MILTON RIETOW GUTSCH

Milton R. Gutsch, Professor Emeritus of History died on January 1, 1967. Professor Gutsch, the last of what we refer to as the "Old Department" of history, was born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He was of German and French stock and his family were the founders and successful operators of the Gutsch Brewing Company of Chicago and Sheboygan. He attended public and private schools in Wisconsin and in 1904 entered the University of Wisconsin, intending to pursue a law career. There, however, he became interested in history, thanks to the distinguished Medievalist Dana C. Munro, and went on to complete an MA in Medieval history in 1909, and his Ph.D. in 1916.

Although Professor Gutsch began as a Medievalist, as did two other Wisconsin trained scholars who came to Texas at about this time and who had distinguished careers, August C. Krey and Frederick Duncalf, whom he knew well, it was as an instructor in English history that he came to the University of Texas in 1912. He remained an instructor until 1916, when he was promoted to adjunct Professor. Shortly thereafter, on August 29, 1918, he married Mary Mayfield of Austin, whose father had a distinguished career as Railroad Commissioner of the State of Texas and as a prominent Austin attorney. This marriage, a most happy one,
ended his early career as a resident and one of the devotees of
the University Club, which then served as a center for the young,
gay bachelors on the faculty. In 1922 he was promoted to
Associate Professor and in 1927 to full Professor.

During his early years at the University, Professor
Gutsch was active in establishing the Texas History Teachers
Bulletin and served as its Managing Editor from 1912 to 1920. He
also was instrumental in collecting records concerning the
activities of Texas during World War I, serving as Chairman of a
University Committee charged with this task. These valuable works
now constitute the Texas War Records Collection. As an outgrowth
of this interest he became one of the organizers of the National

In 1927, when Dr. Eugene C. Barker relinquished the post,
Gutsch became chairman of the History Department, a position he
held for twenty-five years until his retirement in 1951. He pre-
sided over the department, therefore, during the period in which
graduate work in history began to be important at Texas, which was
no small responsibility, for in his day the Chairman also served
as Graduate Advisor. His meticulously indexed departmental minutes
and files stand today as a memorial to his good sense and industry
in this administrative capacity.
His teaching showed the same organizing ability. His freshman English history course, old History 4, was immensely popular with the students, being so well organized that it was said that if a student dropped a pencil, when he picked it up he was twenty years behind. Students were particularly charmed by his annual lecture on Henry VIII, and it was his custom just before Christmas holidays to return to his interest in the Middle Ages and sing for them Medieval student drinking songs in his ample baritone voice.

Though his services as teacher and administrator of the History Department were rightly much appreciated, and kept him so busy that he never produced any major scholarly work, it was in another role that the University of Texas owes him a particular debt. In 1928 he became Secretary of the General Faculty and in 1944, Secretary of the Faculty Council -- posts he held until he retired in 1951. In these capacities he presided over scores of tumultuous faculty meetings during the stormy years of the Rainey controversy. This was a period in which the Faculty was deeply split and old friends even ceased to speak to one another. Though no one had any doubts as to Gutsch's own private opinions, he presided over these meetings in his capacity as Secretary with such fairness and equanimity that he was in no small measure responsible
for holding the University together during these difficult years.

In 1951 he retired, due to ill health, to enjoy the peacocks and fish ponds of his charming estate at 3505 West 35th Street in Austin. Though ill health kept him increasingly inactive he did meet at regular intervals, during the next decades, with old friends and colleagues; Frederick Duncalf, Ernest Vilaeroso, August C. Krey and Walter Webb, and a few younger history department members, at which occasions the conversation was sparkling and reminiscences of the University in its earlier day flowed freely.

His passing, as the last of the Old Department, has left his colleagues in the History Department and the University as a whole with much sadness. We send his widow, Mary Mayfield Gutch, our sympathy and our thanks for the many services he rendered to his students, the Department of History and The University in general.

Professor Archibald Lewis, Chairman

Archibald R Lewis for the Committee

Professor Lanier Cox

Professor Barnes Lathrop
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