

FRANKLIN PIERCE RICE

Franklin Pierce Rice was born in Marlborough, Mass., July 29, 1852. His family moved to Worcester in 1856 and he was educated in the public schools of this city. He did not enter college, but began soon after leaving the High School the study of the sciences and the elements of medicine in order to prepare for the medical profession which he had chosen as his life work. The long illness of his father and the consequent care of the home which devolved upon him prevented the fulfilment of this plan. After ten years of expectation and recurring hope, he relinquished this cherished object, but the training gained through these waiting years gave him the strong interest in the scientific and literary fields which governed his later life.

In 1871 he purchased a small press and a few pounds of type and without an hour's instruction from any member of the craft either at that time or later, he began printing as an avocation and accomplished during his life more than has been recorded of many who made a business of this art. A catalogue of his imprints issued in 1915 gives a list of 122 titles of books which came from his press as well as 50 others which he compiled or edited to be printed elsewhere.

His early life was influenced by a radical or liberal movement which started in Worcester in the year 1868, but he finally outgrew it and its evil effects were overcome by the influence of two friends, the Rev. George Allen, a refined literary character with strong antiquarian taste, and Hon. Eli Thayer, whose robust manhood and virile Americanism drew out of Mr. Rice all that was best in him. These men remained his firm friends during their lives and his obligation to them was shown in the memoirs prepared by him in later years.

He was one of the four founders of the Worcester Society of Antiquity and it is significant of his character that at the initial meeting he urged, in place of that

title, the name of The Worcester Historical Society, as it is now called, in order to avoid interference with the older society, a fact which has more than once caused embarrassment to each organization. For twenty years, not only was he active in that society as a member, but from 1879 to 1895 he printed its proceedings. His attention was early attracted to the desirability of taking some action for the preservation of the vital records of our New England towns and in 1879 he printed the first volume of the Town Records of Worcester, seven volumes of these records coming from his press before 1895. In order to carry on this important work more effectively he started in 1892 the Massachusetts Record Society and printed two volumes of the New England Town Series. This plan not proving efficient he formed in 1898 the Systematic History Fund and in the next four years he printed seven volumes of Massachusetts Town Records. In 1902 he was induced to transfer his energies in this line to the same work under the State Vital Records Act of that year and under which he worked for nine years. More than forty volumes have been published by him in this field but not printed on his press. This part of his life work will prove of increasing importance as these records are used, because his extreme accuracy and his broad historical knowledge were both employed to verify each one of the data collected.

In October, 1906, Mr. Rice was elected a member of this Society and from that time until his decease on January 4, 1919, he was chairman of the Committee of Publication to which office he brought all of his personal interest and large experience as a printer and a man of letters. The debt of this Society to him is very great, not only because of the burden which he bore but because of the elevation of the standard of our publications in consequence of his unremitting labors. For many years it had been his custom to cut from the daily papers items of biographical and historical interest and obituary notices of national or local

importance. This material, consisting of more than 20,000 clippings and arranged in such form as to make it always accessible, he presented to the Society in 1917. The gift was a very valuable addition to our archives as it supplemented the collection of William Jennison along similar lines but of an earlier generation.

Quiet in manner and self-contained Mr. Rice was thought by some to be almost eccentric, although this was far from the truth. While the many vicissitudes of his life caused a sensitive nature to withdraw somewhat within himself, to his friends Mr. Rice showed a warm heart and a staunch loyalty, which appealed to them as strongly as his literary and historical ability attracted all others who came to know him.

C. L. N.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Theodore Roosevelt—born October 27, 1858, died January 6, 1919—was elected a member of this Society in April, 1918. What is said of him here will relate exclusively to his work as a writer of American history, although, as is well known, this forms but a small part of his contribution to literature, and great as his accomplishments have been in the broader field, they were only a part of his prodigious activities.

His first history was the first book he wrote, "The Naval War of 1812," in 1882, when he was twenty-four years old. In 1886 he wrote the "Life of Thomas H. Benton," in 1888, "Gouverneur Morris," and in 1889, "The Winning of the West." In November, 1890, he published "New York," a history of the City; and in April, 1895, in conjunction with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, "Hero Tales from American History." While Governor of New York, he published "The Rough Riders, a history of the First United States Volunteer Cavalry, in the war with Spain," and in 1913 his Autobiography.

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