

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES WILLIAM RAMSDELL

Charles William Ramsdell was born at Salado, Texas, April 4, 1877, and died in Dallas, July 3, 1942. He held the degrees of B.A. and M.A. from The University of Texas, 1903, 1904; and the degree of Ph.D. from Columbia University, 1910. During 1905-1906, he was teaching assistant at Columbia University and taught classes in Barnard College. He came to The University of Texas as instructor in history in 1906, and was promoted successively to the ranks of adjunct professor (1912), associate professor (1916), and professor (1917). He taught the fall quarter at the University of Chicago in 1922 and the summer terms in the University of Illinois, 1923, 1926; Colorado, 1924; Columbia, 1927, 1940; North Carolina, 1928; Western Reserve, 1930; Northwestern, 1932; West Virginia, 1933; Missouri, 1935; Duke, 1938. He was a member of numerous learned societies, and served on the executive committee of the Texas State Historical Association, 1907-1942; the American Historical Association, 1931-1934; the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1928-1933; and the Southern Historical Association, 1935-1939. He was Secretary-Treasurer of the Texas State Historical Association, 1907-1942; and President of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1928-1929, and of the Southern Historical Association, 1936. He was associate editor of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly and of its predecessor, The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, 1910-1938, and served for varying terms on the editorial board of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association.

Though he was a man of broad interests and comprehensive learning, Professor Ramsdell's chief study was centered upon the history of the Old South from 1800 to the close of the period of reconstruction. In all that pertained to the history of the Southern Confederacy, his scholarship was decisive. Though he published a definitive volume on Reconstruction in Texas, numerous illuminating articles, and a multitude of penetrating and constructive book reviews - all

in impeccable literary style - the tragedy of his loss to historical scholarship is accentuated, as one of his friends expressed it, by the fact that he was never able to reduce his vast knowledge of his subject to the orderly progression of a comprehensive and unified narration. He left no history of the Southern Confederacy, which he was so eminently qualified to write.

Besides effectively teaching large graduate and undergraduate classes, Professor Ramsdell served the University in many capacities requiring judgment, tact, patience and sympathetic understanding. His interest in students and student activities was a conspicuous characteristic. For many years, he was a member of the Athletic Council, one of the most important committees involving student, faculty, and public relations. Perhaps his own participation in intercollegiate athletics was a valuable apprenticeship for this service. For many years also, he was a member of the Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships - a duty and an obligation which he discharged with conscientious discrimination. To his influence upon his students, Mr. Stuart McGregor paid eloquent tribute in an editorial in the Dallas News of July 6, 1942. "With the true instincts of the old Scottish dominie," Mr. McGregor wrote, "he took a personal interest in the young men and women who sat at his feet. It was an interest that followed on as his students went out into the world - a loyalty that was returned by thousands of Texas Exes who sat in the classroom of the kindly, learned man during his generation of service on the faculty of The University of Texas."

In his mental attitude, Professor Ramsdell was a liberal, but never a propagandist. He held firm and reasoned convictions, which he was prepared to defend at all times with courage and determination, but his tolerance and self-control were extraordinary, and he avoided controversy. His opinions were the result of rigidly controlled, objective judgment and his expression of them was tempered by truly innate courtesy. He was loyal in all his relations - a modest, unassuming gentleman.

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