

Americans at New Year's, 1780.' While not active in its affairs, Ted Richardson obviously took pride in his association with AAS.

Charles H. Sawyer

### ROBERT HILL TAYLOR

Robert Hill Taylor, who joined the Society in 1972, died at his home in Princeton, New Jersey, on May 5, 1985. He was born on September 12, 1908, in Gloucester, Massachusetts, the son of William Hill Taylor and May Dyckman Andrus Taylor. He attended the Riverdale Country School before entering Princeton University in the class of 1930, majoring in architecture. For many years he lived in Yonkers, New York, before moving to Princeton in 1960. In 1971 he moved his library into a specially built room in the Princeton University library.

His affiliations with bibliophilic organizations extended over many years. He served as president of the Grolier Club, the Keats-Shelley Association of America, and the Bibliographical Society of America, as chairman of the Council of Fellows of the Pierpont Morgan Library, and, for twenty-six years, as chairman of the Friends of the Princeton University Library. In 1975 he received Princeton's Donald F. Hyde Award for Distinction in Book Collecting and Service to the Community of Scholars; in 1981 he was awarded the Sir Thomas More Medal for book collecting from the University of San Francisco. He also wrote and talked frequently on books and book collecting. He was a member of The Century Association (New York) and a director of the Surdna Foundation, established by his grandfather, John E. Andrus.

But such a listing of facts, expected and necessary though it be at the opening of an obituary, does not evoke the spirit of Bob Taylor. A modest and self-deprecating man, Bob was also

lovable and brilliantly delightful. However, the wit and brilliance never took precedence; both were always tempered by loveliness and modesty. As for books, he admitted that they were a life-long passion. As he later explained, 'I was ill a great deal as a child. . . . There was nothing I could do except read. I developed a passion for it . . . I read anything. It wasn't what I read that was remarkable—it was the time I spent and the way I was wrapped up in it.' In his last year at Riverdale Country School, this devourer of books acquired his first really old book, a 1794 edition of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. Here is his reaction: 'It was the first tangible link with the past which I had ever possessed, and I pored over it most of the night, reminding myself frequently that this was the way the work had looked to its original readers.' Thus was triggered the building of a wonderful library aggregating some 7,000 items, a collection noted especially for its holdings of Anthony Trollope and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, as well as for the works of Pope, Byron, and Beerbohm. Once in a discussion about Beerbohm, he remarked wistfully that, when he first encountered the inimitable Max, 'he seemed to be writing just for me.' The presence of such a collection at Princeton inspired the second and third numbers in volume 38 of the *Princeton University Library Chronicle* (Winter-Spring 1977), which were issued together under the common title 'Robert H. Taylor Collection.' It makes fascinating reading.

However, it is now time to ask, why is such an enthusiastic collector of British authors a fit subject for an AAS obituary? The most obvious answer is that Bob was also an enthusiastic collector of American literature, as Richard M. Ludwig makes quite clear in his article in the volume of the *Princeton University Library Chronicle* noted above. Identifying the specific American book that Bob started his collection with depends upon which account you read—another example of how undependable bare facts can be in unraveling the charm of his personality. Ludwig's article treats the word 'literature' very

narrowly. I did not find a reference to Anne Bradstreet's *Several Poems* (Boston, 1678), in a nice contemporary binding, but Michael Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* (London, 1687) was mentioned together with the dealer Michael Papanonio's attestation: 'the Heber-Britwell-Harmsworth-Thomas W. Streeter copy.' Benjamin Franklin, represented by a 1758 *Poor Richard's Almanac*, has to do for the eighteenth century, but most of the major nineteenth-century American authors are present, often in abundance. Bob's collecting interests, whether English or American, tended to dwindle after World War II.

Nevertheless those interests, while overwhelmingly literary, were not exclusively so. In the American sociopolitical field we find Oswald Veblen as well as Henry George. Going further back, there are the Lincoln-Douglas *Debates* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And members of the AAS may be interested to learn that one of Bob's last significant purchases (on November 16, 1984) was the rare first edition of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776).

This unsatisfactory sampling will have to do for Bob's wondrous bibliophily, but there is one other thing about Bob that must be mentioned, his generosity. Bob's discretion and modesty cloaked a great deal of this, and I am no gossip able or willing to unmask such secrets. But I hope he is blessed because of them, and I know that his memory on earth will be blessed because of them. Moreover, I dare to think that I speak for all Bob's friends when I say that the memory of his friendship will always be a cherished treasure. Would that there might be more people like him!

William H. Scheide

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