

work on a biography of his ancestor Pierre Laclede, founder of St. Louis, on which he had worked much of his life. He died April 23, 1981, and is survived by his wife and son, a brother, Marion, and three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

DAVID CHAMBERS MEARNS

David Chambers Mearns was born in Washington, D.C., December 31, 1899, to William Andrew and Mary Beard Chambers Mearns. He attended both George Washington University and the University of Virginia, but graduated from neither; his only degree was an honorary LITT.D. bestowed by Lincoln College in 1960. He joined the staff of the Library of Congress in 1918, as chief assistant to the superintendent of the reading room, and married Mildred Sellers Haines in 1929. They had one daughter.

Mearns was to stay on at the Library of Congress for forty-nine years. By 1943 he had become director of the reference department. Two years later his wife died. In 1951 he became chief of the manuscript department, the position for which he is best known and which he held until his retirement in 1967; concurrently he was the incumbent in the chair of American history and assistant librarian for American collections. He married Mary Hume Richardson in 1951.

Mearns represented the Library of Congress on the National Historical Publications Commission for thirteen years. He brought growth to the manuscript department, including its expansion into cultural history, the history of science, and other less traditional areas, and under his stewardship the presidential papers program and the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* project began. Upon his retirement, he received high tribute from past associates. Archibald MacLeish, a former librarian of Congress, called him 'the rarest treasure in the Library of Congress,' and Luther H. Evans, another former librarian of Congress, wrote, 'You were for me

more the embodiment of the Library of Congress than any other person, perhaps because you loved it most.' President Lyndon Johnson wrote, 'All branches of the Government and scholars throughout the Nation regret your retirement from Federal service.' He continued to work as honorary consultant in the humanities to 1976, a position held only once before, by Robert Frost.

He was elected to membership in AAS at the annual meeting in 1966, but was present at only one meeting, in 1970. Upon hearing of his election, he wrote to Clifford K. Shipton: 'The news of my election to the American Antiquarian Society could not have made me happier even if I had deserved it. I am highly honored. Presuming you to be in daily communication with him, please present my grateful acknowledgements to the shade of Mr. Thomas.' Mearns represented the Society at the inauguration of President Clarence C. Walton at the Catholic University of America in 1969, and he donated a small group of materials pertaining to his great-great grandfather, a printer named David Chambers, to the manuscript collection.

Mearns was a member of other learned societies, including Phi Beta Kappa, and served with distinction on several Civil War centennial commissions and the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission. He also wrote several books, including a history of the first 145 years of the Library of Congress, *The Story Up to Now* (1947); *The Lincoln Papers* (1948); *Declaration of Independence: The Story of a Parchment* (1950); and *Largely Lincoln* (1961). He died May 21, 1981, in Alexandria, Virginia, at the age of eighty-one, and is survived by his wife, Mary Hume Richardson Mearns, and daughter, Anne Mearns Jacoby, as well as by two granddaughters and two great-grandsons.

ANDREW OLIVER

Andrew Oliver, lawyer, author, and devoted trustee and officer of many cultural and educational institutions, was elected to

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