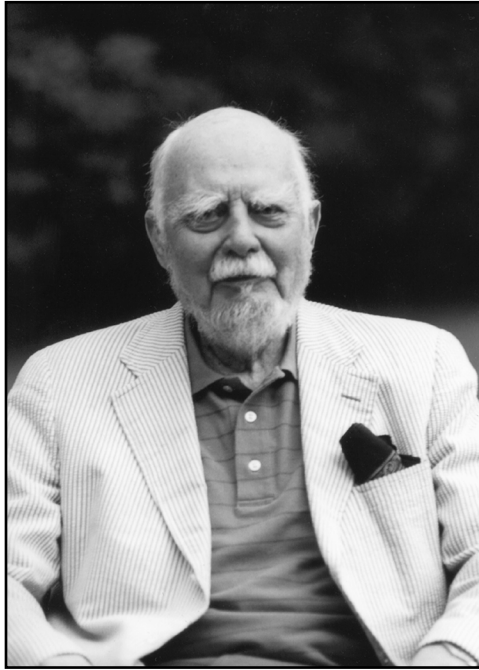


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## PENDLETON HERRING



AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

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PENDLETON HERRING, a pioneering student of American politics and influential foundation executive, died at his home in Princeton, New Jersey, on 17 August 2004, at the age of one hundred. He had two successive careers, first as a leading political scientist, then as head of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), a capacity in which he played a major part in fostering the burgeoning of the social and behavioral sciences in the post-World War II years.

Herring also had a strong commitment to public service. During the war, he worked with the Bureau of the Budget as an adviser on the Records of War Administration and on advisory committees for the army, navy, and air force. He was awarded the Navy Citation and Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 1946. His most important public contribution was as the principal adviser to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal's associate Ferdinand Eberstadt in a study of the feasibility of unifying the armed services. The Eberstadt report was a major determinant of the National Security Act of 1947, which created the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Pendleton Herring was born on 27 October 1903 in Baltimore, Maryland. (He later dropped his first name.) Herring had a formative early political memory of being taken to the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson in 1913. He received his A.B. in English in 1925 and Ph.D. in political science in 1928 from the Johns Hopkins University. He embarked on a graduate education with a view to entering the diplomatic corps, an interest sparked by his world travels as a mess boy and cook on merchant ships during college vacations. During his graduate studies, Herring was taught constitutional law by Frank J. Goodnow, the first president of the American Political Science Association.

When the time came to select a dissertation topic, Herring proposed an interview-based study of the activities of lobbies in the nation's capital. When the earlier Johns Hopkins graduate student Woodrow Wilson had conducted the study published in 1885 as *Congressional Government*, he did not see fit to visit Capitol Hill. Herring's proposal, he recollected in his APSA oral history, prompted a deliberation on the part of the faculty about whether interviewing "came under the rubric of scholarly research." He reports that after being given a go-ahead, "I

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<sup>1</sup>For an account of Herring's efforts see Jeffrey M. Dorwart, *Eberstadt and Forrestal: A National Security Partnership, 1909-1949* (Texas A&M Press, 1991), 95-96. "Herring's most significant contribution to the ideas and forms of national security that emerged from the Eberstadt Unification Report of 1945," Dorwart comments, "lay in the corporatist scheme that he developed in his 1941 book, *The Impact of War: Our American Democracy under Arms*, widely regarded as the single most important synthesis of civil-military relations written before World War II."

simply wandered around the congressional corridors as if I were the white rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*. . . . I remember distinctly knocking on a very large door that was opened by a little man with a florid countenance. He invited me in, and it was only after we had been talking for some time and he had likened lobbyists to coyotes that I realized he was John Nance Garner.”<sup>2</sup> Herring’s dissertation, which was published in 1929 as *Group Representation Before Congress*, has taken a place alongside Peter Odegard’s *Pressure Politics* (1928) and E. E. Schattschneider’s *Politics, Pressures and the Tariff* (1935) as the foundation of the study of pressure groups as a field of political science. It also paved the way for field studies of political behavior in Washington and other settings.

Herring was a member of Harvard University’s Department of Government from 1928 to 1947, and secretary of Harvard’s Graduate School of Public Administration from 1936 to 1947. During his years at Harvard, he published six books, each of which had a significant impact. Following *Group Representation Before Congress*, he published *Public Administration and the Public Interest*, an early analysis of the interactions between government agencies and their clienteles, and *Federal Commissioners: A Study of Their Careers and Qualifications*, an exploration of the backgrounds of the members of federal regulatory commissions. Both appeared in 1938.

Herring’s next two works were more general in scope and impact. *Presidential Leadership: The Political Relations of Congress and the Chief Executive* (1940) is a searching analysis of the presidency in action. *The Politics of Democracy: American Political Parties in Action* (1940), remains a principal source of ideas and inspiration for those who hold the view that the United States needs a politics of moderation and consensus rather than one of sharp choice between irreconcilable alternatives and that the pragmatic, decentralized parties of American tradition are more likely to meet that need than the unified, disciplined British-style parties admired by advocates of “responsible party government.” Herring’s final book, *The Impact of War: Our American Democracy under Arms* (1941), is an account of the military buildup that was in progress in the period before Pearl Harbor and an early contribution to the study of civil-military relations. It was this work that brought Herring to the attention of Eberstadt.

