

Obituaries

STEPHEN BOTEIN

Stephen Botein, historian and teacher, was born in 1941 in New York City, the son of Marian Berman Botein and the late Judge Bernard Botein. He took his AB degree summa cum laude from Harvard in 1963, attended Columbia University Law School for one year, and received his Ph.D. in American history from Harvard in 1971. Between his year at Columbia and his return to Cambridge for doctoral work in history, he spent a year as an assistant editor in the Book Division of *American Heritage*. From 1970 to 1972 he was an assistant professor of history at Williams College and from 1972 to 1977 held an equivalent rank at Harvard. From there he ventured to the Midwest for a permanent position in the history department of Michigan State University, where he rose to the rank of professor. He was held in high esteem by his colleagues and students in East Lansing, but managed to spend considerable blocks of time back in the East, especially in Cambridge and in Worcester. During the academic year 1985-86 he served as visiting editor of publications at the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg.

Steve specialized in legal history, the history of professions, and the field that has come to be known as the history of the book. With his remarkable skill at synthesis, all became like one. His published output was actually relatively slender. Except for a book entitled *Early American Law and Society*, published in 1983, his publications consist of articles, reviews, and edited works. But many of these were very influential, his "Meer Mechanics" and an Open Press: The Business and Political Strategies of Colonial American Printers,' which appeared in the journal *Perspectives in American History* in 1975, especially so. But his real influence lay not so much in the printed page as in his personal contacts with,

encouragement of, and helpfulness to countless students, scholars, and other colleagues.

I had known of Steve before I joined the staff of AAS in 1973. I first sighted his name in a listing of dissertation topics. It caught my eye because his subject—printers of the Revolutionary era—was of great interest to me in my own dissertation work. His long *Perspectives* article, 'Meer Mechanics,' which had grown out of his dissertation, was for me a most influential piece of work. But it was only after I went to work at the Society that I got to know Steve personally. I don't believe that any other scholar, at least in the fourteen years that I have spent at AAS, participated so fully as Steve in the sundry activities that go on here. He was an AAS-National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in 1983-84, played important roles in AAS conferences on the history of the book in 1980 and 1984, gave a public anniversary lecture on John Peter Zenger and edited a pamphlet on Zenger for the AAS imprint, contributed chapters to AAS books, gave a paper in one of the regional postdoctoral seminars we host, led the first two summer seminars in the history of the book in American culture at AAS, and, in the months following his election to membership in AAS, in October 1985, served as a member of our Committee on Fellowships.

We had much more in mind for him to do, and he doubtless would cheerfully have taken on those tasks for us had he not died, so young, on the morning of the last day of last summer's seminar, on June 24, 1986. That seminar, like the previous year's, had been another Botein success story. Staff and participants alike noted the crucial role Steve played in organizing the seminar, making it cohere, and encouraging the participants' diverse ideas, interests, and spirits to flourish.

Many have remarked about Steve's own generosity of spirit. He was certainly the most giving person intellectually I have ever known. He was also a great connector—of people, of ideas, and of attitudes. All of us who knew him at AAS are grateful that he regarded our institution as important to him personally and profes-

sionally and as a place where he could—and did—make those connections that he found so vital. Members of his family, including his wife, the former Sheila Dawson Read, his daughters, Emily and Hilary, and his mother, established a memorial fund at AAS in his memory, to which dozens of his friends and colleagues have contributed. That fund will help others at AAS do the kinds of ‘connecting’ that Steve found so congenial.

John B. Hench

KATHRYN CLARK BUHLER

Kathryn Clark Buhler (Mrs. Yves Henry Buhler) died in Boston on November 7, 1986 at the age of eighty-five. Kathryn joined the American Antiquarian Society in 1966. She enjoyed her membership and regularly attended meetings until her declining health prevented her from doing so in recent years.

Kathryn started her career at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1925 and retired in 1966 as senior research fellow. She specialized in the decorative arts with special interest in American and European silver.

After her retirement, she continued actively in her work with antique silver and was internationally recognized as the leading authority on American silver. She was the only American honorary member of the English Silver Collector's Society. She wrote many articles on the subject and prepared many catalogues of collections, including the two-volume catalogue of the collection at the Museum of Fine Arts that appeared in 1972.

Her name was well known to all who have had any interest in American silver, for she had an outstanding knowledge on all phases of the subject, from the handcrafting of the pieces to a listing of the many American silversmiths and their varying styles, traits, and abilities. She had an unmatched, well-researched record of those for whom articles of silver were made and of the provenance

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