

# Carleton Sprague Smith on his 75th Birthday

**F**OR HALF A CENTURY, Carleton Sprague Smith has been a name to conjure with in hemispheric music. No American-born musicologist (New York City, August 8, 1905) has worn more diverse hats than he, none has been catalyst for more worthwhile library and publication projects, none has more profusely combined the enthusiasms of patron and performer with discrimination born of erudite scholarship, none has more flawlessly acquired diverse spoken and written tongues, none to the manor born has more nobly served all classes, clans, and creeds.

His biobibliography in all the chief music lexicons and the rich record of his life and works in *Contemporary Biography 1960* and in *Who's Whos* are too readily accessible to justify pleonastic repetition here. However, conventional biographies leave unsaid much concerning his patrician family background that merits mention in a 75th-birthday tribute. Both his father Clarence Bishop Smith (1872-1932) and his grandfather Cornelius Bishop Smith (1834-1913) were sufficiently salient figures in Manhattan to be themselves profiled in *Who's Whos* and other biographical compendia of their epochs.

At only 37 Clarence Bishop Smith (New York City, October 17, 1872) entered *Who's Who in New York City and State*, Fourth Biennial Edition (L. R. Hamersly & Company, 1909), page 1201—thus anticipating by 41 years Carleton Sprague's entry in *Who's Who in New York City (City and State)*, Thirteenth Edition (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1960), page 1169. Clarence Bishop Smith in 1909 belonged to the law firm of Wheeler, Cortis & Haight. Phi Beta Kappa holder of first honors A.B. (history and political economy) from Columbia College and of a *cum laude* LL.B. from Harvard University, where he was an editor of the *Law Review*, he had married Catharine Cook January 14, 1902. By 1914, when the next *Who's Who in New York (City and State)* appeared, Clarence Bishop Smith's law firm had become Haight, Sanford & Smith, attorneys for the Hamburg-American and other steamship lines. Clarence Bishop Smith's lifetime literary feat, left unfinished at his death but complete so far as it goes, was *A history in terms of one family* (New York, 1932, 12 volumes), copies of which are at the New York Public Library and the American Antiquarian Association. After an ingenious culling of documents from court files, town records and letters, books and articles about or by his and his wife's ancestors, he wove into the web of his history over four hundred persons who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contributed to the growth of towns and villages in New England.

No less important a shaping influence in Carleton Sprague Smith's nonpareil career was his mother. *Catharine Cook Smith 1879-1961 Remembrances . . . Written between 1962 and 1977 by her family and friends* (Wilton, Connecticut: The Press House, 1977 [152 pages]) testifies to this unique woman's grandeur. Page 111 of this volume of remembrances contains an authorized summary of Carleton Sprague Smith's own career. Reprinted here, this one-page summary replaces the much longer

encomiastic article originally written for the Fall 1980 issue of *Inter-American Music Review*. His modesty prevailed upon me to postpone sounding trumpets and flourishes to the later issue that will contain a review of *American Hymns Old and New* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH, second son of C.C.S. was born August 8th, 1905. St Paul's and Hackley Schools, Harvard A.B. (cum laude) and A.M. Ph.D. at University of Vienna. Married Elisabeth Cowles Sperry, 1934. Has been Chief of Music Division at New York Public Library, Professor of Iberian and Latin American history as well as music at New York University, Professor of music at Douglass College, Rutgers, Director of Brazilian Institute of N.Y.U. and Director of Spanish Institute, Inc. of New York. Board member and adviser of, among others, Museum of Modern Art and New York Philharmonic. Received Doctor honoris causa from University of Brazil, University of Bahia, and Doctor of Music from Hamilton College. At outbreak of World War II was on staff of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (Nelson Rockefeller) and then Cultural Officer in Brazil. Many conferences and trips for Department of State for cultural reasons, with a three months' tour of Latin America accompanying Adlai Stevenson as adviser and interpreter. Founded Music Library Association, started New York Public Library Music-Americana and Dance sections and conceived the idea and helped evolve the plans of The Library-Museum of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Initiated Junior Year in Brazil for N.Y.U. Carleton speaks fluent French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. He is a professional flutist having played with the Musical Art, Lerner, Berkshire, and Juilliard Quartets and numerous other groups. Quincy Porter, Randall Thompson, George Antheil, Heitor Villa-Lobos and others have dedicated pieces to him. At Waldingfield Farm Carleton loves to work outdoors cutting paths and uncovering hidden rocks. He is a fond grandfather who carries on the tradition of reading aloud to his family. Works include: *Documentos referentes al "Cancionero" de Claudio de la Sablonara* (Revista de Filología Española), *The Service of the Library to Musicology* (Papers, American Musicological Society), *Recent Work on Music in the Renaissance* (Modern Philology), *William James in Brazil* (Vanderbilt University), *Perspective of Brazil* (Atlantic Monthly Supplement), *The Arts in America* (Institute of International Education), *Table Blessings Set to Music* (Commonwealth of Music, in honor of Curt Sachs), *America in 1801-1825. The Musicians and Music* (Bulletin of New York Public Library). Currently working on: *Colonial Broadside Ballads and their Music* (Boston, Colonial Society of Massachusetts), *Six Centuries of Table Graces* (Atlanta, John Knox Press), and *An Annotated Bibliography of Spain, 1898-1975* (Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press).