

## *Obituaries*

### HENRY NEEDHAM FLYNT

Henry Needham Flynt, lawyer and preserver, was born in Brooklyn on the second day of July 1893, son of George Converse and Helen Pratt (Needham) Flynt. After being brought up there and at schools and the academy at Monson, Massachusetts, he went to Williams College where he graduated in 1916. He then returned to New York City where he went to Columbia Law School, but taking time off during the First World War to serve as a lieutenant in the Army. Returning home he graduated in 1921 and was admitted to the New York Bar. Law and business occupied him during the twenties and early thirties until he happened upon Deerfield, Massachusetts, and from that time on his efforts were toward its preservation, 'not as a museum village, dead at night, nor is it a ghost town. It is a vibrant living community where people live and work,' and it is a superb restoration.

In 1947 during the course of his research into Deerfield's past, he wrote to the Society and this began a long correspondence, mutually beneficial, and it was through the agency of a member of our Council and a friend of Flynt, Richard A. Heald, that relations became very cordial and lasting, Director Clarence S. Brigham and Flynt exchanging visits whenever they could manage it.

In 1950 at the spring meeting Flynt was elected and though surprised and happy to accept he sprung back at Brigham with a list of questions about Deerfield which he wanted answered, saying that perhaps this Society had 'made a mistake' in electing him but that he would be only too happy to pay to have the work done. Brigham looked up the answers himself and later in the summer Flynt came to visit the Library. It was not

just books and manuscripts concerning Deerfield which intrigued Flynt, but rather everything he could find and acquire—paintings, silver, artifacts, furniture, architectural pieces, the lot—and he had Deerfield as a setting for his finds. Brigham was helpful in getting accurate drawings of our Isaiah Thomas press for a reproduction Flynt had in mind and Brigham was in Deerfield with the Walpole Society in 1951 to see at firsthand some of his handiwork.

Flynt was in England in 1954 taking a course in architectural history, an outgrowth from his interests and from his sponsorship the previous year in Deerfield of a conference of New England college art department representatives. Brigham was asked to speak before the group but, as he was trying desperately hard to get out his book on Paul Revere's engravings, he had to turn down the offer.

Flynt called often upon Brigham with specific questions concerning arrangement of the books and manuscripts which had been 'in deplorable condition' in Deerfield, and he later sent down some of the curatorial staff to look over the methods used here. Flynt also wrote to the Society while putting together his recent book on silver.

Flynt was not able to attend meetings of the Society, chiefly because he was on the move so much in other orbits, but he did support our work with an annual check and also cooperated in the Microprint imprints project by lending books for filming. He was in our building most recently on the occasion of the meeting in Worcester of the Walpole Society in October 1969, and just last year he and his wife were cited by the National Trust for Historical Preservation.

Henry Needham Flynt died at his summer home in Bay Head, New Jersey, at the age of seventy-seven. He leaves his widow, a son, and two daughters. He also leaves an enduring monument to his single-minded devotion to the past in Deerfield.

J. E. M.

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