

OBITUARIES

HOWARD EARLE COFFIN

Howard Earle Coffin died at Sea Island, Georgia, November 21, 1937. A descendant of Tristram Coffin of Nantucket, he was born on a farm near West Milton, Ohio, September 6, 1873, the son of Julius V. and Sarah E. (Jones) Coffin. After a public school education, he entered the engineering department of the University of Michigan in 1893. Here, he studied engineering for three years, left because of the necessity of earning a living, but returned to the University in 1900 for two more years of study. He was presented with his degree of M.E. in 1911, as of 1903. During all these years he had experimented with automobiles. He had built his own gasoline-powered car in 1897 and the following year had built one of the earliest cars driven by steam. In 1902 he joined the engineering staff of the Olds Motor Works at Detroit. In 1905 he aided in establishing the Thomas-Detroit Company which became the Chalmers Detroit Motor Company, and in 1909 with his associates founded the Hudson Motor Car Company, making it one of the largest companies in the automobile industry. During the World War he attained high position in consolidating the engineering interests of the country, being a member of the Naval Consulting Board, chairman of the Committee on Industrial Relations, and chairman of the Aircraft Production Board. He was the head of the National Air Transport Company from 1925 to 1930.

In later life, after he had retired from active participation in business, he devoted much time to the development of real estate on the coast of Georgia. He

bought Sapeloe Island, an extensive tract eleven miles long and four miles broad, and built there a modern Spanish home, where he entertained many notable guests, including President Coolidge, President Hoover and Colonel Lindbergh. It was on a visit to his house in 1929 that President Coolidge had his portrait painted by Salisbury. After the death of his wife, he developed in 1934 a fine residential property on Sea Island in Brunswick Bay. He also became actively concerned in business again through his attempt to establish the cotton industry on a firm footing, and was one of the founders of Southeastern Cottons, a dominant corporation in the textile field. Mr. Coffin married Matilda V. Allen of Battle Creek, Michigan, October 30, 1907, and after her death on February 26, 1932, he married Gladys Baker of New York, daughter of A. Herbert Baker, who survived him. He had no children.

Mr. Coffin received the honorary degrees of Eng.D. from Michigan in 1917, LL.D. from Mercer University in 1929, and Sc.D. from Georgia School of Technology in 1931. Although not a man of cultural aspirations, he was interested in scholarship and historical research. It was due to the suggestion of his friend Mr. Coolidge, then President of this Society, that he was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1931. He visited the Library with Mr. Coolidge in the summer of that year, and thereafter manifested much interest in the Society.

C. S. B.

WILBERFORCE EAMES

When the day's work brings to light a new piece of bibliographical information or a hitherto unknown seventeenth century imprint, I think at once: "How delighted Mr. Eames will be when I send this find to him," and then I remember—and the new discovery loses much of its charm, for the most distinguished of

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