

table. 'I wish you were here to swell the number around the lunch table,' he wrote a friend in 1979. A few months before his death, he wrote exuberantly of the manuscript of a young colleague whose research he had guided: 'It is a superb volume, meticulously done, fresh in its concepts, sparkling with new ideas, and in all a joy to read.' His enthusiasm and zest for American history, ideas, learning, and people made Ray Billington a gifted scholar and the friend and supporter of all those around him. He is survived by his wife, Mabel Crotty Billington, a daughter, Ann Schmitt, of France, and a son, Allen, of Michigan.

Howard R. Lamar

LESTER JESSE CAPPON

Lester Jesse Cappon, director emeritus of the Institute of Early American History and Culture and fellow emeritus of the Newberry Library, died of a heart attack in Chicago on August 24, 1981. He was eighty. It was entirely typical of his continuing intellectual vigor and dedication to scholarship that this distinguished historian, archivist, geographer, and bibliographer should have had two articles in press and the draft of a book review just completed on the day of his death.

Born in Milwaukee on September 18, 1900, Lester received a diploma from the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music in 1920. He subsequently earned the B.A. degree in 1922 and the M.A. degree in 1923 from the University of Wisconsin. Entering Harvard University and working under Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., he took a second master's degree in 1925 and received his doctorate in 1928.

By the time that he completed a dissertation on the early iron industry in Virginia, Lester had already begun a distinguished career in 1926-27 as research associate at the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences at the University of Virginia.

After taking a year off in 1928 to complete the dissertation, he returned as research associate from 1928 to 1930. From 1930 until his promotion to associate professor in 1945, he was assistant professor in the department of history. In the same period Lester also built his reputation as an archivist by serving as archivist in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia from 1930 to 1940 and as consulting archivist from 1940 to 1945, as director of the Virginia Historical Records Survey in 1936-37, and director of the Virginia World War II History Project in 1944-45.

In 1945 Lester became the first editor of publications at the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg. He also served as the first archivist of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and as lecturer in history at The College of William and Mary, cosponsors of the institute. Under Lester's direction, the institute launched its book publishing program and issued the first thirteen titles in a series that established it as the leading publisher in early American studies. In 1955 he became the third director of the institute, a post he held until his retirement in 1969 and in which he continued to build the strength and reputation of the institute's program.

Retirement was never an apt word to use in connection with Lester's activities, for in 1969 he moved to Chicago to begin a new career, first as senior fellow of the Newberry Library and then, from 1970 until the completion of the project in 1976, as editor-in-chief of the *Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era, 1760-1790*. Thereafter he continued his active scholarship as fellow emeritus of the Newberry.

The *Atlas of Early American History*, a cooperative undertaking of the Newberry Library and the Institute of Early American History and Culture, was undoubtedly Lester's greatest scholarly monument, one that drew together all of his many talents—not least of all his great ability to direct and encourage the work of younger scholars. His complete list of publications was a long one that also included his work as co-

editor, with Stella Duff Neiman, of *The Virginia Gazette Index, 1736–1780* (1950) and as editor of two volumes of *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (1959).

Active in a host of professional organizations, he filled the presidency of three: the Southern Historical Association in 1949, the Society of American Archivists in 1957, and the Association for Documentary Editing in 1979–80. Elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society in April 1952, his loyalty to AAS is attested to by his generous support during his years of membership, and by a bequest. Although he was able to attend meetings only occasionally, Lester read a paper, 'Geographers and Map-makers, British and American, from about 1750 to 1789,' at the annual meeting in 1971, soon after he had begun work on the *Atlas*.

Lester will be remembered by those who knew him not only for his own accomplishments and the high standards he imposed on himself, but also for the strong encouragement he gave to others and the example he set. Perhaps Parke Rouse, a Williamsburg colleague and friend, caught something of the essence of Lester as a scholar and as a person when he wrote in an unsigned editorial in the *Newport News Daily Press* of August 30, 1981: 'A legion of ex-students kept in touch until his death with the modest, bearded scholar. They loved him not only for his selfless work but for his helpfulness in all manner of matters that his wide career had touched on. They also prized his wit, his loyalty, and his warmth of friendship.'

He is survived by his son, Stanley Burnett Cappon of Somerset, Kentucky, and four grandchildren.

Thad W. Tate

ROBERT BRUCE HITCHMAN

Robert Bruce Hitchman was born in Denver, Colorado, October 28, 1908. While still in his early teens, his family moved to

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