

lications of American writers. One of his earliest catalogues was devoted to these early efforts and this has been followed at intervals by others in the same vein. This was, however, only one facet of his interests and the scholarly catalogues he published covering fiction, poetry, drama, and bibliographical works provide a valuable commentary on the history and the changing fashions of American book buying over four decades.

The shop established on the premises at 3 West Forty-sixth Street in New York by Kohn and Papantonio shortly after the end of the war has become a mecca for bibliophiles from all over the United States and from foreign countries. It is not overstating the case to say that Kohn became the leading authority on first and important editions of American literature. He was an interested and active member of the American Antiquarian Society. The Society's incomparable holdings in American literature have been enriched by his counsel and his gifts. He will be sorely missed as a member, a friend, and a benefactor.

C. Waller Barrett

SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON

Samuel Eliot Morison was born in Boston on July 9, 1887, and died there nearly eighty-nine years later on May 15, 1976. He lived most of his life at 44 Brimmer Street in Boston. He graduated from Harvard in 1908, sharing a family tradition with, among others, several Samuel Eliots, President Charles W. Eliot, Charles Eliot Norton, and Elting E. Morison. During his junior year he decided on teaching and writing history as an objective after graduation and in his twenty-fifth Harvard class report, he wrote: 'History is a humane discipline that sharpens the intellect and broadens the mind, offers contacts with people, nations, and civilizations,

and saves one's sanity in those eras of man's madness through which the world has passed in the last twenty years.'

After a year of study in Paris, he returned to Harvard and received his Ph.D. in 1912. This was followed by a year as instructor in history at the University of California, Berkeley. He then returned to Harvard again where he continued on the faculty until his retirement in 1955 except for sabbaticals, a year of service as a private in the United States army in the First World War, work as a member of the American commission to negotiate peace in 1919 in Paris (with assignments in Russia, Finland, and the Balkan states), three years at Oxford as the first Harmsworth Professor of American History, and as the historian of naval operations during the Second World War. He inherited Edward Channing's study in the Widener Library in the beginning of the 1930s and continued to use it as a scholarly base until his death.

He taught undergraduates and graduate students in the field of American history, specializing in the colonial period. He lectured apparently extemporaneously but actually from notes which he revised annually. He supervised the dissertations of fewer doctoral candidates than some of his colleagues because of his busy writing schedule. His first book was the life and letters of one of his ancestors, Harrison Gray Otis, which was published in 1913 and which had developed from his doctoral thesis. It was followed by *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* in 1921 and his *Oxford History of the United States* in 1927. The latter, written during his Oxford years, and which has gone through several editions, has never been equaled or replaced. After 1927 his publications came closer together and will not be listed here in detail. They were literary productions such as are too seldom produced by historians as well as first-class history. Mention should be made, however, of his more than forty years' work with *The New England Quarterly* from its beginning in 1928 as editor, reviewer, and contributor; his five volumes written between

1926 and 1936 as Harvard's tercentennial historian; his *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus* in 1942 and *John Paul Jones, a Sailor's Biography* in 1959, both of which won Pulitzer prizes; and finally *One Boy's Boston* in 1962, the story of his boyhood and background which discloses more about him as a person than his other publications.

Sam Morison was extremely shy, giving an impression of aloofness. He was tall, slender, and straight. Some mistook his shyness for snobbishness. He was, on the contrary, a true liberal. While he thought very highly of President Lowell because of his defense of academic freedom of speech, he disagreed with him on the Sacco and Vanzetti case. He felt that the causes of the First World War were not as simple as many of his countrymen believed. He was an admirer of Woodrow Wilson until, during his varied assignments at the 1919 peace conference, he lost confidence in the president's judgment.

Morison was consulted by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt about what became the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park and spent an evening discussing it at the Harvard Faculty Club with Wilmarth (Lefty) Lewis, Archibald MacLeish, William A. (Bill) Jackson, and the writer. Bill and I disagreed with him but there was no confrontation. He could disagree without quarreling. In the Second World War Morison had no hesitation about his duty in connection with it and was pleased by his assignment by President Roosevelt as historian of naval operations. The assignment involved sea duty in the Atlantic and Pacific where he was directly involved in various types of warfare and exposed to air attacks, gunfire engagements, and amphibious and submarine operations. He rose eventually to the rank of rear admiral. The result of his service was the monumental fifteen-volume history of the American naval operations in the war, published from 1947 to 1962.

