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In Memoriam

ARTHUR STANLEY LINK, 1920–1998

Arthur Stanley Link, Director and Editor of the Papers of Woodrow Wilson Emeritus and George Henry Davis '08 Professor of American History Emeritus at Princeton University, died on March 26 at the Bermuda Village Health Center in Advance, North Carolina. The cause of death was lung cancer; he was seventy-seven years old. Link was one of the founders and the first president of the Association for Documentary Editing, 1979–80, and remained an enthusiastic supporter and adviser to subsequent officers of the ADE as well as to editors of the many projects which have developed under its aegis over the years.

Arthur was born in New Market, Virginia, not many miles from Staunton, the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson. His father, although he received little formal schooling, was a man of strong drive, inquisitive mind and personality, determined to make his own way. Befriended as a youth by a Lutheran minister, he worked his way through the Lutheran seminary, became ordained, and served in churches in both Virginias and in North Carolina. He believed in hard work, honesty, the basic worth and goodness of people, and acted out his faith in the ministry. Arthur's mother, Helen Elizabeth Link, possessed an equally dynamic intellect with a special interest in music and literature. Arthur inherited their dynamism, a broad and imaginative intellect, and the love of art and music.

Emulating his father's drive, he worked his way through the University of North Carolina, performing with brilliance, and was graduated Phi Beta Kappa. The university was an important formative experience, for Chapel Hill was a dynamic center in the late 1930s—a fulcrum of ideas—intellectual, political, social—an extraordinary collection of extraordinary historians, among them Professors Howard K. Beale, Chester M. Destler, and Fletcher M. Green. Arthur made his own contribution to this vibrant milieu not only as an unusual undergraduate, but also as a graduate student with a capacious intellect and highly organized work habits—so dynamic that they were frequently commented on by fellow students and teachers.

Chapel Hill offered Arthur another great benefit that would have major impact on his life and career thereafter. He met and fell in love with Margaret McDowell Douglas; together they formed a lifelong partnership that in many

ways made his success possible. As one of their sons, Professor William A. Link, has said, "She softened his rough edges, channeled his unlimited drive and ambition, translated his own energy into compassion, and focused his generosity on human problems."

His first interest in Woodrow Wilson was kindled by the lectures of Professor Destler. His doctoral thesis on the Democratic campaign of 1910–12 was under the direction of Professor Green. He received his doctorate in history in 1945.

Link taught at North Carolina State in 1944–45 but, as he has written, was engaged primarily for the next three years in creating from the foundation of his dissertation the first volume of a multivolume study of Woodrow Wilson and his times. In the process he spent a very profitable nine months as a visiting student in a seminar of Professor Henry Steele Commager at Columbia University. Link later said that he had learned a great deal from the experience about the writing of history. Commager read his first volume in manuscript and contributed many helpful comments.

Meanwhile, Arthur was appointed instructor in history by Princeton University in 1945 and assistant professor the following year. He received two research grants from the Julius Rosenwald Fund which were crucial in the completion of his first volume, *Wilson, the Road to the White House*, in 1947.

He was lured to Northwestern University as associate professor in 1949, becoming full professor in 1954. Link spent eleven happy and productive years at Northwestern, and it was there that I first met him, when I was a graduate student. Little did we realize then that we would in a few years become colleagues in an editorial enterprise that would extend throughout our active careers.

I told the story of the founding of the Papers of Woodrow Wilson in my Association address on 3 November 1989. Arthur was prevailed upon by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation in New York to accept directorship of the new project in February 1958. The Foundation was fortunate to receive generous invitations from Northwestern and Princeton Universities to co-sponsor the project by providing housing and services. The Publication Committee and the editors on 18 September 1959 accepted the offer of Princeton University. The editors received ap-

pointments in the History Department—Arthur accepted full teaching responsibilities. The Links moved to Princeton in 1959, and when the full project arrived in town, it was provided with handsome facilities in Firestone Library.

A staff was appointed without delay to begin the selection and cataloguing of the vast number of Wilson papers in the Library of Congress and the National Archives as well as in such manuscript repositories as Yale University, the University of Virginia, and University of North Carolina. In fact, our searches never ceased either in this country or abroad. Arthur made an extensive search for materials in London, Paris, and several locations in Germany in 1976, and Dr. Ann Gordon made a special visit to the London Foreign Office in 1978. During the collection phase in Washington, Arthur visited us regularly, overseeing our work and many times joining in the search.

When the project moved to the campus of Princeton University in the fall of 1963, the documents, photocopies, were housed in nineteen five-drawer legal-size files. Arranged chronologically, the documents, according to my estimate at the time, amounted to very close to four hundred thousand items. They were arranged chronologically and were accompanied by descriptive control cards filed in name, source, and chronological series.

The actual assembling of volumes began almost immediately. Arthur lost no time in beginning the process of working through a drawer of documents, selecting items to be typed, identifying stray materials, setting up headnotes, and turning them over to our typist. In the beginning, we sat side by side reading and selecting documents for typing. After the first few volumes, as the work expanded, Arthur was able to use research assistants and other members of the staff. When the typescript was completed it was read carefully, and footnotes were set up and assigned. We had a number of excellent research associates over the years, but the one who stands out is Dr. John E. Little, who worked tirelessly, with the project for over thirty years.

