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HAROLD DURSTON SAYLOR

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HAROLD DURSTON SAYLOR was born in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, on July 18, 1892, son of Henry Durston and Dora Brendlinger (Gerhard) Saylor. He went to the local grammar school during most of his growing-up years but he also lived in Coburg in Germany and Dawson in the Canadian Yukon while his father was United States Consul in those places. Harold graduated from the Hill School of Pottstown in 1910 and went directly to Yale with the Class of 1914. After four years with studies, sport, and such groups as the Elizabethans, the *Courant* of which he was managing editor, Debating Union, and Cercle Francais, he graduated with his class and left New Haven for Philadelphia. Here he went to the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania, his father's school, where he took his LL.B. in 1917, and World War One was waiting for him.

The summer before his third year in Law School, Saylor "attended the Business Men's Training Camp at Plattsburg, and in April 1917, signed up for the R.O.T.C. at Fort Niagara, N.Y. I was excused from the final examinations at the Law School and given the degree of LL.B. in absentia in June 1917. Likewise, I was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania without examination."

On May 11, 1917, he reported at Fort Niagara, and was assigned to a Provisional Training Regiment. Having been commissioned Second Lieutenant, on August 15, 1917, he sailed for France early in September, and took two months' training at the French Field Artillery School at Fontainebleau. On December 1, 1917, he was ordered to the American Artillery School at Gondrecourt for a one-month course. He was then retained at that school for four months as Instructor in Gunnery. In April he left for the Montdidier front to become Executive Officer of Battery C, 7th Field Artillery, 1st Division. During the counter-attacks following the capture of Cantigny, May 29 and 30, he was burned slightly by mustard gas in the eyes, throat, and parts of the body. He was evacuated to the French Gas Hospital at Cempuis near Grandvilliers in Picardy. On June 10, 1918, he was discharged and sent to the Replacement Regiment at La Courtine. On June 21 he returned to duty and from July 18 to 25 took part in the Second Battle of the Marne at the beginning of the counter-offensive south of Soissons, celebrating his twenty-sixth birthday night working out the trajectory figures for his artillery unit's barrage during the advance. He was then ordered to Major General Summerall's staff as Assistant Intelligence Officer, 1st Division. He was promoted to First Lieutenant, on August 17, and in "position warfare" in the Pont-a-Mousson (Saizerais) Sector.

On September 12 and 13 he was in the drive against the St. Mihiel salient, and was about to enter the Meuse-Argonne Offensive when ordered to America to be Intelligence Officer of a new division. He sailed from Brest October 2, and on November 7 entered the Staff Class, War College, Washington, D. C., while there the Armistice was signed. On December 10 he received his diploma as Divisional Intelligence Officer, and was discharged at Camp Meade, Md., December 12, 1918. On June 24, 1919, he was commissioned Captain in the Officers' Reserve Corps. On January 1, 1920, Major General Summerall cited him in General Orders for "gallantry in action and especially meritorious services." Saylor received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart.

Returning from service he practiced law in the Morris Building and was an instructor in the political science department at the Wharton School. Of the period after the War Harold Saylor wrote, for a Yale Report, that in addition to work and teaching "I have been interested in

organized charity work in the city for the last eighteen years. While this takes a considerable amount of time, I suppose that, not having a wife and family, I am a good one to give the time. I left the service of the Commonwealth in 1935, after five years of interesting and worthwhile legal work as counsel for the Banking Department, Insurance Department, and the State Treasurer. If I had not decided then that five years was a long enough time as Deputy Attorney General because of the possibility of getting into a rut, the election of George H. Earle, 3rd, as Governor of Pennsylvania on the Democratic ticket, was sufficient reason for leaving the Capitol at Harrisburg." He also travelled a good deal in those years in the British Isles, all over Europe, and through the Panama Canal. He was active in Philadelphia life in the Philadelphia Cricket Club, Penn Athletic Club, Union League, and as trustee of the Broad Street Hospital and the Alden Park Corporation where he lived for many years. At the end of this report for his twenty-fifth reunion he commented, "this doesn't sound very interesting to anybody else, but what else is there for a bachelor to write about?"

The Second World War found Saylor back in uniform from 1942 for four years as a battalion commander at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and overseas with the Inspector General's Department. He left the service in 1946 with the rank of colonel, and resumed his private law practice. In 1952 Saylor was appointed Judge of the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas on the Orphans Court in Philadelphia. He was elected for two ten-year terms and was endorsed by both political parties.

In 1955 Saylor married Audrey P.S. Hutchinson and became stepfather for her three daughters. He remained active in the life of Philadelphia serving as a member of the Fairmount Park Cokmmission from 1950, as chairman of the Philadelphia Recreation Coordination Board from 1955, chairman of the Friends of the Wissahickon, Philadelphia Conservationists, and president of the Germantown Historical Society from 1953.

Saylor's interests in this Society were long standing. He followed years of service as a member by joining the Council in 1953 where he remained for nearly a decade "bringing to its deliberations his sound practicality and easy wit." For a dozen years he served as a Vice President until in 1975 he took on the presidency of the Society for the next five years, "taking this broadened duty seriously and carrying out

the tasks of his office with perseverance, scope, and persuasion." He saw the Society through exciting times which included the completion of a major building and renovation project and the mounting of a major cooperative bicentennial exhibition here, "A Rising People: The Founding of the United States 1765 to 1789," which combined holdings of this Society with those of the American Philosophical Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia. While he was president he was responsible for obtaining funds for the various programs of the Society and the grant of one hundred thousand dollars by the city was a personal triumph. He was a strong supporter of the director and the staff and did his part to bring public recognition to the Society.

In a questionnaire prepared in January 1980 for his Yale class report, Saylor complained only of "a bit of arthritis in my lower back," and he wrote that he was enjoying his "Golden Years." In that period he asked to be relieved of his duties here. He was succeeded as president in the spring of 1980 by John W. Eckman and was cheered into retirement by a party of his colleagues on the Board who presented him with a remembrance of his long service.

Harold Durston Saylor died of cancer, after a short but tough fight, on the fifth of January 1981, leaving his widow, three step-daughters, eleven step-grandchildren, and an army of friends. He is remembered here for his manifold virtues and his great zest for life. His was a good long one full of proud achievements. We shall continue to miss him here.

JAMES E. MOONEY
Director