

## OBITUARIES

## GEORGE FRANCIS DOW

George Francis Dow, one of the leading historians and antiquarians of New England, died at Topsfield, June 5, 1936. He was born at Wakefield, N. H., January 7, 1868, the son of George Prince and Ada Bingham (Tappan) Dow. After an education in public and private schools, in 1885 he entered the wholesale metal business in Boston, with the firm of Farrar, Simpson & Co., where he rose steadily in the esteem of his firm. Always endowed with strong leanings toward local and Essex County history, in 1898 he retired from commercial activities and was elected secretary of the Essex Institute of Salem, of which he had been a member for six years. For twenty years, as director of its museum and editor of its publications, he gave a large part of his life to this important institution and notably increased its prestige throughout the country. It was during his term of office that he aided in bringing out the many valuable volumes of vital records of Essex County, and edited the four volume "Diary of William Bentley," because of its broad scope of subjects and unusual index, one of the most valuable of early New England diaries.

In 1918 he retired as an officer of the Essex Institute, and in the following year was elected curator of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Here he officiated for the remainder of his life, serving as curator, director of its museum, and editor of its nationally known magazine, "Old-Time New England."

In 1894 he founded the Topsfield Historical Society, serving as secretary and treasurer of the Society, and

editor of its publications. When the "Parson Capen" house came into the possession of the Society, he was in charge of the restoration. Because of his knowledge of early New England architecture he was often consulted, and had charge of the restoration of a number of eighteenth century houses for individuals and historical societies throughout New England. He also designed the Pioneers' Village at Salem. In 1922 he organized the Marine Research Society at Salem and edited its long and valuable series of publications. As an author he wrote or edited the following volumes: "The Holyoke Diaries," 1911; "Two Centuries of Travel in Essex County," 1921; "Sailing Ships of New England" (with John Robinson), 2 volumes, 1922-1924; "Pirates of the New England Coast," 1923; "Domestic Life in New England," 1925; "Whale Ships and Whaling," 1925; "The Arts and Crafts in New England," 1927; "Slave Ships and Slaving," 1927; "The Diaries and Letters of Benjamin Pickman," 1928; "The Sailing Ships of New England," 1928; "Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," 1935. He also contributed many articles to historical and literary magazines.

Mr. Dow was a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society and many other historical organizations. To the American Antiquarian Society he was elected in 1910 and was one of its most useful members. He invariably attended its meetings and contributed to its Proceedings in 1922 a paper on "William Bentley, the Salem Diarist." He married, June 1, 1920, Miss Alice G. Waters, for many years librarian of the Essex Institute, who survived him. The writer of this sketch has claimed him as a valued friend for many years. His enthusiasm for historical research and his unbounded zeal and activity were a source of encouragement to all those with whom he was brought in contact.

C. S. B.

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