

Obituaries

RANDOLPH GREENFIELD ADAMS

Randolph Adams was born in Philadelphia on November 7, 1892, a son of John Stokes and Heloise Zelina (Root) Adams. After graduation from the University of Pennsylvania in 1914, he studied law for one year, and then took an assistantship in History, from which, in 1916, he moved to the University of Chicago as a Fellow in History. His academic career was interrupted by military service in France, beginning as a private in the University of Pennsylvania hospital unit and ending as a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps. After the War he returned to the University of Pennsylvania as a Carnegie Fellow in International Law, and there he took his Ph.D. in 1920. In that year he went to Trinity College, now Duke University, as assistant professor, and there his doctoral dissertation, *Political Ideas of the American Revolution*, was published.

When William L. Clements began to look for professional help in the development of his great library, George Parker Winship introduced Adams to him. As a result, in 1923 Randy went to Ann Arbor to head the newly established research library in American History with the rank of professor in the University of Michigan. There he faced, and superbly mastered, the great task of turning the library of a private collector into a center for scholarly research. Fortunately the donor was still alive and willing to have his collecting guided by the librarian. Recognizing the fact that in the field of printed material his library could never overtake its older sisters, Mr. Clements turned his attention to manu-

scripts, and by the purchase of the Gage, Clinton, Germain, Hartley, and Nathanael Greene papers, established the supremacy of his institution in that part of the historical field.

In retrospect it is evident that Adams would have been miscast as a college teacher, a researcher, or a bibliographer. He was a collector, and a great one. Of his many writings the best are his delightful essays on rare books and collecting. In our generation and circle of librarians, no one was more joyous and convivial, and this in spite of the constant drag of poor health. Few were more fertile of ideas, and no one more willing to receive ideas conflicting with his own. Actually, he was humble, although that word does not seem appropriate to such an exuberant character.

In 1929 Adams served as visiting professor in American History at St. Andrews University, and in 1938 he was given an LL.D. by Albion College. In the latter year he delivered the Rosenbach Lectures, which were published in book form with the title, *Three Americanists*. He was a member of the Grolier Club, the Massachusetts Historical Society, president of the Bibliographical Society of America (1940-41), trustee of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, member of the board to advise the Librarian of Congress, and one of the founding editors of the History Book Club.

Adams was elected to this Society in 1924, and at the October meeting of 1937 he read a paper, "New Light on the Boston Massacre." We did not have as many contacts with him as we do with most of our circle of institutional heads, for he did not engage in much of the research which calls for help and cooperation. He died at Ann Arbor, of heart disease, on January 4, 1951, and is survived by his wife, Helen Newbold Spiller, to whom he was married on June 17, 1917, and by two sons, Thomas Randolph and Richard Newbold.

C. K. S.

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