

## Obituary

### HENRY R. WAGNER

The memory of our late member, Henry R. Wagner, will be kept alive for many generations by his four outstanding books. His pre-eminence as a bibliographer is shown in his *Plains and Rockies 1800-1865* and his *Spanish Southwest 1542-1794*; as a cartographer in his *Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800*, and as a historian in his *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World, its Aims and Achievements*.

We are apt to think of Wagner as primarily a bibliographer, cartographer and historian, without realizing that his pre-eminence in those fields was due to his passion for collecting and to his originality and effectiveness as a collector. Though a collector from his early years, it was not until he retired from active business, when nearly 60 years old, that, except for a few minor publications, we begin to know of Wagner as a scholar. Indeed *The Published Writings of Henry R. Wagner*, published by the Zamorano Club in 1955, when Wagner was in his 93d year, and listing 167 books and articles, records only seven dated prior to 1920. It was in the earlier years and for a few years after retiring from business that Wagner gave full play to this passion to collect.

As early as 1892 Wagner began a metallurgical collection, of which he remarked in later years that he doubted if there were another such collection anywhere in the world. This

was offered as a gift to the American Antiquarian Society in 1936, but was refused because it was outside the field of its collections. It was then given to Yale.

In the decade of the 1910s Wagner began assembling noteworthy collections of original narratives of travel and exploration for the region west of the Mississippi and eighteenth century and earlier contemporary accounts of the Southwest, before the collecting world had any idea of their importance. These were the basis of his two outstanding bibliographies, his *Plains and Rockies*, published in 1920, and his *Spanish Southwest*, published in 1924. These two bibliographies not only made these formerly neglected items fashionable to collectors and greatly enhanced their prices, but they recorded for scholars the original printed material on two important phases of our history.

Wagner's eminence as a cartographer is shown by his *The Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800*, published in 1937. This again was based on his zeal as a collector, this time, since the originals could not be collected, of photostats of documents and maps, mostly from the Spanish and Mexican archives, which he had spent fifteen years in assembling. Many of the results of these searches had first been reported in his earlier books on Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast and in articles in historical periodicals. One of these earlier articles, his "Apocryphal Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America," was published in the *Proceedings* of this Society for the April, 1931, meeting. His eminence as a historian is shown by his *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World, its Aims and Achievements*, San Francisco, 1926. This, based on photostats of thousands of pages of documents from archives, is regarded by informed scholars as the most important work thus far on Drake.

about books with the connecting link of our respective doings, has become one of my prize possessions. It shows that Wagner was not only pre-eminent as a scholar, but was also a companionable and responsive friend. T. W. S.

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