

ALEXANDER SAMUEL SALLEY

A. S. Salley, Jr., to use the form which he preferred, was a son of Alexander McQueen and Sallie A. (McMichael) Salley of Orangeburg, South Carolina, where he was born on June 16, 1871. He graduated from The Citadel in 1892, read law in the office of Joseph W. Barnwell, served as secretary to Congressman William Elliott, and was admitted to the bar in 1899. He was, however, never to practice law. From the time of his graduation from college he was fascinated by history, and was employed in the researches which finally blossomed in the form of his *History of Orangeburg County* (1898). Taking over the offices of librarian and secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Historical Society, he quadrupled its membership and brought it back to life.

In January, 1899, Mr. Salley was in Columbia covering the activities of the Senate for *The News and Courier* when the colonial archives of the State were discovered in a room where they had been packed away in 1865. Recognizing their importance, he began a newspaper campaign which eventually resulted in the resuscitation of the moribund Historical Commission and, in 1905, the appropriation by the State of \$1000 for a secretary. Taking the office himself, he began one of the most incredible tasks of organization, popularization, publication, and general solid achievement in our field in this generation. When he was elected to this Society in 1914 in recognition of his work, he at first declined, for he was modest and diffident, and too preoccupied with the work in front of him to take an interest in a national organization. Clarence Brigham visited him when working on the Newspaper Bibliography, and a warm friendship grew up between them, based largely on a mutual interest in Southern literary history, in which Mr.

Salley had built up a fine private library centered around the largest collection of William Gilmore Simms material. This Library was then building up its collection of Simms first editions, and Mr. Brigham could help Mr. Salley in the preparation of his bibliography of that author's works.

When we first knew Mr. Salley he was very conscious that he was a one-man department in one-room quarters, and when he glanced at what seemed to him then to be the monumental achievements of a State like Massachusetts, it was with diffidence. By 1935 when he moved his department into the magnificent World War Memorial Building he had far surpassed the accomplishments of the archival departments of the New England States; the situation of 1905 had been reversed, and by 1950, when he retired, the South Carolina Historical Commission was so far ahead of the Yankees as to be out of sight.

Because Mr. Salley was shy and not easily drawn far from home, few Yankees got to know and enjoy him as did his fishing and deer-hunting friends. One of his best books is *The Happy Hunting Ground*, a series of the woodsy yarns which he told so well around the campfire. His neighbors refused to permit him to remain in professional retirement, but in 1957 recalled him to serve on the Board of Directors of the Columbia Museum of Art, where he was still active when he died on February 19, 1961. He is survived by his widow, the former Harriet Gresham Milledge of Atlanta, who shared his interests and professional friendship through their long life together.

C. K. S.

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