

Obituaries

JOHN OTIS BREW

John Otis Brew was born in Malden, Massachusetts, on March 28, 1906, the son of Michael Parker and Edith (Fryer) Brew. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1928 with an A.B. degree in fine arts. From 1928 to 1931 he prepared for his Ph.D. in the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, receiving the degree in 1941, ten years later, after an active hands-on experience in the field and at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. He listed and signed his name as 'J. O. Brew' and answered to the first name of 'Jo.'

Jo Brew was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society at its annual meeting in October 1965. In his acceptance letter to director Ted Shipton, Jo wrote, 'Despite the fact that I am a prehistorian whose field is Pueblo Archaeology, I was born and raised here and have a lively interest in the local scene.'

Jo's lively interest in the local scene was centered at the dining table of the Saturday luncheons at the Club of Odd Volumes in Boston. The COV Saturday luncheons were important to him as a communications center. Among the two dozen or more men usually in attendance were scholars in many fields: teachers, researchers, administrators, to name but a few. Jo was one of them. He talked, and he listened. He learned, and he shared his learning. He was a good companion, able to keep up with the ideas, facts, and fancies flying around his head. It was only natural that he was asked to join, and accepted membership in, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the American Antiquarian Society, as well as many scholarly organizations in his own field less well represented in the Club of Odd Volumes. Even if he did not attend many of the formal meetings

of these Massachusetts organizations because of the multiplicity of his other associations, he saw some of their members regularly at the COV.

If any one word can be chosen to sum up Jo Brew's life, that word is 'sharing.' He found and he opened many doors to new discoveries in his field. He invited others to pass through those doors with him, to make their own discoveries, and to publish what they had learned.

Much of what follows is drawn from Walter Muir Whitehill's 'A Memoir of John Otis Brew,' which was prepared for the minutes of the faculty of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology on the occasion of Jo's retirement as director of that institution. It was published by the Club of Odd Volumes in 1968.

Dr. Richard B. Woodbury, curator of archaeology at the Smithsonian Institution, wrote about Jo, 'His work can be described as outstanding for two reasons: the first his skill in selecting relatively neglected or misunderstood areas for research, and second, the thoroughness with which the research was organized and directed.'

Dr. Edward B. Danson, director of the Museum of Northern Arizona, had this to say: 'Another of Dr. Brew's important contributions to archaeology was the number of students whom he helped to train. His breadth of vision and knowledge was a constant source of stimulation to his students, and his enthusiasm and love of the Southwest added to the pleasure of studying under him. No student of Dr. Brew's was allowed to be pedantic or petty. He wanted his students to be careful but not meticulous, imaginative but not fanciful, enthusiastic but not extremists. He wanted his students to be well-rounded anthropologists, and a reflection of his archaeological standards are the numerous publications produced under his aegis that are of significant importance.'

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology was the center of Jo's professional life. From 1941 to 1945 he served as assistant curator of Southwestern American archaeology, advancing in 1945 to curator of North American archaeology. He was director of the museum from 1948 to 1967. In 1949 he was chosen

to be Peabody Professor of American Archaeology and Ethnology, holding the post until 1972, when the word 'emeritus' was attached to his title. That flag was still flying at the time of his death. Jo was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a member of the executive council and a trustee of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society. He served on the council of the Society of American Archaeology and also as its president. 'Retirement' and 'emeritus' did not slow Jo down as far as anyone could see. Three and one-quarter inches of minuscule type in *Who's Who in America* record the bare bones of his life's activities, some of them very active during what no one considered to be his twilight years.

During his excavating years, Jo had observed the destruction of the relics of the past caused by human carelessness, ignorance, and indifference. It did not take him long to realize that the same gaps in our understanding were thinning out the surviving art and architecture from more sophisticated civilizations, some of this destruction occurring in our own libraries and museums. Beginning with what he called 'salvage archaeology,' his influence spread throughout the whole conservation movement. He knew that he could not slow down or stop this attrition by himself. Other conservationists realized that they needed his help. He shared his talents with many organizations founded for this purpose, leading some of them, guiding others.

As chairman of the Monuments Commission of UNESCO, Jo was influential in the rescue of archaeological and historic sites in Egypt and the Sudan from the rising waters of the Nile that backed up behind the Aswan High Dam. His service on the Consulting Committee to the director of the National Park Service contributed to the designation of over eight hundred sites as national historic landmarks and earned him a Conservation Service award from the U.S. Department of the Interior.

He was no hand-wringer. He went head-on with people at the seats of power and won their cooperation by his skill at negotiation, his understanding of the arts of the possible, and his ability to enter into the minds of the people with whom he was dealing.

Jo was a trustee of Donations for Education in Liberia, an organization founded in 1850 with high hopes and limited funds to establish and support Liberia College in Monrovia. He visited the college, now called a university, in December 1969, and was the first trustee to do so. He was awarded an LL.D. in international relations by the university and, for good measure, an elaborate medal the size of a saucer that identified him as a Grand Commander of the Star of Africa. He wore this medal to the meetings of the trustees, much to the pleasure of those present. He was elected president of the trustees in 1968 and held that office until his death.

This was Jo Brew: archaeologist, teacher, friend, much of whose pioneering work was completed and published by his colleagues, including his students, under their own names. He was careful in his work but not meticulous, imaginative but not fanciful, enthusiastic but not an extremist. Perhaps his most valuable contributions to his field are his students, and their students, too, for Jo's ability to share his knowledge has been passed on to them.

Only one of Jo's great discoveries did he keep for himself. Toward the end of the work at Awatavi in the Hopi country of northeastern Arizona, on June 11, 1939, he married Evelyn Ruth Nimmo, a member of the expedition staff. She and their two sons, Alan Parker Brew and Lindsay Edward Brew, survive him. Jo's heart gave out on March 19, 1988. 'I have had a good life,' he told his doctor. He accepted death as he had accepted life: another door to pass through, another discovery to be made.

David B. Little

GEORGE BUBB DANGERFIELD

George Bubb Dangerfield wrote with a style that universally won the admiration of historians, whether or not they agreed with his points of view. The author of several books in both British and American history, Dangerfield was best known for *The Era of Good*

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