

Obituaries

WILLIAM SUMNER APPLETON

Sumner Appleton, antiquarian, as he liked to designate himself, was born on Beacon Street in Boston on May 29, 1874, a son of William Sumner and Edith Stuart (Appleton) Appleton. His first school was Miss Garland's on Chestnut Street, but he was taken thence when thirteen to spend a year in Europe with the family. This and later trips greatly impressed him with the part played by Victorian Europe in the education of the true Bostonian, and provided him with one of the absorbing interests of his later life. Back in this country, he attended St. Paul's at Concord, New Hampshire, and was fitted for college at Mr. Hopkinson's school in Boston. At Harvard poor health interfered with his studies, and he failed of election to the social clubs, but he founded a literary society, the Amphadon, which flourished for some years. After graduation he traveled in Europe for a year with a tutor.

With every intention of becoming a businessman, Appleton attended a commercial school and in 1907 formed a partnership in the real estate business with a college contemporary, Lombard Williams. This firm prospered until 1900 when Appleton experienced a nervous prostration which was due to an undiagnosed eyestrain. He was still an invalid when his father died in 1903 leaving the family money in trust, with the result that Sumner had an adequate income but did not have the requisite capital to reenter business. For a time he tried to run the large suburban

farm which belonged to the family, but even after a course at the Bussey Institute in 1905 he found himself unable to master farming. In 1906 he attended the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to study fine arts and architecture, but the next year he switched to the School of Mining and Metallurgy. After a visit to the mining camps of the West he decided not to enter this business.

In the meantime Appleton had become secretary of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, and in the course of the struggle to find funds to preserve the Revere house, he became interested in the physical evidences of antiquity. As a result, he joined several patriotic societies, became a director of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, and for many years was one of the pillars of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. The immediate occasion of what became his lifework was the protest against the remodeling of the Jonathan Harrington house, on Lexington Common. In 1910 he organized the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, and for two years he was its entire office force. There is no need here to describe the vast work which he accomplished through that organization. He was always its lifeblood, although he refused any other title than that of corresponding secretary until the problems of its extensive real estate holdings compelled him to add the title of business manager. He drew no salary, but devoted every dollar that he could raise to the work of the Society. To save money for it he lived frugally and dared to give nickel tips. Very naturally his strongest dislike was F. D. Roosevelt whose economic favoritism for certain politically powerful minorities made the work of the S. P. N. E. A. more difficult.

Appleton always regretted the fact that life had not brought him the home and family he had naturally looked forward to, but he was no recluse. He was fond of moving

pictures and the theatre, and never missed a Harvard football game. He swam and played tennis, and was one of the founders of the Boston Tennis and Raquet Club. Although he attended the meetings of the Massachusetts Historical Society and of the American Antiquarian Society, to which he was elected in 1924, his interests always lay in antiquities rather than in history. But unlike most people, he was more useful to us than we were to him. There were few people to whom we turned more frequently for information. We had in common the belief in the importance of picture post cards and stereoscopic views as historical source material, but we were allies rather than rivals, for his interest lay in the making of collections illustrative of the material which the American traveler brought back from Europe.

While on a tour of the historical landmarks of Andover, Appleton suffered a stroke of which he died in a Lawrence hospital on November 24, 1947. He is buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, and is survived by three sisters: Mrs. Eleanor Standen of England, Mrs. Dorothy Wald of Santa Barbara, and Mrs. Gladys Winterbottom of Tangier, Morocco.

C. K. S.

HERMANN FREDERIC CLARKE

Hermann Clarke was typical of that group of amateur antiquarians which has always been the predominating influence in this Society. He was born at Auburndale on March 29, 1882, a son of Arthur French and Mary Rice (Leslie) Clarke. From Boston Latin School he went to Harvard College, where he finished the prescribed course for the B.A. in three and a half years, which gave him an opportunity for European travel before taking his degree in June, 1905. He immediately entered the employ of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company as a clerk

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