Many times the nature of the document required an

editorial note. Most were written by the editor, many by myself. All were discussed in detail by the editorial staff. The editor set the pace, led the way, made key decisions; in the best editorial sense, it was teamwork. It was Arthur's dynamic leadership and his contributions which ensured the project a remarkable completion in sixty-nine volumes over thirty-three years. But in the largest sense the *Papers* will be successful according to the impact they have on future scholarship. Professor Dewey W. Grantham, in a review of the first fifty-nine volumes contributed to a vol-



The staff of the Wilson Papers in October 1982. From left to right: front row, Margaret Link, Phyllis Marchand, David W. Hirst, Arthur S. Link, Marie Trapani, Elizabeth Jackson; back row, John Little, Manfred Boemeke, Fredrick Aandahl.

ume in Link's honor published in 1991, wrote that the volumes have become "the indispensable starting place for any serious investigation of Wilson and his administration." "We are not likely," he continues, "to see again anything like *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, certainly not involving a twentieth century president. The concept is simply too audacious, the scope too large, the cost in financial support, time, and professional dedication too great. But if only a single such project can be completed for a twentieth century American, Woodrow Wilson may well be the best possible choice."

The project would constitute a full-time career for

most scholars—I write with personal acknowledgment—but for Arthur Link it was only one of several. Indeed, he would have been rated a distinguished, productive scholar had he never taken on the Wilson project.

He early received Bancroft prizes for the second and third volumes of his two-volume biography of Wilson; he was a Guggenheim Fellow, a Rockefeller Fellow, and a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in 1949 and again in 1954–55.

Following the publication of his biography, taking Wilson to the brink of war, Link never slowed his literary and historical activity, completing nearly thirty books and countless articles. He was editor of several major volumes of essays and documents. He was awarded ten honorary degrees, including one from the University of North Carolina and another from Northwestern University. In 1966, he was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society and in 1972 of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He served as a member of the National Historical Publications Commission in 1968–72. He received, in 1979, the Pitcher Award of the New Jersey Historical Commission for notable contributions to the history of New Jersey and in 1981 the Julian P. Boyd Award from the Association for Documentary Editing for distinguished contributions to the knowledge of American history and culture.

Link lectured widely in the United States, delivering in 1956 the Albert Shaw Lectures in Diplomatic History at The Johns Hopkins University; in 1962, the Mars Lectures in Christianity and Education at Northwestern University; and in 1977, the Commonwealth Fund Lecture at the University of London. He lectured at the University of Bristol, the University of Birmingham, and the University of Belfast in the British Isles. He lectured on the Continent at the Universities of Cologne, the Ruhr, Hamburg, Berlin, Freiburg; the University of Paris; the University of Copenhagen; the University of Warsaw; and the University of Cracow. On other continents, he lectured at the National University of Argentina and at Doshisha University in Kyoto.

He served as president of the Southern Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Historical Association as well as being the first president of the Association for Documentary Editing. He served as Fulbright Fortieth Anniversary Distinguished Lecturer in 1987 and for two years thereafter as president of the Board of Directors of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools.

Arthur Link was a devout Christian. He often expressed to me, during our working years together, that he

felt his coming to the Wilson Papers was the result of a divine call. And he sometimes expanded this to include his work as teacher and historian. He was a ruling elder at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, chairperson of many committees and participant in other church and Presbytery activities. He served on the Council on Theological Education of the United Presbyterian Church and on the Special Committee on Ordination and Ministry of the General Assembly, and as vice president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America. For several years he was a member of the board of directors of *Presbyterian Life*, and he was editor of *The First Presbyterian Church* of Princeton published in 1967.

Early this year, Arthur sent to press his new volume on the history of cardiovascular treatment in the United States, a topic which grew out of our work on Wilson's illness. When he died, he was at work on a broader study of medicine in this country. Arthur's wife, Margaret McDowell Douglas, died in May 1996. Arthur always acknowledged her contributions to all his writing as well as to the Wilson Project as editorial assistant. Through the years she made a great contribution as proofreader and stylist. Toward the end of the project, we spent many hours together proofing and rearranging the massive number of entries that went to make up every cumulative index volume from the twelve preceding volumes. She was a significant presence at every stage of our work. My wife, Barbara, and I grieved at her unexpected passing, but the loss struck deeply into Arthur's heart; they had hardly begun to enjoy retirement together.

Arthur is survived by four children—William A. Link, of Greensboro, N.C.; A. Stanley Link, Jr., of Winston-Salem, N.C.; James Douglas Link, of Flemington, N.J.; and Margaret Link Weil, of Chapel Hill, N.C.—and four grandchildren.

And so, Farewell, old friends. I think of Ben Jonson's words at a similar time in his life: "For what is life, if measured by the space, not by the act?"

—David W. Hirst