records to his custody. Mr. William P. Palmer, an interested member of the Antiquarian Society for many years, greatly admired Mr. Cathcart, gave to the Western Reserve his notable collections on the Civil War and on Lincoln, and succeeded to the presidency of the institution when Mr. Cathcart became director.

Throughout all his long period of collecting for his Society, Mr. Cathcart's earlier experience as a bookseller guided his hand and gave him discernment. I have often thought that a capable collecting librarian could serve no better apprenticeship than in a bookshop. Wilberforce Eames and John Russell Bartlett affirm this theory, and Wallace Cathcart followed in their footsteps. His career brought him prestige and redounded to the credit of his organization.

Mr. Cathcart did not publish many books—perhaps he was too busy collecting; also a fire in 1920 destroyed much of his personal library, including bibliographies in preparation. His one volume is the *Bibliography of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, a notable literary and bibliographical contribution, issued by the Rowfant Club of Cleveland, in which famous book-club he was always much interested. He received the honorary degree of L.H.D. in 1926 from Denison University. He was married August 8, 1893, to Florence Holmes, and had two children; he married secondly, on February 11, 1918, Ellen Douglas Hamilton. He was a member of many national associations allied with his interests, and also of several of Cleveland's local societies.

Mr. Cathcart was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1924, and from the first aided it in every way. He was a source of constant information and the donor of much important material, especially his duplicate Shaker books and pamphlets, in itself a noteworthy collection of rare items increasingly difficult to find. The writer of this short sketch has known Mr. Cathcart for many years. Even when he was with the Burrows Brothers, I remember visiting him in Cleveland, and favoring the possibility of his leaving a business life and taking an institutional position where he could collect books to save and not to sell. He was an enthusiast in all that he did, and inspired the same eagerness in others. Genial and warm in his friendships, he will be missed by his friends and by the Society which he administered.

C. S. B.

EDWARD TUCKERMAN ESTY

Edward Tuckerman Esty was born at Amherst, Massachusetts, August 30, 1875, the son of William Cole and Martha Ann (Cushing) Esty. He was educated at Amherst High School and entered Amherst College, where his father for many years had been professor of mathematics. Graduated in 1897 with the degree of B.A., he taught mathematics at Amherst for a year and then entered Harvard Law School, graduating in 1901 with the degree of LL.B. He immediately joined the law firm of Hammond & Field in Northampton, but removed to Worcester in 1902, there to practice law for the remainder of his life. For five years associated with W. S. B. Hopkins under the firm name of Hopkins & Esty, in 1907 he formed a partnership with the late Edward H. Vaughan as Vaughan & Esty, later becoming Vaughan, Esty & Clark, and in recent years Vaughan, Esty, Clark & Crotty. He held many legal positions of responsi-

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.