After the war Herring resigned from Harvard to join the staff of the Carnegie Corporation. In 1948, he became president of the Social

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<sup>2</sup>Michael A. Baer, Malcolm E. Jewell, and Lee Sigelman, eds., *Political Science in America: Oral Histories of a Discipline* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 24.

Science Research Council, founded in 1923 to promote the organization and funding of social science research. Herring held the SSRC presidency from 1948 to 1968. In those twenty years the Council became the prime organization shaping the nature of research in most of the social sciences. At the beginning of Herring's presidency the annual budget of the SSRC was less than \$500,000. When he left office it was nearly \$2 million.

Under Herring's leadership, the growing resources of the Council were used to pursue two main goals. The first was to improve the quality of social science knowledge by encouraging researchers to acquire more and better data, analyze them by more rigorous quantitative methods, and develop systematic theories with predictive power. The second was to focus and report research in ways that would make it accessible to public policy makers. The Council worked mainly through committees of scholars, chosen and encouraged by Herring and his staff. Among the more noteworthy were the committees on mathematics in social science research, economic stability, and biological bases of social behavior. In Herring's own discipline, the committee on political behavior and its derivative committees on comparative politics and governmental and legal processes played key roles in the "behavioral revolution" that transformed political science beginning in the 1950s.

Herring succeeded in attracting the country's leading social scientists to serve on the SSRC's committees and board of directors and to participate in its conferences. Included were R. A. Gordon, Lawrence R. Klein, Simon Kuznets, and James Tobin in economics; Philip Curtin, Louis Gottschalk, Roy F. Nichols, and Edwin Reischauer in history; Willard Hurst, Edward H. Levi, and Leon Lipson in law; Gabriel A. Almond, Robert A. Dahl, V. O. Key Jr., and David B. Truman in political science; Angus Campbell, Lee J. Cronbach, Leon Festinger, Gardner Lindzey, and Herbert A. Simon in psychology; James S. Coleman, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and Robert K. Merton in sociology; and Otis Dudley Duncan and Frederick Mosteller in statistics.

Herring retired from the SSRC in 1968. He had become president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation in 1962, a position he continued to hold for almost thirty years. During that period, he was instrumental in persuading the Johnson administration and Congress to establish the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., as a living memorial to the nation's twenty-eighth president. Under Herring's aegis, the foundation supported the publication of the sixty-nine-volume *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, a project to which Herring was an intellectual mentor.

Herring was an active member of the American Political Science Association. He was president of the Association at the peak of the depredations of Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy. Herring's 1953

presidential address was a closely reasoned analysis of the importance of the systematic study of government for “helping our democracy to know itself better.” Without ever mentioning Senator McCarthy by name, Herring warned against those “who seek to further their own interests through exploitation of public concern with the Communist contagion.”<sup>3</sup> Herring received several APSA awards. In 1979 he received the Charles E. Merriam Award for his contributions to public service. In 1987, he received the James Madison Award in recognition of his scholarship. In 1998, he was in the group of initial recipients of the Frank J. Goodnow Award for contributions to the profession. During its 2003 centennial celebration, the Association recognized Herring’s own approaching centenary at a dinner in his honor. Rising to the occasion, he walked to the microphone and crisply enumerated the ways the APSA had advanced his professional life.

There is probably no other figure of his generation who had as varied and great an impact on social science as Pendleton Herring. The postwar political science literature on pressure groups, political parties, and administrative behavior took his prewar books as points of departure, and postwar research across the spectrum of the social sciences owes much to his efforts as president of the SSRC.

It remains to remark on Herring the man. He was a courtly and cultivated presence and a delightful human being. He was unostentatiously erudite and as steeped in the humanities as in the social sciences. He carried out his many avocations at a higher level than might have been thought possible for an amateur. Herring took up painting in the 1950s, producing vividly colorful canvases in an impressionist mode, many of them of flowers. (He was an avid gardener.) He turned to poetry in the 1980s and 1990s, privately publishing a collection of sonnets (*Caged Thoughts*) and a pensive series of reflections on the perspective on life of “an old man in his eighth and ninth decades” (*Ventures into Verse*). A scholar to the end, Herring introduced the second collection by noting that he had employed such forms as the haiku, rondeau, and sestina, appending a glossary explaining the verse forms he had used. He remarked on his continuing relish for life in a poem occasioned by his eighty-eighth birthday, noting that he had become “too old to dance a jig, but not to hum a tune.”

Another of Herring’s passions was collecting historical prints that illustrate political behavior, which he donated to the Association. They are on display at the national office, where they are known as the Pendle-

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<sup>3</sup> Pendleton Herring, “On the Study of Government,” *American Political Science Review* 47 (1953): 971.

ton Herring Print Collection. Included are works of William Hogarth, George Caleb Bingham, and Thomas Nast. Contributions for the maintenance and expansion of the collection should be made to the “APSA Herring Fund.” Those wishing to contribute prints or other works of art should contact Robert J.-P. Hauck at 202-483-2512 or rhauck@apsanet.org.

Herring’s first wife, Katharine Channing, died in 1969. He married Virginia Stamen Wood in 1971; she survives him along with his two sons, H. James Herring of Princeton and Thomas S. Herring of Wareham, Massachusetts, five grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Elected 1948; Councillor 1963–66; Committee on Nomination of Officers 1965–66

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