

Mr. Thruston was also at one time president of the national society of the S.A.R., and was a member of many patriotic and historical societies. His first contact with the American Antiquarian Society came in 1914 when he inquired about our *Proceedings*. He was elected to membership in October 1916, and he frequently corresponded with us on mutual problems such as the preservation of newspapers. Although he was a generous friend of this Society, he could never be brought to read a paper at one of our meetings. Indeed he was primarily a gatherer and preserver of historical materials, and the only item of importance which he ever wrote was a booklet on the origin and evolution of the United States flag, which was published by the government. The great work on the Signers of the Declaration of Independence on which he labored for some years, was never finished.

There were many other ways in which Thruston served his generation. He was active in the Red Cross during and after the first World War, and was for many years a trustee of the Louisville Free Public Library. With the other members of his family he gave to the city three public parks and the home of George Rogers Clark. The University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky awarded him honorary degrees. He was always a good son of Yale which he served as president of the Alumni Association of Kentucky and a member of the executive committee of the Alumni Advisory Board. He died, unmarried, on December 30, 1946, survived by a nephew, Breaux Ballard, and by many other members of the younger generations of his family. C. K. S.

WILLIAM SAWITZKY

William Sawitzky, art historian and leading authority on early American portraiture, died at his home in Stamford,

Connecticut, February 2, 1947. He was born at Riga, in Russia, November 30, 1879, the son of Karl Sawitzky, botanist and horticulturist, and Maryann (Kenningham) Sawitzky of Hull, England. Educated primarily in biology and history, he engaged at first in ornithological field work in the Urals, Caucasus, and Central Asia. Then in 1904 he turned to journalism, writing for Russian newspapers on natural history, literature and art. In 1911 he came to this country as a correspondent for several European newspapers. In 1913 his leading interest in art manifested itself and he joined the firm of M. Knoedler and Company, in New York, to remain for about three years as art librarian. From that time on, art was his chosen vocation and rapidly his interest began to center in American art, chiefly of the early period. In 1920 he started arranging exhibitions of American paintings in the Middle West and South, accompanying them with lectures. In 1926 he edited for the Frick Art Reference Library the four volume work on Gilbert Stuart by Lawrence Park, who had died in 1924. Mr. Sawitzky wrote the biographical sketch of Mr. Park and in the Stuart list adhered entirely to Mr. Park's opinions, where they were expressed, although not necessarily agreeing with those opinions.

By this time Mr. Sawitzky was becoming a recognized authority on early American portraits. His industry was enormous. In 1926 and 1927 he visited Europe twice to examine art museums and especially to seek for "lost" portraits by Stuart and other American painters. During the 1930's he travelled over this country in exhaustive researches to examine American portraits. He inspected literally thousands of pictures in all of the states along the Atlantic seaboard and the southern states to the Mississippi River. His retentive memory enabled him to store in his mind, as well as on paper, the record and location of

these pictures, and his knowledge of the brush-work, style and mannerisms of artists made it possible for him to ascribe attributions to many hitherto unidentified portraits.

Mr. Sawitzky's ability and experience caused many museums and historical societies to seek his advice. In the late 1930's, he spent much time in studying the large collection of paintings owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which resulted in the publication in 1942, of a valuable catalogue of its portraits and miniatures. In 1940 he became formally connected with the New York Historical Society, first as lecturer, and then as advisory curator of American Art under a special grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It was during that period he produced in 1942 his *Matthew Pratt*, a volume of much merit, upon a painter whose work had been but little chronicled. As a result of his study, two of our own portraits—those of John Bush and his wife—formerly ascribed to Charles W. Peale, were accredited to Pratt. He also wrote forewords for catalogues and contributed to art periodicals. Nearing completion at the time of his death were monographs on Ralph Earle and *Three Early New York Portrait Painters*, which valuable studies will subsequently be published under the editorship of his wife, Susan Sawitzky, as will also a number of other volumes for which Mr. Sawitzky had laid the groundwork, but was unable to finish.

Mr. Sawitzky was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1945, but died before he was able to attend a meeting. We had planned to publish monographs which he might write on early American art. He married Susan Clay, daughter of Colonel Charles D. Clay of Lexington, Kentucky, and a great-granddaughter of Henry Clay. She survived her husband and her close companionship and knowledge of his work has made it possible for her, at his request, to carry it on.

C. S. B

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