

out that a piece of silver in several of his "Vermeers" showed a nineteenth-century repair. He was probably better known in Europe than in America, although he never concealed the fact that he regarded their art as only the interesting background of the work of the American colonials. In this country, only Trinity College gave him an honorary degree, and that an M.A.

No doubt our failure to give John Phillips his due was because we thought that there was time enough. He first came to our attention with the publication of his *Early Connecticut Silver* in 1935. This was followed by *Masterpieces of New England Silver* (1938) and *American Silver* (1949). In the latter year he was elected to this Society. He attended meetings faithfully, and was to have read a paper for us in October. He died in New York City on May 7, 1953, from overexertion, after running for a train. He is survived by two brothers, Pennell and William Phillips.

C. K. S.

WILLIAM GREENE ROELKER

Bill Roelker was born at Providence on April 9, 1886, a son of William Greene and Eleanor (Jenckes) Roelker. He was educated at Groton School and at Harvard College, where he made Phi Beta Kappa and in 1909 took his B.A. magna cum laude. Taking advantage of the accelerated program then available, he spent the academic year 1908-1909 studying in the Law School, to which he returned after graduation. However, in the fall of 1910 he became a salesman in the advertising department of the Vogue Company, with which he remained for two years. Returning to Providence, he joined the *Journal*, of which he was advertising manager for four years. In 1918 he left to join the Washington office of the Red Cross, serving as associate

director of membership and chapter organization. After the war he became a vice-president of the Industrial Trust Company of Providence, with which he remained until 1929. For three years he worked for brokerage houses, and in 1932 was appointed receiver for National banks in Leominster and Lowell. This work finished, he joined the staff of the Harvard Tercentenary Fund in 1936.

Roelker was always a strong advocate of transacting business by social contacts after office hours, a particularly depressing occupation in a decade in which so many of his former customers were becoming bankrupt. Their worries and his broke his health and sent him to a sanatorium. Here he took stock of his life and decided that he had not been doing what he really wanted to do. A descendant of Roger Williams, Samuel Gorton, and other Rhode Island worthies, he was steeped in a strong family historical tradition. For a time he had collected books, but he found more congenial the many social-patriotic societies, like the Cincinnati, to which he had entrée. Happening to read at the same time Van Wyck Brooks' *Flowering of New England* and the catalogue of the Harvard Summer School, he determined to return to the scene of his former triumphs and embark upon a new profession. His success in Summer School sent him to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, where he took his M.A. in 1939. At the suggestion of the then dean of the college he undertook to tutor undergraduates, at which he made a comforting success.

Bill was working toward a Ph.D. when, in 1940, he was offered the position of librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society. There his business training enabled him to effect a revolution. He expanded the membership of the Society almost fivefold, and managed the movement of its headquarters into the John Brown House on Power Street. No librarian, he gladly changed his title to "director" in

1941. He carried the same energy into other societies, notably the American Association for State and Local History. These duties left him little time for research or writing, but he edited for the American Philosophical Society a section of his family archives which was published under the title, *Benjamin Franklin and Catharine Ray Greene: Their Correspondence, 1755-1790*. He was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1941, and at the meeting of April, 1943, read a paper on "Francis Wayland, A Neglected Pioneer of Higher Education." He was a faithful and generous friend of this Society. While driving from Providence to his home in Warwick, he received injuries of which he died on May 29, 1953. He is survived by his wife, the former Anna R. Koues, to whom he was married in 1912, and by two daughters, Nancy Lyman Roelker and Helen Koues (Mrs. John A.) Kessler.

C. K. S.

LEMUEL AIKEN WELLES

Lemuel Aiken Welles was born in November, 1870, at Newington, Connecticut and died February 15, 1953, at Ridgefield, Connecticut. His father, Roger Welles, 1829-1904, was descended from Thomas Welles, Governor of Connecticut, who came from England and settled in Hartford in 1637. His mother, Mercy Delano Aiken Welles, was born in Fair Haven, Massachusetts, the daughter of Captain Lemuel S. Aiken and Sarah Coffin Aiken. She was descended from Captain John Aiken who settled in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, before 1689.

Mr. Aiken prepared for Yale at the Hartford High School. At Yale he received a High Orations Appointment, a second Ten Eyck Prize at the Junior Exhibition, was an editor of the *Yale Literary Magazine*, Class Orator, a member of Phi

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