

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS DAVID S. LOVEJOY**

David S. Lovejoy, professor emeritus of history, died on October 8, 1999, in Oxfordshire, England.

David Sherman Lovejoy was born on November 30, 1919, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He matriculated at Bowdoin College in 1937, attracted to the institution by its location in Maine and its track team. Focusing his studies in literature, Lovejoy earned a B.S. degree in 1941. In September of that year, he married Elizabeth Bowers.

Lovejoy served as an infantry officer during World War II. With Beth often living nearby, he was stationed stateside in California, Georgia, and Colorado. An avid skier, Lovejoy spent time with the Tenth ("Mountain") Division. He eventually served in the European Theater. Lovejoy separated from the service in 1945 with the rank of captain. Returning home, he met his fifteen-month-old daughter for the first time. Also named Elizabeth, she was the Lovejoys' only child.

Overseas, Lovejoy developed what he later described as an "irresistible urge to put my mind onto issues and materials I could think about for the rest of my life." The GI Bill, he added, "turned a strong urge into a reality at \$120 a month plus tuition and books." ["Scholarly Reminiscences," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 45, No. 3 (July 1988), p. 546].

Returning from Germany, Lovejoy entered graduate school in history at Brown University. He initially pursued the field of American civilization but switched to American history after the arrival at Brown of Edmund S. Morgan, who was emerging as one of the greatest colonial historians of his era.

Specializing in early American history, Lovejoy completed the M.A. in 1947 and the Ph.D. in 1954. His dissertation became the basis for his first book, *Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolutions, 1760–1776*, published by Brown University Press in 1958. In it, Lovejoy demonstrated how the development of the revolutionary movement in Rhode Island linked with and fed upon existing divisions between local political factions.

Lovejoy began his teaching career at Marlboro College in Vermont in 1950. Not long after his arrival there, Lovejoy's senior colleagues recommended to the trustees of the experimental college that they make him president of the institution. Lovejoy agreed to accept the position in an acting capacity. He served as president for two years, but the administrative burden slowed the completion of his dissertation. He decided to complete his degree and pursue teaching and research full-time.

After teaching at Michigan State University for the 1954–1955 academic year, Lovejoy returned to Brown University to replace his mentor, Edmund S. Morgan, who had moved to Yale. Lovejoy remained at Brown until 1959. He next took a position at Northwestern University and made his final academic move a year later, when he became an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin. Lovejoy won promotion to associate professor with tenure in 1962. He became a full professor in 1965 and retired with that rank in 1983.

In 1972, Lovejoy published *The Glorious Revolution in America* (Harper and Row). Nominated for a National Book Award, the book was the most important work he released while an active member of the faculty at Madison. Focusing on three major American colonies — Massachusetts Bay, New York, and Virginia — Lovejoy examined the evolution of provincial political thought during the last quarter of the

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seventeenth century. The “Glorious Revolution” mentioned in the title referred to the overthrow of King James II in 1688 and the subsequent establishment of a constitutionally limited monarchy in England. Lovejoy’s well-argued contention was that, during the period leading up to the ouster of James, the colonists responded to the Crown’s efforts to tighten its control on America by claiming for themselves rights equal to those of English living in the home country. The assertion of equal standing almost a full century before the actual American Revolution suggested how quickly the colonists were developing a sense of autonomy.

Starting in 1971, David and Beth Lovejoy retreated each summer to a cottage at the edge of the Cotswolds in Oxfordshire, England. In 1987, they moved permanently there from their home in Madison. The location allowed them to spend time closer to their two granddaughters, who were growing up in Aberdeen, Scotland. The relocation did not impair Lovejoy’s ability to pursue research; he simply switched the venue of his work from the Wisconsin Historical Society to the Bodleian Library at Oxford University.

Lovejoy published prolifically in retirement. In addition to a series of articles, most of which appeared in the *New England Quarterly*, Lovejoy completed a major book project on which he had been working for more than a decade. His quest began in 1969 with the publication of *Religious Enthusiasm and the Great Awakening*, a collection of edited documents on religious dissidents in the mid-eighteenth century. It came to fruition with the publication in 1985, under the imprint of Harvard University Press, of *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution*. The study of 250 years of religious enthusiasm won substantial praise. Writing in *Reviews in American History*, Professor Larry Gura described the book as “a true *omnium gatherum* of the most prominent individuals who from New Hampshire to Georgia ‘would not, could not, contain their zeal within the organized limits of religious convention’ (p. 1), and thus often were condemned as heretical, seditious, or both.” [Vol. 13, No. 4, (December 1985), p. 500].

Comments made in confidentiality across the span of David Lovejoy’s professional life were positive in their judgment of his character as well as of his scholarship. Consistent with those remarks were words offered in a letter to the Department of History before Lovejoy’s arrival. “[B]asically he is a warm, charming and friendly person — I have never known anyone who did not like him.” Another writer offered the summary statement, “he wears well.” Those of us fortunate enough to know him and to have enjoyed his friendship over many years cannot say it any better. David S. Lovejoy was a well-rounded scholar who brought intellectual acumen and human decency in abundance to the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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