

Obituaries

Theron Johnson Damon

Theron Johnson Damon was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on February 25, 1883, son of Edward Carver and Anne Elizabeth (Hagar) Damon. He grew up in the town, graduated from the high school, and then went to Harvard with the class of 1905. While there he interested himself in course work, various church organizations, and the Japan and Political Clubs. The summer after graduation he spent traveling in Europe and then he spent a year working on the *Kansas City Star*. Following that stint he went to Constantinople to teach at Robert College, 'high above the beautiful Bosphorus,' and there he traveled widely in the Near East and met his future wife, the sister of a colleague. He taught there until 1909, spent that winter in Paris studying, and then returned to Constantinople and newspaper work. In 1911 he returned to the States, married his bride in Milton, and then settled in Turkey teaching at Constantinople College, working with the Associated Press, and helping out at the American Embassy as courier to Berlin in those days of the First World War before this country and Germany, Austria, and Turkey split relations. Unwelcome there he returned to the States and taught for a year at Loomis, a private school in Windsor, Connecticut.

During the War Damon signed up in July 1918 and 'served at Washington as a swivel-chair officer (Captain, U.S.A., M.I.D.) followed by the "Battle of Paris,"' having been assigned in November 1918 to the peace-making council at Versailles. Early in 1919 he returned to Constantinople in an official capacity during negotiations, returning to Paris where he was present at the signing of the peace. In October 1919 he was 'demobilized.'

Once discharged into civilian life Damon returned to Turkey where he was in charge as executive secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Levant. He left that job in 1926 and became an agent in the area for an American oil company and remained there for three years. As he noted in his fiftieth class report, 'not foreseeing the great depression, I opened a shop in New York City for old Near Eastern art and craft work a few days before the depression. I did not close it, alas, until 1936.' For a time Damon ran the shop long distance from Turkey but later set up housekeeping in New York while continuing to travel a great deal. Thirty years out of college, his aversions included 'jazz and crooning, or Orozco, not to mention the lipstick and the fingernail polish.' He withheld judgment of the New Deal. After closing the shop he continued to travel. It was while he was running the shop that Clarence S. Brigham, our then director, wrote Damon asking for help on an exhibition of colonial portraits the Society and Worcester Art Museum were sponsoring. Damon was helpful, and served on the committee, and later wrote of the esteem he had for young Louisa Dresser, newly arrived on the Museum staff. A couple of years later, after Damon had closed his shop, Brigham asked him to join the staff of the Society working with manuscripts, maps, and prints. Damon took the offer and came to Worcester. In 1938 he took a short leave of absence to help settle his invalid brother-in-law's affairs in Istanbul, from whence he wrote us in June a journal of his hectic trip through a Hitlerized Europe he detested. He returned to Worcester and his work, leaving only during the Second World War when he accepted an appointment in the Office of War Information specializing in Near East matters, though he was not able to be back here at the Society cleaning up the manuscript room which he confessed had been left in no little disarray. During the War he continued to write about his own fortunes and his hopes that all was going well here. Once he had moved to Washington from the O.W.I. office in

New York, he got pneumonia but got over it quickly. As the War went on, Damon's health got worse until in early 1944 he resigned from his job and was told to take it easy. He tried manfully to do so and after the War returned to his place here, where he and his family moved into a house very close to the library.

With his health not that much improved, he left his work here and went into retirement of a sort. He was succeeded by a college classmate, Albert G. Waite, who took over as curator. We did continue to hear from Damon into the sixties when his letters were full of engaging criticisms of modern life, including design of postage stamps, 'modern art,' the comics, politics, religion, and the rest.

Damon had been elected to this Society at the annual meeting in 1937 and dutifully attended our meetings, often acting as teller of the ballots. Later he served on the nominating committee. Over the years he had been interested in our collections, giving us volumes. Brigham's report of the librarian in 1956 contained the following: 'The greatest surprise of the year came when Theron Damon walked in and laid on my desk the two fat manuscript commonplace books of Benjamin Franklin, the uncle of the great Benjamin, who came to Boston in 1715 and became a member of Josiah's household. Apparently Parton, who used this manuscript in the preparation of his biography of Franklin a century ago, was the last historian to see it. Later writers have assumed that young Benjamin was influenced by this literary uncle, but a reading of the poems and other literary exercises in these volumes will give the impression that Uncle Benjamin was, potentially at least, a far greater influence than has been supposed. They show that there was at least a respectable amount of genius lying around in the Franklin family before Ben was born.'

On the twenty-fifth of April 1973, Theron Johnson Damon died at ninety years of age in a convalescent home in Weston, Massachusetts, to which he had moved recently after living for thirty-five years just around the corner from the library.

His wife, the former Cornelia Huntington, had died in 1960 and he is survived by a son, G. Huntington Damon, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Memorial services were held in Belmont. He is remembered at the library with affection and respect.

James E. Mooney

BERNHARD KNOLLENBERG

Bernhard Knollenberg, lawyer, librarian, and historian, was born in Richmond, Indiana, November 26, 1892, the son of George H. and Agnes (Steen) Knollenberg. After Richmond High School, he attended Earlham College, a Quaker institution in his home town, graduating with the Class of 1912. His interest in his alma mater remained strong. Its library had 'first call on my books, under my will' and he took pains to see that it should be in possession of a set of one of this Society's gems of scholarship, Clarence Brigham's *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers 1690-1820*. Although he never lived in his native Indiana after graduation from college, the upper Whitewater Valley in which he grew up had sufficiently strong sentimental attachment for him that he wrote a book on that picturesque region and its pioneer Quaker heritage, which was published by the Indiana Historical Society in 1945.

After earning his A.B. at Earlham, he ventured east to Harvard College. He took his A.M. there in 1914. He stayed on in Cambridge to attend Harvard Law School, from which he received the LL.B. in 1916. That same year he was admitted to the bar. He began the practice of law in Honolulu. Within a year the United States entered the Great War and Knollenberg joined the Naval Intelligence Service. He left the Service early in 1919, went back to Boston, and again took up practice. There he remained until 1929, when he moved to New York City as a member of the firm of Lord, Day & Lord. It

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