

Frank enjoyed good health and a sound mind to the end of his life. He decided that, unlike his father, he would like to be present at the auction of his own collection for the fun of it. Good financial steward that he was, he also wanted to resolve the disposal of his books so that it would not be a burden to his family after his death. Christie's was selected to hold the sale, but sadly Frank did not live to see it, having died after a brief illness. The catalogue, in two substantial volumes, suitably documents his superb collection, one of the most important to be sold at auction in New York in recent decades. The auction, on April 16-17, 2007, was a hard-fought affair with strong prices, ultimately realizing more than sixteen million dollars. It was a fitting culmination to a four-decade-long career in the world of books and book collecting.

William S. Reese

JOSEPH WELLES HENDERSON

Virtually everyone affiliated with the American Antiquarian Society has a deep appreciation for the rich collections of books, manuscripts, documents, and artifacts that are housed in libraries, research institutions, and museums. These collections inform our work and enable researchers and scholars to piece together the past. What we sometimes overlook is the fact that the collections being held in these institutions were often brought together by dedicated, individual collectors. With the death of J. Welles Henderson on May 5, 2007, we lost an admirable colleague who was an attorney, a civic leader, a museum founder and trustee, but, above all, a consummate collector.

Welles Henderson was inflicted with the collector's zeal before he reached his teens, when he received a small anchor in appreciation of his contribution of fifty cents toward the preservation of the *USS Constitution*. As the son of an admiralty lawyer in Philadelphia,

he listened with rapt attention to the tales of maritime disasters, which brought legal cases to his father and which lit the spark of interest in young Welles. This maritime interest soon developed into forays into waterfront junk shops, nearby antique shops, and bookstores in search of maritime memorabilia. After graduating from Princeton in 1943, Welles responded to the call of duty and, inexplicably, served in the Army in Italy rather than in the Navy on the high seas. When he returned from the service, he enrolled in Harvard Law School and upon graduation joined his father's firm.

Despite the decade of distraction as he was forced to focus on academic and military priorities, Welles was still possessed by his maritime interest and the urge to collect. It was during the 1950s that he began to refine his collecting and focus on an area he saw as neglected—the maritime history of the port of Philadelphia and the Delaware River. With contagious enthusiasm, he amassed a significant collection that filled large areas of his home. Welles was not, however, hoarding these items for his personal enjoyment: he had a vision for a museum through which the collections could be shared and a story told. In 1960 he founded the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, which had the expressed purpose of 'exhibiting the collections of J. Welles Henderson.' I first visited the museum in the late sixties while pursuing maritime graduate studies in Philadelphia and was astonished that one man had been able to gather such a comprehensive collection.

With the museum launched, Welles applied his energies towards the nurturing of the nascent organization by drawing others onto the board and broadening the base of support. Like virtually all the county's maritime museums, the Philadelphia Maritime Museum had to go through a maturation process that included 'the terrible twos' and a difficult adolescence, but with Welles's steady hand on the helm, the museum emerged as a well-respected institution in Philadelphia and among the maritime museums of the world.

One might think that with the establishment of such an organization, the founder might relax and bask in the reflected glory

of such an accomplishment, but that was not the case for Henderson. The obsession to collect set him off on a second and very important quest. Welles realized that while much had been written about great maritime events and museums that displayed models of famous ships, dramatic figureheads from some of those ships and captains' splendid uniforms, there was very little available about the life of the sailor. With a tenacious commitment, Welles began to ferret out whatever he could find that depicted the life of the sailor or described the boredom, joys, adventure and terrors of this occupation. His efforts were successful and after decades of work, and with the encouragement of his patient wife, Hannah Bradley Henderson, the Henderson residence was once again brimming with artifacts, paintings, prints, and publications. On a visit to his home in the early 1990s, I was treated to a scavenger hunt through closets, under beds and into nooks and crannies, each of which revealed remarkable items relating to the life of the sailor.

It was in the early years of this quest that Welles had his first contact with the American Antiquarian Society, in the form of a letter to Mark McCorison in early 1977 requesting permission to use an image from the AAS collections to illustrate a lecture. From that introduction, the mutual respect of Welles for AAS and AAS for Welles developed, and later that year Welles was elected to membership. Drawing on the collections at AAS, he added information and images to the material he was gathering for a companion piece to his collection, a book on the life of the sailor.

In 1995 the Philadelphia Maritime Museum moved to a new site on the edge of the Delaware River at Philadelphia's Penn's Landing and changed its name to Independence Seaport Museum. It was here, in the organization he founded, that his second great contribution to the documentation of maritime history would be made. In 1999 the museum simultaneously hosted the exhibition, 'Life of a Sailor: A Collector's Vision,' and co-published Welles's book *Jack Tar: A Sailor's Life, 1750-1910*. The exhibition was drawn almost exclusively from the remarkable collection Welles

had drawn together, and the book, written with Rodney P. Carlisle, expanded on the theme and became a lasting document that is of interest to all in the maritime community.

There can be no doubt that with the death of Welles Henderson, AAS has lost a respected member who cherished his thirty-year membership in the Society and who has made, through his collecting, museum work, and writing, a lasting contribution to the preservation of our maritime heritage.

J. Revell Carr

JAMES OLIVER FREEDMAN

James Oliver Freedman was born on September 21, 1935, to mismatched and unhappy Jewish parents in Manchester, New Hampshire, as he wrote in his 2007 autobiography, *Finding the Words*. The son of a shy and diffident public school teacher and a mother who focused all her frustrated ambitions on her son's academic prowess, his childhood and adolescence focused on academic performance and avoiding his mother's angry outbursts. His only sibling, a sister two years younger than he, commented in later life 'they ought never to have gotten married. . . . It must have been a mistake from the start' (10).

Freedman knew he was expected to earn a scholarship to Harvard, which he succeeded in doing, managing to meet his personal expenses from savings from his wages as an office boy at the Manchester *Union Leader*. When he left for Harvard College in the fall of 1953 he took with him extraordinary diligence in study habits, a fine mind and an imagination as yet untouched by encouragement for creative thought, and a strong sense of his Jewishness forged from life in a small Jewish enclave within the ethnic mix of an old textile manufacturing town.

Harvard College introduced him to modernism in literature and art, to great teachers, and to many wider horizons. But he was

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.