

Obituaries

ALEXANDER GEORGE McADIE

Alexander McAdie, twenty or more years ago one of the prominent members of this Society, died at Hampton, Virginia, November 1, 1943. Through Henry W. Cunningham, a close personal friend and a member of the Council, his name was brought before the Society in 1915, and he was elected to membership. For several years he attended all of the meetings and because of his exceptionally genial personality he was welcomed by all members. In 1918 he read a paper, "Nova Albion, 1579," showing how a study of weather conditions established the course of Drake's California voyages. He followed this with papers in 1924 on "Franklin's Kite Experiment," and in 1928 on "George Downing—a Puritan Politician." At the April meeting in 1930 he read a paper entitled "Thomas Jefferson at Home." This meeting was assuredly presidential in character. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, son of President Tyler, read a paper, and Professor Hart spoke on "Washington as a New England Man." In addition it was at this meeting that Calvin Coolidge first presided, prefacing the proceedings with a graceful acknowledgment of his election to the presidency of the Society.

Alexander McAdie was born in New York City, August 4, 1863, the son of John and Anne (Sinclair) McAdie. He took his A.B. degree from the College of the City of New York in 1881, followed by an A.M. in 1884, and a further degree of A.M. from Harvard in 1885. He was in the United States Signal Office in 1886-87, teacher of physics and meteorology

at Clark University in 1889-90, in the Weather Bureau at Washington in 1891-95, and then serving as forecasting official at San Francisco for the next few years. In California he formed friendships with such scholars as Professor George Davidson the geodesist, William Keith the landscape painter, and John Muir the explorer and naturalist; measured by barometer the height of some of the mountains near the Pacific coast; and after the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 established the Seismological Society of the Pacific. Beginning with 1903 he was professor of meteorology with the United States Weather Bureau at San Francisco.

In 1913 he entered upon his long career as A. Lawrence Rotch professor of meteorology at Harvard and director of the Blue Hill Observatory, bringing prestige both to himself and to the institutions with which he was connected. Here he remained until his retirement in 1931, when he removed to Hampton, Virginia. He married, October 7, 1893, at Edge Hill, Virginia, Mary Randolph Browne, who survived him.

Professor McAdie has been accredited as the father of the modern science of meteorology, laying the foundations of the present methods of weather forecasting. It was largely due to his studies of the role played by weather in the history of man and especially in the history of wars, that military authorities began to feel the need of weather information in the planning of warfare. He became known as the "high priest of anemocracy," or mastery of the wind. During the first World War he served as Lieutenant Commander in the Navy and acted as aerographic officer overseas in 1918. He was the author of many monographs on meteorology and a member of several scientific societies.

Mr. McAdie had a keen sense of humor, a notable sweetness of nature, and a profound belief in his fellow man. He kept up his interest in the Antiquarian Society after his

retirement to private life in Virginia. The last letter which we received from him expressed his regret that he could no longer attend the meetings which he so much enjoyed and where he renewed so many social contacts. C. S. B.

ALEXANDER JAMES WALL

Horatio Alger soon after the Civil War began writing books which chronicled the lives of boys who through their own efforts rose from humble beginnings to positions of power and influence. Scarcely anyone in the field of librarianship and bibliography would have attracted that author's interest more than the late Alexander J. Wall. Born at 110 Fourth Avenue, New York City, on October 25, 1884, the son of Lorenz and Augusta (Ziemer) Wohlhagen, he left school in 1898, at the age of fourteen, to enter the employ of the New York Historical Society. Beginning at the bottom rung on the ladder, he performed whatever duties the Librarian, Mr. Robert H. Kelby, required. I remember him well in those early days, when the Library of the Historical Society was located at Second Avenue and Eleventh Street. His cheerfulness and uncanny ability to find books was quickly noted by members and researchers. Mr. Kelby soon found that he could rely upon the young assistant, and often used him to write his letters in long hand.

The Library was moved to its present location in 1908, and soon after young Wohlhagen was made assistant librarian. In 1916 he published his first historical contribution, the compilation of the marriage and death records from the *New York Weekly Museum*, which was published in several successive volumes of Valentine's *Manual of New York City*. In 1917 he had his name legally changed to Alexander J. Wall. Soon afterwards he began upon a check-

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