Morison respected the long-range value of library collec-

tions. At a Harvard faculty meeting when discussion centered on the need of more space for the library's growing collections, a senior member of the economics department stated almost violently that the librarians were unreasonable in their insistence on keeping old books which were no longer useful and said that one-half of the collection was never used and if it was discarded, the space problem could be solved. He added that the library even had a collection of children's books. Sam, who seldom spoke at faculty meetings, immediately but quietly and almost gently said that he would predict that in another generation the collection of children's books would be more useful than the two volumes a year that the previous speaker had been producing, and the problem was solved at least for that generation.

The writer of this memoir, as was the case with many of Morison's associates, never felt that he knew Sam well; this in spite of the evening spent dealing with the library at Hyde Park, frequent lunches at seats near each other at the long table at the Harvard Faculty Club, and a memorable dinner with him and his first wife, Elizabeth, at the home of Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. Mrs. Metcalf knew him and Elizabeth many years before I came to the Boston area as they had a Boston Athenæum share and used the library from time to time. In later years when she met him on the street or saw him in the library, he would always ask, 'How is Keyes (*Keys*)?' She would answer and say, 'Keyes (*Kys*) is well.' Sam would then say, 'Remember me to Keyes (*Keys*).' His sense of humor was quiet, never obtrusive, but it was a good one.

Morison was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society and the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1914, at an unusually early age, after the publication of his *Life of Harrison Gray Otis*. He had been elected to the Colonial Society of Massachusetts in 1912. Before he died, he had been for a long period the senior member of each. He was active in all three societies and often read papers at their

meetings. He was the president of the Colonial Society from 1925 to 1938 and of the Antiquarian Society from 1938 to 1952, unusually long terms of service in these capacities.

His correspondence with Clarence Brigham began in 1911 when he was a graduate student at Harvard. He was asked to speak at one of the regular meetings in Worcester only three years after his election. He called on Mr. Brigham for help in the days when he thought the Massachusetts Historical Society was running down from lack of leadership. He worked closely with Ted Shipton when the latter first began his work on *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* in the early 1930s but he did not hesitate to criticize when he disagreed on details connected with it. He suggested Shipton for the librarianship of the Antiquarian Society in 1940 after Glenn Vail resigned and later recommended him strongly for the position. He made a custom of bringing his seminar class to Worcester for a day at the Antiquarian Society so they could see something of the riches of its collections relating to their fields of interest. At one time he wrote to Shipton a letter that should help those who did not know him intimately to understand him better:

I am appalled to hear that someone is to lecture about me, but if it has to be done, I am glad that the lecturer is to be you.

If you mention those to whom I am indebted, it would be well to say, that in addition to my debt to such teachers as Haskins, Hart, Channing and Turner, I owe an immense debt to three beloved and devoted women.

1. My mother, who financed me during the long Ph.D. process and years of low (\$1200 to \$1800) salary at a time when there were few if any grants-in-aid for young scholars.

2. Bessie, who in addition to being a devoted wife and mother encouraged my efforts to write well and gave me excellent literary criticism and sailed with me on the Columbus voyage.

3. Priscilla, whose social gifts and graces opened new horizons and who has an uncanny facility for criticizing my work from the viewpoint of the public, which has improved my appeal to popular audiences.

Also, could you mention the availability of my pamphlet 'History as a Literary Art' in Old South [Church] for a dime—or in my *By Land & by Sea?* That will obviate graduate students writing 'please tell me how to write history.'

Sincerely and affectionately,
Sam E. M.

In Sam's last years, after the premature death in 1967 of his second wife, Priscilla (his first wife died in 1945), he was handicapped by old age and arthritis, but his mind continued as alert as ever. I was fortunate enough to hear him talk twice about his final historical enterprise, the second volume of *The European Discovery of America*, subtitled *The Southern Voyages* published in 1974, when he spoke of his last, long trip tracing the course of Magellan's voyage around Cape Horn. The first of these talks was given after a dinner in his honor on the sixtieth anniversary of his membership in the American Antiquarian Society, arranged by Henry Streeter for Boston members of the Society, and the second at the Colonial Society, where he had been a member for some sixty-three years. There was no sign of mental deterioration or loss of memory or sense of humor, and both occasions were memorable ones for all who heard him.

Keyes D. Metcalf

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.