

Obituaries

GARDNER WELD ALLEN

The two qualities for which the friends of Gardner Weld Allen will always remember him were his modesty and his erudition. When a famous historian in the process of spreading his learning before an admiring audience chanced to make an error, Dr. Allen might modestly murmur a correction, but he would never take issue. "Little Dr. Allen," as we younger men affectionately referred to him, amazed us by his knowledge of history and charmed us by his gentle friendliness.

He was born at Bangor, Maine, on January 19, 1856, a son of Joseph H. and Anna Minot (Weld) Allen. He was graduated at Harvard College with the Class of 1877, which in later years he served faithfully as secretary. The greater part of the years 1877-1879 he spent in Kansas City and ranching in Colorado. Returning to the East, he took an M.D. at the Harvard Medical School, and after internships at Boston and Providence, spent some months studying in Germany. He began the practice of medicine in Boston in October, 1884.

From 1897 to 1906 Dr. Allen taught at the Tufts Medical School, but the sea held more attraction for him than teaching. He was a surgeon of the Massachusetts Naval Brigade, a militia organization, when the Spanish American War broke out, and so was brought into the Navy as Passed Assistant Surgeon, in which capacity he served five months on the U.S.S. *Prairie*, part of the time in the Cuban blockade.

After this experience the Navy was wife and child, if not food and drink, to Dr. Allen. He built up a large collection

of material, which he later gave to Harvard, relating to naval history. In 1905 he brought out *Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs*, and four years later, *Our Naval War with France*. This brought him election to the Massachusetts Historical Society, to the publications of which, and to those of other learned societies, he contributed articles on naval history. Perhaps his most distinguished work was his *Naval History of the American Revolution* which appeared in 1913.

During these years he was actively practicing medicine. In April, 1917, the Secretary of the Navy appointed him to the Board of Medical Officers for the examinations of naval militia. At this time he was on the retired list of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia with the rank of Commander. He also found time to work to improve the educational opportunities of the American Negro, and in 1919 he became a trustee of the donations for education in Liberia. In 1923 he completed and brought out a history of the Board of Trustees of the Liberia organization.

After Dr. Allen's retirement from active practice in 1922 he became still more active in research and still more faithful in the attendance at the meetings of the learned societies to which he belonged. In April, 1923, he was elected to the American Antiquarian Society, and to the *Proceedings* for April, 1925, he contributed a paper on "Naval Songs and Ballads" based largely on our collection. The research on which he was now engaged, particularly on articles for the *Dictionary of American Biography*, sent him many times to this Library for biographical data. He used to express wonder at the way in which Mr. Vail and Mr. Brigham labored to help him, and he likewise expressed his appreciation by contributions to our book funds "far beyond the call of duty." His last volume of importance was *Our Navy and the West Indian Pirates* which appeared in 1929. Thereafter he devoted more and more time to winding up the affairs of

the Class of 1877. Immediately after the death of each member Dr. Allen would bring into my office in the Harvard University Archives the neatly finished docket of the man's correspondence and a formal obituary. It was always with a pleasant word, and never with bitterness or resentment at the ravages of time, that he handed his friends' papers to the University's Charon.

After a short sickness Dr. Allen died in Brookline on July 12, 1944. He is survived by a niece, Mrs. Francis P. Coffin, of Schenectady.
C. K. S.

JOHN STEWART BRYAN

John Stewart Bryan, Virginia newspaper publisher and former president of the College of William and Mary, died at Richmond, Virginia, October 16, 1944. He was born at Brook Hill in Henrico County, October 23, 1871, the son of Joseph and Isobel Lamont (Stewart) Bryan. His father, during the War, was one of Mosby's famous raiders and inculcated his son with the Confederate tradition. His boyhood was spent at Brook Hill and at Laburnum, the estate near Richmond where his father built a home in 1885. After a school education in Richmond and Alexandria, he attended the University of Virginia where he received the degree of A.M. in 1893. He then entered Harvard Law School, to acquire his LL.B. in 1897.

Although he studied to become a lawyer, Mr. Bryan soon developed other interests. In 1900 he became associated with his father in publishing the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, and in 1908, upon his father's death, he was chosen publisher of the paper. Upon the sale of the paper in 1914 he became publisher of the Richmond *News-Leader* which he had previously purchased. He thus continued for the remainder of his life, and in 1940 he effected a merger by which the *Times-*

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.