

Dr. Austin Scott

by Rev. W. H. S. Demarest

Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society

Vol. VII, No. 4 (October 1922)

Digital Antiquaria

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Morristown, NJ

www.digitalantiquaria.com

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IN MEMORIAM

DR. AUSTIN SCOTT,¹ President of Rutgers College from 1891 to 1906 and member of the faculty from 1882 until now, died at his summer home, Granville Center, Massachusetts, Tuesday, August 15th, at the age of seventy-four. His death was sudden, an incalculable loss to the College; a great shock and grievous sorrow to his associates in the College life, in the church and in the City of New Brunswick. He had completed his year's work, an especially arduous year, without a day's faltering, although warned by occasional distress outside the classroom that his life was none too secure; and he was looking with fine satisfaction to greatly developed work in his department, work arranged for by him with the President during recent months. He must have gloried that his departure was after the finished work of a year and while he still stood ready for his task.

Dr. Scott was born near Toledo, Ohio, August 10, 1848, was graduated from Yale in 1869, and received the degree of A.M. at the University of Michigan a year later. He studied at Berlin and Leipzig for three years and received his Ph.D. from the latter University in 1873. In 1891 he received the degree of LL.D. from Princeton University. He was the instructor in German at the University of Michigan, 1873 to 1875, and from 1875 to 1882 he was associate in history at Johns Hopkins University. During much of this time, both abroad and in this country, he was associated with Mr. George Bancroft, gathering material and otherwise helping in the preparation of Mr. Bancroft's great works, the "History of the United States" and the "History of the Constitution."

In 1882 Dr. Scott was called to Rutgers, and in 1883 he received the full title of Professor of History, Political Economy and Constitutional Law. He at once gave strength to the College and gained the high esteem of all associated with him. His ability and force of character were such, and his grasp of general College affairs became so apparent, that, on the resignation of President Merrill E. Gates, he was chosen, in 1890, to succeed him. During his administration as President the Robert F. Ballantine Gymnasium and the Ralph Voorhees Library were erected, substantial gifts to endowment were received, and the educational program of the College was distinctly advanced and strengthened. Executive work was not as agreeable to Dr. Scott as teaching, however, and after fifteen years of presiding over the College, he asked that his resignation be accepted, and he returned, in 1906, to full work as

¹ The following account of the late Dr. Scott was published in the "Christian Intelligencer" of New York on August 23, last, and is reproduced by the courtesy of the writer, the present President of Rutgers College, who, perhaps, knew him more intimately than anyone else. The work of Dr. Scott in connection with the New Jersey Historical Society is commented upon in the department of "Historical Notes and Comments" in this issue. - EDITOR.

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Professor. He had continued to teach somewhat while President history, however, had been committed to other professors and, with the growth of the College and the increase of instructors in recent years, it fell to him to give his time quite entirely to his paramount subject, political science, constitutional and international law and civics. With rare vigor and enthusiasm, since returning from the President's office now for sixteen years, he has carried on his very distinguished classroom work.

Dr. Scott was one of the greatest teachers of his time. He had natively a keen mind and an eagerness of the search for truth, and his training, academic and later, was of the best. His learning was wide and accurate: his intellectual resources were always at instant and apt command: he had the teaching gift in rare degree. Before his students he was a master indeed. Vital, alert, incisive, original, he commanded definite and unfailing interest, compelled intellectual reaction, and gave forth riches of experience as well as learning. Forty classes, one after the other, have given him supreme respect and admiration and gratitude as a teacher.

As teacher and as President he was an unswerving champion of the College, all its honor and welfare. He had adopted it entirely as his own. It was unceasingly upon his heart. He gloried in its distinction and its usefulness. After his retiring from the office of President he gave to his successor, his one time student, the most unwavering and complete support in word and deed and the warmest, intimate friendship.

In the City of New Brunswick Dr. Scott has been for many years an outstanding figure. Devoted to training his students for best citizenship, he could not fail to give public service himself as chance appeared. He was ready to enlist in all good civic movements. He was willing even to accept public office he served a term as Mayor of New Brunswick and fulfilled the duties of the office with rare faithfulness and with high courage in difficult circumstances. He served on one board and another of public administration. He was counted on as a speaker on philanthropic and patriotic occasions. In such a group as the local Historical Club, of which he was President, he was the leading and moving spirit, strongly sustaining its whole enterprise and sharing constantly its productive work.

