

Obituaries

PIERCE WELCH GAINES

Pierce Welch Gaines, lawyer, collector, and bibliographer, died of leukemia on July 9, 1977, at the age of seventy-one. A native of New Haven, Gaines was an alumnus of The Taft School. He graduated from Yale in 1927 with an A.B. degree and took his LL.B. (converted retroactively to a J.D.) from Harvard Law School in 1931. Except for 1935-36 when he was with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in New York City, Gaines was associated from his law school graduation until 1942 with a number of law firms in New York and Bridgeport, Connecticut. In 1942 he joined the war effort as a civilian lawyer in the navy's Bureau of Aeronautics, rising in time to the post of counsel to the bureau. His wartime service earned him the navy's Distinguished Civilian Service Award and was, he later reflected, 'an interlude pleasant to look back on.' After V-J Day, he returned for two years to his former practice. From 1947 until his retirement, he was an attorney for American Telephone and Telegraph Company in New York, working mainly on financing and related matters.

As a collector and bibliographer, Gaines's interests centered on political writings published during the early years of the Republic, 1789-1815, and on the imprints of Mathew Carey. He first made himself known to the American Antiquarian Society in 1954 through the gift of a catalogue of Carey imprints that he had made for his own use. Later that year he paid his first visit to the Society's library. During this time Gaines was busy compiling, from secondary sources, a list of anonymous or pseudonymous political writings published during the first three presidential administrations, together with attributions of authorship. He was quick to point out that he was not 'making attributions myself, but rather

simply . . . noting the attributions others have made, contradictory or not.' Gaines sought and received advice from Brigham and Clifford K. Shipton at AAS during the course of his research. His work culminated in the publication in 1959 by Yale University Library of *Political Works of Concealed Authorship during the Administrations of Washington, Adams and Jefferson 1789-1809 with Attributions*. Ted Shipton wished 'that we had the honor of printing it in our *Proceedings*.' Gaines later brought out second (1965) and third (1972) revised and enlarged editions of the book under the imprint of The Shoe String Press as well as separately published additions and amendments published in our *Proceedings* for October 1966 and October 1976.

In the 1960s Gaines turned his scholarly attention to compiling a bibliography, with notes and extracts, of all the works of William Cobbett ('Peter Porcupine') that were written in, published in, or about the United States. In the course of this work, Gaines edited Cobbett's account books, which are in the Society's manuscript department, for publication in the *Proceedings* for October 1968. The Society published the full work in 1971 as *William Cobbett and the United States 1792-1835*. Gaines thought the finished books, adorned with Klaus Gemming's handsome deep blue and red dust jackets, 'look very well indeed. Most colorful for a "scholarly book," so-called.'

For years, Gaines spoke deprecatingly of the skills that he brought to his scholarly efforts. When he sent his manuscript Carey catalogue to AAS, he wrote apologetically, 'I'm not really a catalogue man.' Later he spoke of his work on concealed authorship as 'a venture in a new field for me.' Of a proposed bibliography of political sermons, he told Ted Shipton, 'Being neither a bibliographer nor an historian poses limits.' And his *William Cobbett*, he claimed, was 'obviously an amateur work and I think the pros may well say so.' But he need not have worried. The Cobbett book was 'a careful and

scholarly annotated bibliography,' according to a reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* (England). An American reviewer called it 'a model bibliography.' Indeed, Gaines himself was the very model of the amateur scholars who combine with those who happen to make their living by poking around in libraries to give the membership of the American Antiquarian Society (the rolls of which Gaines joined in October 1958) its special character. During his twenty years of association with the Society, Gaines was a most generous and loyal member. Out of his own library of some 4,600 titles, he helped AAS fill a number of gaps in our own collection of early political writings and Carey imprints. After his death, his library went to the University of Connecticut in Storrs.

Pete Gaines had bouts with illness off and on in recent years. During his last struggle, with leukemia, he maintained his interest in early political writings as long as he could. Our last contact with him in fact was in the course of readying for the printer the last installment of additions and amendments to his *Political Writings*. His illness kept him from checking the proofs of the article and his death from ever seeing the final printed product. His survivors include his wife, Carolyn Livingston (Fliess) Gaines, whom he married on July 28, 1934, and with whom he shared the joys and pains of restoring and maintaining a pre-Revolutionary saltbox house on seven acres of land in Fairfield, Connecticut; two daughters, Julie Phelan and Carolyn Roberson; and one son, Pierce Welch Gaines, Jr.

John B. Hench

FREDERICK MERK

Frederick Merk, who taught American history at Harvard University and Radcliffe College for thirty-nine years, died on September 24, 1977, a few weeks after celebrating his ninetieth birthday. Professor Merk was certainly one of the

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