Obituaries

PAUL FENIMORE COOPER, JR.

Paul Fenimore Cooper, Jr., who died suddenly at the age of fifty-eight on Lord Howe Island near Australia on Friday, December 16, 1988, has bequeathed a great many letters and other manuscript material of James Fenimore Cooper, his great-great-grandfather, to the American Antiquarian Society, of which he had been a member since 1972.

Something of the novelist's love of the frontier seems to have come down to him through the generations, for Paul Cooper, Jr., like both his parents, was deeply involved in the Arctic. His father, Paul, Sr., was a writer and historian who chronicled the Franklin expedition; his mother, Marion Erskine Cooper (who survives him) was an artist and horticulturist who collected and drew Arctic plants; but Paul, Jr., who caught both their enthusiasms in the course of many summers rambling around the Arctic shores of Canada, was not a writer or an artist but a scientist; and accordingly he approached the North in his own way. He consulted for the Canadian government on such matters as the movement of ice, the use of hovercraft as a means of transportation over snow fields, and the efficacy of windmills for generating power for Eskimos—on anything, as long as it had to do with the snow and the ice, the winds and the permafrost. He spent many months a year in the Arctic, where (Leatherstocking-like) he seemed to get along at least as well with the natives of the McKenzie Delta as he did with the denizens of New England or New York.

How does all this fit in with his devotion to the American Antiquarian Society? He was as at home in a parka as he was in tweeds, or sitting in an igloo as in a laboratory—or, for that matter, a

library. Paul's interests have always been very broad and evenly apportioned between the sciences and the humanities. At Harvard, from which he was graduated in 1952, he majored simultaneously in physics and Greek, receiving a summa in Greek. As a child, he was what today would be called 'gifted'; he taught himself to read (by sounding out the road signs on his parents' lap on a drive through Arizona) at the age of two and was second in his class at both Exeter and Harvard. He knew an enormous amount about both mathematics and music, particularly opera. He went on to the Harvard graduate school in physics, receiving his doctorate in 1958; he remained at Harvard until the early 1960s, helping to build the university's synchrotron, until the Arctic beckoned.

When Paul was not in the Arctic, he was at his family's home in Cooperstown, New York, where his interest in the humanities was in the ascendancy. Like his grandfather—the grandson of the novelist—Paul was an insatiable collector and curator; he cherished his grandfather's collections of eighteenth-century Wedgwood and paintings, adding to these his own collections of Classical coins and Conrad first editions and manuscripts—once again, the literary call of the wild. He cared for, and added to, his father's large collection of books about the Arctic.

In particular, though, he was the curator of a large number of family papers, those not only of the novelist but of his father, William Cooper, an eighteenth-century land owner and agent who settled forty thousand pioneers—more than anyone else—on farms and in villages throughout the western parts of New York and Pennsylvania. James F. Beard of Clark University, a fellow member of the American Antiquarian Society and the editor of the novelist's correspondence, remembers a visit to Cooperstown in the early 1950s, when he opened a trunk of Cooper papers; his job was to sort those of James from those of William, a job that took him and the two Paul Coopers a dusty but exhilarating week. Paul and his father saw to it that all these papers—some of which are now on their way to Worcester—were duly catalogued and filed in proper containers.

Always, the Paul Coopers' library was open to visiting scholars. Paul, Jr.'s, interests were less literary than his father's, but they were perhaps more scholarly and critical. In scholarship, he was a great stickler for accuracy—perhaps a carryover from his scientific training. He was an indispensable guide to visiting scholars writing about James Fenimore or William Cooper. One recent visitor, Alan Taylor of Boston University, who had spent a week in Cooperstown in 1988 researching William Cooper, wrote afterwards, 'I could not have advanced my project so swiftly, without Paul Cooper's thoughtful advice.'

Paul was an eccentric in the best sense of the word—totally dedicated to his interests, following them wherever they led him, which in his case was to the very ends of the earth. As at home as he was in the Arctic or the upstate New York of this century, he would have been welcome, too, in the England of Newton or Herschel, or fitted into the New England of Emerson or the Lowells.

Henry S. F. Cooper, Jr.

CARLISLE H. HUMELSINE

Carl Humelsine was one of the legendary achievers. He was built in the heroic mold, though paradoxically he was a perfect, discreet committee man. The conjunction of dynamic executive and assiduous bureaucrat produced an unusual equilibration. For many, his death at seventy-three on January 26, 1989, leaves a gap in their lives.

A native of Hagerstown, Maryland, he had ascended dramatically within a few years of graduation from the University of Maryland in 1937. He joined Gen. George C. Marshall's staff during World War II and by war's end was a colonel and had played a role at Malta, Yalta, and Potsdam. He was then twenty-nine. He subsequently entered the State Department, becoming the youngest assistant secretary and deputy under-secretary in that depart-