John Brinckerhoff Jackson  
1909–1996

While putting together this issue of the Journal we learned that on August 29, 1996, John Brinckerhoff Jackson died in the community he had made his home for a half century, La Cienega, New Mexico. J. B. Jackson was 86. There is no person who has had more impact upon the study of the American landscape. This journal and much of the material that has been published in its pages owed to Jackson an incalculable intellectual and personal debt. He conceived Landscape magazine in 1951, wrote much of its contents, and edited it until 1968. All “landscape” publications, including Landscape Journal, follow in its trailblazing footsteps. Brinck, as he was known, was a man of amazing erudition and range of intellect coupled with an infectious curiosity and a gracious personality which in many ways combined a pre-war patrician European upbringing with an individualistic western American spirit.

I had the wonderful good fortune to be one of Brinck’s assistants when he taught at Harvard. It was the seminal intellectual experience of my life. By example Brinck taught those around him how to teach, how to think, how to write, and how to learn to read the landscape. A simple walk, even the most modest conversation, was an education. Under his mind’s glaring light he interrogated landscapes, constantly probed and questioned, and sought to understand their qualities and the character, ideas, and ideals of those who had made them. The range of places that excited his curiosity, was, as we all know, wide. In the most profound sense, he exemplified a humanistic sensibility and the virtues of a truly liberal education applied to an understanding of landscape, the interaction of people and place. KIH

A REQUEST TO READERS. Any readers of Landscape Journal who would like to share their experiences of Brinck, as friend, colleague, student, or, the largest group, those who have read and been influenced by his work, please write us.

J.B. Jackson at home, La Cienega, New Mexico, 1991 (KIH).