

in 1969, and continued work on his biographical dictionary of marine artists. When he retired for the third time, he bought a house in Mystic, Connecticut, and so inevitably he and Dot were soon cataloguing the pictures at Mystic Seaport. He was engaged in that work when he died on December 8, 1974.

Few men have had such single-minded devotion to a scholarly pursuit that began as an avocation; few have carried on so uncomplainingly against physical obstacles. His successor at Salem, Philip C. F. Smith, in the editorial in the January 1975 issue of *The American Neptune*, admirably characterized Marion Brewington as 'one possessed of an insatiable drive to unearth undiscovered facts by hard work, deep digging, and sensible scholarship,' concluding his tribute with the sentence: 'His uncommonly fruitful life nevertheless goes on by virtue of the intangible legacies of knowledge and rigid disciplines which he imparted to many—the undersigned included.' In this I heartily concur.

Walter Muir Whitehill

#### CARL ERHARD WAHLSTROM

Carl Erhard Wahlstrom, jurist and devotee of Abraham Lincoln, was born in Worcester, January 27, 1898. The son of J. Peter and Anna M. (Erickson) Wahlstrom, he was raised in the tightly knit Swedish-American community that has contributed greatly to the growth of the city. He attended Worcester public schools and Clark University, from which he graduated in 1920. For law school, he dared venture forty miles east to Boston University, taking his J.D. degree in 1923. He was the holder of an honorary Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Calvin Coolidge College.

Wahlstrom was admitted to the bar in 1924 and returned to his native city, joining the law firm of Cowee and Fletcher. Two years later he became assistant register of probate and served in the position until 1940, also finding time to teach

law at Northeastern University. In 1940 he was made a judge of the Worcester Probate Court, a position he held until his retirement in 1972. He was deeply involved in the affairs of his community and held memberships in many fraternal, business, professional, service, and church organizations. He was one of Worcester's most honored citizens.

Wahlstrom's interest in the life of the sixteenth president went far deeper than that of the ordinary Lincoln buff. His curiosity about the man was piqued, however, rather casually, as these things often are. One day about 1926 while Wahlstrom was serving as assistant register of probate for Worcester, two elderly gentlemen came to his office to see him, noticed on his wall a lithograph of Lincoln reading the Gettysburg Address, and stared at it for some time. As Wahlstrom recounted the story, one of the visitors mentioned that he had first met Lincoln in 1862 and then introduced himself and his companion. The one who had spoken was a nephew of Clara Barton; the other, more distantly related to the founder of the American Red Cross, was Dr. William A. Barton, a clergyman and prominent Lincoln scholar who had previously written to Wahlstrom requesting certain probate information. That information concerned the offspring of Mrs. Lydia Bixby of Boston, the recipient of one of Lincoln's most famous letters. Barton's researches in Worcester Probate Court and elsewhere showed that Lincoln had committed what Barton called 'A Beautiful Blunder,' that, in fact, Mrs. Bixby had not seen five sons perish in the war and that at least one son, possibly two, had actually deserted to the Confederates.

It was Barton, Wahlstrom claimed, who urged him to study the life of Lincoln, and Wahlstrom heeded the advice. He was both student and collector of Lincolniana. A longtime member of the Lincoln Group of Boston (where he became acquainted with Marcus McCorison's father), Wahlstrom was author of a slim volume entitled *Abraham Lincoln: Servant of the People* (1942) and editor of a miniature volume of

selections from Lincoln's writings (1950). Both were published by Achille J. St. Onge of Worcester. Wahlstrom's library included more than 1200 books on Lincoln and his times, including one from the great man's own library, and numerous manuscripts of Lincoln and other Civil War personalities.

The earliest extant correspondence between Wahlstrom and the American Antiquarian Society was dated 1954 when Clarence Brigham offered the judge a collection of newspaper clippings on Lincoln that the library was discarding. Election to the Society followed in April 1959. He was a generous member and a faithful attender of meetings during much of the time he belonged. On the advice of Clifford K. Shipton, he was appointed in 1963 as the representative of AAS on the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The judge retired from the probate court in 1972, but continued to pursue his civic and historical interests, including work in planning for the creation of an historic district in Worcester and for the reenactment during the American Revolution Bicentennial of the trek by Gen. Henry Knox and his men from Fort Ticonderoga to Cambridge.

Carl Wahlstrom died in Worcester, December 11, 1974, after a brief illness. A brother, son, daughter, and five grandchildren survive him. His wife, Margaret (Wahlstrom) Wahlstrom, had died in 1972.

John B. Hench

#### ERNEST JAMES WESSEN

Ernest James Wessen was born in Lewiston, Maine, on December 4, 1887. The family moved to Auburn, Maine, across the Androscoggin River, the following year. His father was born in Bristol, England, in 1842 and, in his youth, led a generally adventurous life.

There are few details of Wessen's formal education. There

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