

RAY NASH

Ray Nash, whose life was dedicated to paper, ink, and type, cannot himself be confined to the printed page. The pertinent vital statistics may be briefly stated. He was born in Milwaukie, Oregon, on February 27, 1905. The University of Oregon awarded him his undergraduate degree (1928) and Harvard a master's in fine arts (1947). After a brief career in newspapers, he entered the teaching profession as an art instructor at the New School for Social Research in New York. He began his long and fruitful association with Dartmouth College in 1937, retiring in 1970. He died at his home in Royalton, Vermont, on May 28, 1982. These facts reveal little of the man himself. To understand the scope of his work and influence, one must turn to people—his students, his colleagues, and his friends.

The students who attended his courses in printing and the graphic arts at Dartmouth between 1937 and his retirement in 1970 are the best measure of the man. Among them are eminent printers, publishers, designers, educators, editors, collectors, and craftsmen. This variety is a reflection of his own breadth of interest and reflects as well his ability to find the bookman in a student of any persuasion. Many a confirmed English major or staunch premed succumbed to the black art under his tutelage, and the world of books is all the better for such broadly based recruiting. He knew that the way of life he had to offer was useful, rich, and fine. Students sensed this certainty and followed.

A consideration of his chosen colleagues is also revealing. He was a formidable member of the Dartmouth faculty, loyal and jovial in his friendships, keen in the promotion of his world of books and presses. But his universe was larger than the college, and he was clubbable. In Boston he enjoyed the Odd Volumes and the Society of Printers; in New York, the Grolier and the Century; in London, the Athenaeum. The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the American

Antiquarian Society were among his learned fellowships. He was elected to membership in AAS in October 1955 and attended quite a few meetings until the late 1970s. He valued his membership highly. He also left his mark on the Society's affairs, particularly on its publications, though in an indirect way. The standards of typographic style and taste he inculcated in such persons as Roderick Stinehour and Marcus McCorison (and, even more indirectly, through his apprentices' apprentices) still prevail.

Professor Nash was an instigator. As Noel Perrin wrote, 'He enjoyed causing things to happen.' He launched careers, and he launched institutions as well. He established a graphic arts workshop at a college that did not know, until his coming, what it lacked. He helped to found, in 1940, the journal *Print*, and founded *Printing & Graphic Arts* in 1953, serving as its principal editor until 1965. In 1964 he incorporated and presided over the American Friends of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, a foundation to aid young scholars in research at the archive of printing history that had proved so vital to his own work.

He launched books. He wrote articles and monographs on the history of the graphic arts in Europe and America. His study of calligraphy and printing in the sixteenth century, based on the Plantinian French and Flemish dialogues of 1567, attained two editions in his lifetime—the first printed by Updike, the latest by Stinehour. Philip Hofer published his monograph on Dürer's 1511 drawing of a press and printer for the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts at Harvard College Library. Nash treatises on early American writing masters and copybooks were published by Harvard, by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and by the American Antiquarian Society (*American Penmanship*, Worcester, 1969). From 1960 until his retirement, he also shepherded the books of other authors, as director of Dartmouth publications.

Honors came to him. He received the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and was made, by royal decree, an officer of Belgium's Order of Leopold II. He was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and of the Society

of Antiquaries of London. He was called upon to give the annual oration at Harvard before the Alpha chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1960 and invited to Oxford to reorganize the bibliography room at the New Bodleian Library in 1966. He embraced friendships and projects in Britain and on the Continent with evident relish.

But it was teaching, first and last, that brought his deepest satisfaction. He continued to hold an active summer workshop on his hilltop farm in Royalton, Vermont, until 1978, and he kept in touch with former students until his death, at seventy-seven, in 1982. Two years later, a group of those students held an exhibition in Dartmouth's Baker Library commemorating the output of the graphic arts workshop. The show was not, as it turned out, a culmination, but a beginning. The interest it aroused provided the seeds of yet one more Nash book: *Ray Nash and the Graphic Arts Workshop at Dartmouth College*, published by (and available from) the Friends of the Dartmouth Library, Hanover, New Hampshire. The volume, introduced by Roderick Stinehour, contains reminiscences by former students and a selected bibliography and biographical chronology by Edward Connery Lathem, who also edited the whole. Nash's essay 'Education in a Workshop' is reprinted in entirety, and student work of all eras is reproduced.

Ray Nash always captured imaginations and often entire lives. Charles Bolté, editor of *The American Oxonian*, wrote of their first meeting, 'Conversation began, and lasted for forty-five years.' Contemplating his acceptance in the Nash circle, Roderick Stinehour, chairman of the board of Meriden-Stinehour Press, states simply that 'the course of my life was thereby altered.' Alvin Eisenman, Street Professor of Painting and Design and director of graduate studies in graphic design at Yale University, recalled receiving a kernel of Nashian insight and continued, 'My perception of that small distinction was really the beginning of my career as a designer of scholarly books. Two thousand books later, I'm still amazed at the simplicity of the lesson.' The Boston publisher David Godine learned from Nash a vital connection: 'Art was a part of life; not something you went to museums to see, but some-

thing that enhanced your personal humanity.' Nash shared with his students not only the appointed classroom hours but also his larger life—his friends, his family, and his farm. The farm, perched snugly on the slope of Broadbrook Mountain, was the place where many first perceived, through Nash's own example, how a life of art and work and scholarship might well be intertwined. 'My dreams, aspirations, and energies found plenty of room, up there,' wrote Sinclair Hitchings, keeper of prints at the Boston Public Library. 'I will always connect the farm with the future,' he remarked. And that future—now the present—is more humane, more literate, better designed, more conscious of its heritage, for Ray Nash's generous life.

Stephen Harvard

GORDON NORTON RAY

When Gordon Ray addressed the International Federation of Library Associations in Budapest in 1972, he entitled his remarks 'Books as a Way of Life.' There could be no better title for an account of his own life. Although that talk was not autobiographical, he did describe his qualifications to speak to a bookish audience in this way: 'When I was young, it was largely through books that I formed my view of the world. As a teacher, books have been my chosen subject. I have written a number of books on my own. And for the last twenty-five years book collecting has been my absorbing avocation.' If we add to all the books he encountered in these four capacities—as reader, teacher, scholar, and collector—the books produced by the faculty of the University of Illinois while he was an administrator there and those written by Guggenheim Fellows during his presidency of the Guggenheim Foundation, we can see the extent to which his life was enveloped in books. His solid accomplishment and commanding authority in these various worlds of the book gave him a unique standing: in any of his fields,

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