

[PDF] Pronouncing Dictionary Of American English

John S. Kenyon - pdf download free book

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Description:

About the Author John Samuel Kenyon (1874-1959) was an American linguist. He graduated from Hiram College in 1898 and taught there as a professor of English from 1916 to 1944, when he retired and became an emeritus professor until his death. Together with Thomas A. Knott, he wrote *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* (1944), still regarded as a classic guide to American English pronunciation. Kenyon had also earlier published *American Pronunciation* (1924) and served as the consulting editor of pronunciation to the second edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* in his career as a pioneering expert on the study of American English, which earned him the epithet "the dean of American phoneticians".

Thomas Albert Knott was a professor at the University of Chicago.

The Merriam brothers desired a continuity of editorship that would link Noah Webster's efforts with their own editions, so they selected Chauncey A. Goodrich, Webster's son-in-law and literary heir, who had been trained in lexicography by Webster himself, to be their editor in chief. Webster's son William also served as an editor of that first Merriam-Webster dictionary, which was published on September 24, 1847.

Although Webster's work was honored, his big dictionaries had never sold well. The 1828 edition was priced at a whopping \$20; in 13 years its 2,500 copies had not sold out. Similarly, the 1841 edition, only slightly more affordable at \$15, moved slowly. Assuming that a lower price would increase sales, the Merriams introduced the 1847 edition at \$6, and although Webster's heirs initially questioned this move, extraordinary sales that brought them \$250,000 in royalties over the ensuing 25 years convinced them that the Merriams' decision had been abundantly sound.

The first Merriam-Webster dictionary was greeted with wide acclaim. President James K. Polk, General Zachary Taylor (hero of the Mexican War and later president himself), 31 U.S. senators, and other prominent people hailed it unreservedly. In 1850 its acceptance as a resource for students began when Massachusetts ordered a copy for every school and New York placed a similar order for 10,000 copies to be used in schools throughout the state. Eventually school use would spread throughout the country. In becoming America's most trusted authority on the English language, Merriam-Webster dictionaries had taken on a role of public responsibility demanded of few other publishing companies.

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