

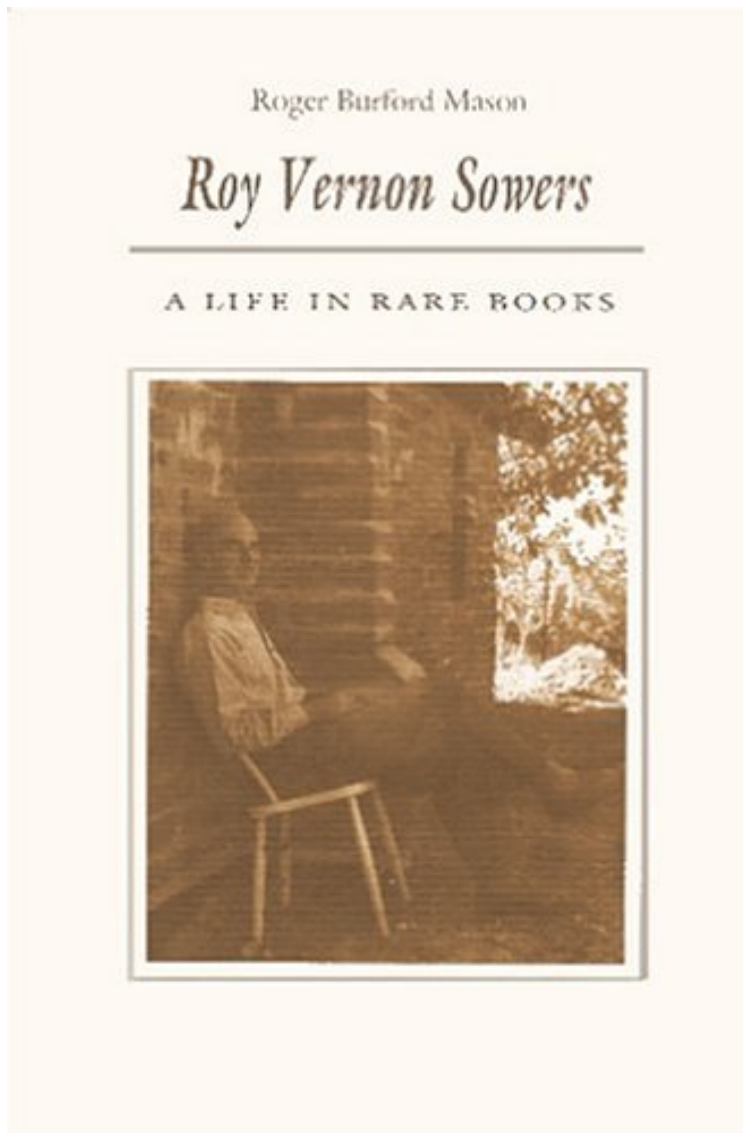
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Roger Burford Mason
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Roy Vernon Sowers: A Life in Rare Books

Roger Burford Mason : Roy Vernon Sowers: A Life in Rare Books before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roy Vernon Sowers: A Life in Rare Books:

Roy Vernon Sowers ("he neither used nor permitted any abbreviation of the name") was a legendary figure in the antiquarian book world, to be precise, worlds. A Canadian whose first shop, in the mid-1920s, was a Mecca for Toronto collectors and writers, Sowers later settled in southern California. There he dealt rarities to the emerging

carriage trade and subsequently worked at the famous Huntington Library. Later still, he was a conspicuous book and print dealer at a succession of locations in San Francisco, where he patronized and promoted the fine-press movement.

Sowers, who died in 1970, spent his last years gathering books in Britain and Europe for resale through catalogues from his remote fruit farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains (where, because of the danger of fire, he kept his priceless inventory in an adobe structure that he designed and built himself). His catalogues (he issued seventy-five in all) were notable for more than the often extraordinary books they described so knowledgeably, from modern first editions (in the early years of his career) to titles in medicine and the history of science (areas which Sowers helped make fashionable). His catalogues were themselves collected for the grumpy erudition of their introductory essays, pieces which grew more curmudgeonly as Sowers became increasingly disenchanted with the contemporary world.

About the Author Roger Burford Mason moved with his wife and son from England to Toronto in 1988. Since then he has published two collections of short stories, a collection of travel essays, two biographies, and a book about Canada.

He has written for many Canadian, U.S., and British magazines and newspapers, and has broadcast on a number of Canadian radio stations. He is the editorial director of a group of business publications, and a contributing editor of Canadian Notes Queries.