

1971. His father, too, had belonged to the Society from 1945 to 1966. Although Stobbs was not a member long, he thoroughly enjoyed his associations at the Society. He attended most meetings, hosted the cocktail party for members and staff preceding the annual meeting in 1973, and served on the nominating and development committees. He gave generously to the Society and left a handsome bequest in his will. In short, he was, however briefly, one of the coterie of Worcester members who view the Antiquarian Society as an ornament of the community and who serve it accordingly.

Russell Stobbs was not completely well the last few years, but did remain active, traveling to Europe and Africa. He entered a local hospital in late February and died there March 12, 1975. He had never married and a brother, Hamilton T. Stobbs, had died before. Two cousins were his closest kin living when he died.

John B. Hench

RICHARD SAMUEL WORMSER

Richard Samuel Wormser, bookseller of Bethel, Connecticut, was born in New York City on April 5, 1898. Educated in the public schools in New York he served in the United States Navy during the First World War. After the war he was engaged in the importation of olives and in other enterprises before joining his father, Otto D. Wormser, in the pearl business. He became an authority in this field, and in later years he was occasionally called in as an expert in the evaluation of gems.

The examination of pearls must be made under good natural light which in London and Amsterdam during the winter months is of brief duration. It was in the afternoons of days thus shortened that he killed time in the antiquarian book shops of those two ancient towns, and developed an interest in the trade. After his father's death, and the introduction of

cultured pearls which depressed the market, he began to deal in books, using his old office on West 48th Street in New York City.

He became early disenchanted with the collecting of literary first editions, and turned to books (and particularly pamphlets) on odd, scientific, and technical subjects, which he liked to characterize as 'uncommon rare books.' An early business venture was the immense stock of Thomas J. Taylor of Taunton, Massachusetts, consisting entirely of pamphlets on almost every conceivable subject. In 1934, Wormser purchased the collection which amounted to thirty-nine tons of material, requiring six large trucks to transport it to New York. He arranged with the New York Public Library to have it stored in the basement corridor. In exchange, the library was allowed to purchase everything not already in its collection. For many years batches of pamphlets regularly arrived in his office as the staff of the Public Library worked their way through the mass of material which had once filled a house from cellar to attic.

From his earliest days he was concerned with the welfare and integrity of the book trade. He was a founder and the second president of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, and served as president of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers in 1958. No one in his time did more to raise the ethical standards of the book trade here and abroad and he was a powerful influence in bringing the booksellers of England, Europe, and America closer together.

He detested sham and pretense, and took no pains to conceal his distaste for individuals in whom he found these qualities; but his loyalty to his friends was absolute.

Perhaps his outstanding characteristic as a bookseller was his ability to anticipate the interests of his customers. He was able to identify potentially important but undeveloped fields before they became popular with collectors in general. He often knew what libraries ought to have before they them-

selves did and aided them in growing in new and imaginative directions before prices became prohibitive. The extremely expensive books which make headlines held no interest for him. He will be remembered particularly for the feat of assembling a near duplication of the dispersed library of Thomas Jefferson which is now at Monticello. The range of his knowledge in the bibliography of science, technology, and history was unequalled. He early became a specialist in foreign language editions of books in American literature and of American editions of English and European classics.

In 1931, when Wormser entered the book trade, the librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, R. W. G. Vail, wrote, 'I am delighted to know that you are going into the rare book business. Anyone with your taste and ability should do well in it.' During the next forty-four years Wormser was to offer the Society a large number of significant rarities among which was the unique and unrecorded Philadelphia 1774 edition of Captain Cook's *A New Journal of A Voyage Around the World*. He was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society at the April 1970 meeting. He valued his connection with the Society and was a frequent attendant at their meetings.

In 1941 he married Lucille Walker Worden, whose son Michael he later adopted. She died in 1945. In 1953 he married Carola Winter Paine, who, with his son, survives.

Richard Samuel Wormser died on April 6, 1975, in Danbury, Connecticut. Although he had been ill for some years he continued his travels, carried on his business, and regularly saw his friends with unabated zest until the very last.

George T. Goodspeed
Thomas R. Adams

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