

Miss Marie Ationette Quinby

President of the Woman's Branch of the New Jersey Historical Society

by Mrs. Thomas J. Craven

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A Memorial Address, read at the annual meeting of the
Woman's Branch of the New Jersey Historical Society, May 12, 1909.

The Annual Meeting of 1909 of the Woman's Branch of the New Jersey Historical Society is the saddest in its history, for over two months ago, on March 7th, its beloved President, Miss Marie Antoinette Quinby, passed away.

The loss to the Branch by her death cannot be measured; somehow, it seems impossible to gather up the work that she so ably planned, so ably carried on - that did not fall from her hands until they were too weak to hold it; those notable hands, those capable hands that we remember often doing more than her strength might allow; that active brain planning an amazing amount of detail that she accomplished many times almost alone. Truly she was a leader. Go, was not her watchword, but Come, and all followed, proud to be associated with her in the work that stands as a monument to her today.

Looking back to the day of the opening of the Library, on May 29th, 1901, when this building was set aside as a store-house of inestimable historic treasures, we recall that that day was also the inauguration of the Woman's Branch of the New Jersey Historical Society, of which Miss Quinby had been the originator and moving spirit; we recall the address of Mr. Roberts, President of the Historical Society, in which the Woman's Branch was cordially welcomed as an auxilliary, and Miss Quinby's response. It was then announced what the Woman's Branch could do for the State Historical Society and for its Library:

It could help to increase the membership from all parts of the state.

It could collect books, pamphlets, papers, manuscripts relating to the general and local history of every village, town, township, city and county in the state, and also the general history of the state.

It could collect books, pamphlets, papers, manuscripts redating to the history of every church, school, educational, charitable and public institution in the state, and also the colleges and educational institutions in the United States.

It could copy the names and inscriptions from the old grave stones in country church burying grounds, especially prior to 1800.

It could collect all kinds of old and rare curios, books and papers, pictures of Revolutionary houses and places, views of villages, towns and cities, pictures of public buildings, churches, schools, etc., to be used in forming a museum department of the library.

We all know how she worked to accomplish these ends. It was no easy task, to increase that membership; the state must be canvassed from North to South, from East to West. It was no easy task to collect those books and manuscripts. To copy the names and inscriptions of old grave stones meant personal visits to distant towns and isolated church yards in the country. All meant much correspondence. One wonders

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how she accomplished it all, but one does not wonder when we recall her unflinching spirit and energy. I quote from the minute of the Woman's Branch at the time of her decease, that "the success of the Woman's Branch had been entirely due to her persistent effort, not only in organization but in the management, and wise counsel." Those well chosen words might fitly find a place in this memorial and I ask permission to add here, entire, the following minute adopted by the Woman's Branch of the Historical Society on the death of its President, Miss M. A. Quinby:

The officers and board of managers of the Woman's Branch of the New Jersey Historical Society desiring to express their sorrow on account of the death of their late president, and to record their appreciation of her services to the society, do resolve

"That in the death of Marie Antoinette Quinby each member of the board has lost a sincere and steadfast friend whose kindness and affectionate regard for them compelled a personal attachment, the severing of which by her death brings sorrow and mourning to each of us.

"That the success of the Woman's Branch of the Historical society has been entirely due to her influence and persistent effort, not only in organizing it, but by wisdom in management and judgment in counsel.

"As long as her health permitted she was always in attendance, and devoted much of her time toward the development of the work. By her removal from our midst we are called upon to suffer a loss that will be more fully impressed upon us and its consequences felt as time passes by.

"While we regret the loss to our Society, which as it now seems is beyond repair, the great loss is the personal one which deprives us of the fellowship of one whose noble character commanded our respect and affectionate esteem and love.

"Resolved, that these resolutions be entered in the minutes of this association, and also published."

From the other organizations of which she has been so useful and active a member, come also expressions of loss and great esteem. The Colonial Dames, the D.A.R., the Army and Navy Relief Society, the Woman's Exchange are some of these.

We here today would express our great loss and our great esteem. The passing of Miss Quinby means loss to social and family life, to friend and acquaintance, to all those points of interest that her full life touched upon so many sides.

In this memorial we desire to honor the memory of a beloved friend, to give to her the tribute of affection, to express our appreciation of her rare personality, her exquisite grace, her accomplishments, her splendid qualities of heart and mind, all, all were hers; gifted in high degree, few might equal her, few excel.

Paralysed by the blow of her death, it seems as if her work could not go on; but if the thought of what she was and what she did remains, as an incentive and an inspiration to carry on the task so nobly begun by her, and upon the same lines she planned, that, I am sure, would be her happiness to know; that, I am sure, would be more acceptable to our friend than any other tribute we could offer. Let it be so. Let us follow in her footsteps, and walk her way: that way made bright and clear by the

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glow of her golden deeds which irradiated the past, and will shine far down the future, lighting it for those who would thus go on. Through the long hereafter

*A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood.*

ACTION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Historical Society held on the fifth day of April, nineteen hundred and nine, the following minute was adopted by the Board

It is with deep regret that the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Historical Society have to record the death of Miss Antoinette M. Quinby, the President of the Woman's Branch of this Society, which took place on Sunday, March 7, 1909. Miss Quinby was born in the City of Newark, and here she had spent all her life. She was thoroughly imbued with a love for her native city and state; whatever concerned them concerned her. She was proud of their progress; she was proud of their noble history. When this Society seemed most to need a new inspiration, she came forward and was largely, if not mainly, instrumental in the organization of the Woman's Branch, which was perfected in April, 1901. With such energy did the new auxiliary set to work that under its auspices this building, then recently acquired by the Society, was fitted up by the ladies, who welcomed the Society to its new home on May 29, 1901, taking entire charge of the arrangements for that auspicious occasion. Miss Quinby had remarkable executive ability, great energy, and the faculty of enlisting the most enthusiastic cooperation of the ladies associated with her in the Woman's Branch, who gave her unswerving loyalty in their support. To promote the welfare of this Society as an instrument for the preservation of the history of the State, and the memory of the noble men and women who had built up the commonwealth, she gladly gave most generously of her means, of her time, and, best of all, of herself. Wonders were accomplished under her management by the auxiliary, which has had a most beneficial effect on the parent Society. At the meetings of the Board of Trustees, which she generally attended, her counsel was always sought and always respected. Her reports for the Woman's Branch were a valued feature of the annual meetings of the Society. Her long and trying illness, borne with such great fortitude, excited the heartfelt sympathy of the officers and members of this Society, and we mourn her taking off as a personal bereavement.

It is a significant and most touching evidence of the abiding interest taken by Miss Quinby in the Society, that she has left us a legacy of two thousand dollars. It is the sense of this Board that this should be reserved as a perpetual memorial of her, and to that end, it is ordered that her name be placed on the roll of Patrons of this Society.