Like his predecessors in the President's office since the Second Reformed Church of New Brunswick was organized, and like his successor, he has been connected with that church. He was a devoted churchman, a strong supporter of the denomination, an elder frequently chosen to the consistory. In him the pastor always found a warm and helpful friend: special movements for the church welfare always commanded his best effort. He held the religious life as the essential foundation of all good life and citizenship. He was gifted in religious address and in prayer. He was well known in General Synod and at times played important parts in its counsels.

Dr. Scott leaves, beside his widow, seven children. The eldest son is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Rochester and the second son is Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School.

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Necrology of Members (Vol. VII No. 4, October 1922)

DR. AUSTIN SCOTT, of New Brunswick, N.J., Vice-President of the New Jersey Historical Society, died suddenly at his summer home, Granville Center, Mass., on August 15, 1922. Particulars of his life and life's work appear on a preceding page. It should be recorded here that Dr. Scott was one of the most interested and constantly attending members of the Board of Trustees of this Society. He loved its work and took an interest in every proceeding which enhanced the value of the Society to the public. Often at much personal inconvenience, if not discomfort, he went regularly every month from his home in New Brunswick to Newark to meet with his associates and discuss plans for the improvement of the Society. He was made a Life Member of the Society Jan. 15, 1885.

At the annual meeting Jan. 25, 1887, he read a paper before the Society on "Early Cities in New Jersey,"² and the next year took a position on the Committee on Publications, and later (1914) on the Committee on Colonial Documents, and as on this latter committee he was a member up to the time of his death, it made his real activity in the Society one of thirty-five years duration. In 1889 he made an address on behalf of the Society in presenting a gold medal to President Benjamin Harrison. This striking and eloquent address was entitled "A Highway of the Nation."³ In October, 1895, he was elected Vice-President of the Society and continued as a Vice-President until 1904; became such again in 1916 until his death. At the annual meeting in 1912 he gave an address before the Society on "William Paterson; the New Jersey Exponent of American Principles." He became a Trustee of the Society October 29, 1913. He served from time to time on various other important committees, as on Membership, etc. At the annual meeting in October, 1920, he made an address before the Society (which proved to be his last) on "Blazing the Way to Final Victory - 1781."⁴ To the published PROCEEDINGS he also contributed "A List of the Freeholders of the County of Essex, 1755";⁵ "List of the Freeholders of Middlesex, about 1750."⁶ As Chairman of the Colonial Documents Committee he edited Vol. V of the Second Series of the "New Jersey Archives," being all newspaper extracts on New Jersey published from October, 1780, to July, 1782, practically to the end of the Revolution, and he had expected to assist in the editing of the one remaining volume of newspaper extracts (for 1775), now in course of publication by the Society. All this work for the Society was in addition to his long-held position as President of the New Brunswick Historical Club, as an active Professor of History in Rutgers College, and as contributor of historical matter to various outside publications, legal periodicals and encyclopedias. He was a tireless worker, an enthusiastic historian and a man of wide and close friendships, and his associates on the Board of the New Jersey Historical Society will long miss his genial handshake, his unnumbered personal courtesies and his close devotion to his official tasks.

² Published in PROCEEDINGS, Second Series, Vol. IX, p. 149 and www.DigitalAntiquaria.com : NJHR86B2

³ Published in PROCEEDINGS, Third Series, Vol. XIII, p. 355 and www.DigitalAntiquaria.com : NJHR94B4

⁴ Published in PROCEEDINGS, New Series, Vol. VI, p. 1 and www.DigitalAntiquaria.com : NJHS21A3

⁵ Published in PROCEEDINGS, Second Series, Vol. XIII, p. 25 and www.DigitalAntiquaria.com : NJHR94A2

⁶ Published in PROCEEDINGS, Second Series, Vol. XIII, p. 89 and www.DigitalAntiquaria.com : NJHR94B2