

PRESENTATION OF "PRESIDENTS' KEYS"*

Introduction by O. M. Miller

AS A RESULT of action taken by the board of direction of the Society in 1941 and 1942 special gold keys are now and in the future to be presented to the past Presidents of this Society. They will be tokens of appreciation for the contributions our Presidents have made to the advancement of the Science of Photogrammetry and their influence toward the betterment of its standards and ethics.

This is an intimate affair of the Society but at the same time a rather formal occasion. Therefore I feel it is a great honor and pleasure for me to have been chosen to express the sentiments which I am sure we in the rank and file of the Society have for these outstanding men.

Let me first briefly describe to you the keys themselves. They are made of gold. The emblem of the Society surmounts each key, and on their reverse faces are engraved the names of the recipients and the dates of their terms of office. They are beautifully designed and most elegant.

Our first President was Colonel Claude Hale Birdseye. We all remember his cheery and friendly personality and feel sad that he is no longer with us. It was most appropriate, however, that he should have been our first president, not of course merely because of his name, which could hardly have been more fitting, but because of his vast experience of ground survey work as chief topographic engineer of the United States Geological Survey combined with his pioneering enthusiasm which amongst other things resulted in his organizing the Aero-topograph Corporation, one of the few commercial organizations in this country to undertake the making of precise maps from aerial photographs. His vision and sincerity will be long remembered. His paternal interest in the Society is sorely missed.

Our second president, Colonel Harry Harmon Blee is now on special duty. He brought to the Society his great abilities as an executive and organizer. It would take many minutes to state even briefly his many activities both as an engineer and consultant or as a chairman of national committees in matters pertaining to aeronautics and maps. Perhaps he is best remembered as far as this Society is concerned for his work in standardizing the federal specifications for aerial photographs.

Our third President was Commander O. S. Reading, Chief of the photographic section of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. He conceived the idea of the Society in the first place and we all know his tremendously valuable work for the science of photogrammetry. But there is another side perhaps of Commander Reading which should be stressed on this occasion. Whenever an individual has a problem requiring expert unprejudiced judgment and kindly consideration, whom does he first think of to consult? Commander Reading. Commander Reading is not only the actual founder of the Society as an organization but one feels that he is a friend to each and every one of its members.

Perhaps no member of this Society has had more practical experience in all phases of photogrammetry than Mr. Virgil Kauffman, President of the Aero Service Corporation. He was our fourth president. He may be summed up by saying that he is not only an experienced photogrammetrist but a good and courageous executive who knows how to get things done well and in a hurry.

* Presented at the Annual Meeting, 1943.

He has a sincere enthusiasm for progress and improvement in the technical aspects of photogrammetry and one has only to visit his plant in Philadelphia to realize how an enlightened business man gets the job done. Everyone in his organization seems to be a happy and contented individual.

We now come to our fifth President, Mr. Marshall S. Wright. He has had great experience in all phases of surveying and photogrammetry, chiefly with the United States Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture. He has long been a key executive in the enormously ramified activities of this latter service. On this occasion, however, one can only stress his great services to this Society, not only in his being President but also because he was Secretary and Treasurer during all of its formative period. Without the modestly performed and unpublicized labor of Mr. Wright it is doubtful whether this Society would have ever amounted to very much.

Our sixth President was Mr. Leon T. Eliel who is the Vice-President of Fairchild Aerial Surveys. Mr. Eliel was born, lives, and works in Los Angeles, California, and so we in the Society do not see as much of him as we would like. However, he has always taken a very active interest in the affairs of the Society. Furthermore he has greatly advanced the art in this country, being the inventor of many useful devices and the executive in charge of many important photogrammetric surveys. He is *the* authority on the Zeiss stereoplanigraph and the leading proponent of this type of instrument in the country.

Our seventh President was Mr. Guillermo Medina who holds an important executive position in the Hydrographic Office of the Navy. Mr. Medina had great experience in the field in conducting hydrographic surveys before he took on his most onerous and responsible duties, especially at this time, in the Hydrographic Office. He has always been active in the interests of the Society and during his term as president stressed the need of coordinating and making available to all concerned the wealth of information stored up in the minds of its members. Great credit is due him for starting the ambitious project of a Society's Manual of Photogrammetry, which in spite of hindrances caused by the war is being pushed steadily forward.

As Commander Reading originally conceived the idea of the Society, it is fitting at this point therefore to quote from page 1 of the first issue of the News Notes of the Society. This was written by him.

"One is impressed with the resemblance of the present state of photogrammetry in this country to the fable of the three blind men examining an elephant. One felt the trunk, another the legs, and the third the tail. Each though the other very stupid and very much mistaken as to the character of the animal." And then he writes in a more serious vein, "It is planned that the activities of the American Society of Photogrammetry will serve to unify and make effective the present scattered hopes, aspirations, ideals, knowledge and experience of its members." All will agree, I am sure, that in the eight years of the Society's existence, these aims have been largely accomplished and that to a very great extent the men who have been our presidents have been responsible for this happy state of affairs.