GC
929.2
L5157LM

ARTHUR NEWLIN LEEDS

dup Karen

ARTHUR NEWLIN LEEDS

A Brief Biography by Morris E. Leeds

ARTHUR NEWLIN LEEDS

Arthur Newlin Leeds, who died First Month 26, 1939, at the age of sixty-eight, was born in Philadelphia and was the son of Barclay R. and Mary Maule Leeds.

His first education was at the Preparative Meeting School of North Meeting, under Deborah Brooks. He then went to Friends' Select School, at the old Boys' School on Cherry Street, where he came under two very well known Quaker educators, Susanna House and John H. Dillingham. He entered Westtown in 1884 and was graduated in 1887. At that time C. Canby Balderston, Watson W. Dewees, Thomas K. Brown and Albert H. Votaw were in their prime; and Charles Potts, although further along in years, was still a vigorous teacher. He felt that he owed much to these men.

From Westtown he entered the Junior Class at Haverford and was graduated in 1889. An additional year for work under Dr. Francis B. Gummere in Early English gave him an M. A. degree.

At Westtown, under the encouragement of Master Canby and Master Thomas, he enthusiastically fell in with an old and well established tradition that encouraged a study of Natural History much beyond the requirements of the curriculum. Botany was his chief interest. One of his school papers describes his own repetition of some of Darwin's work on the cross fertilization of orchids, which he carried out on our familiar showy orchis (*Orchis spectabilis*). Starting thus, Botany became one of his chief pleasures, continued as such throughout his life, and in his last decade was his major interest.

At Haverford Dr. J. Playfair McMurrich, then a brilliant young biologist from Johns Hopkins, greatly enlarged his knowledge of and interest in all classes of living things, and introduced him to speculative Biology in the works of Lyell, Darwin, Wallace and others.

J. Rendel Harris was also at Haverford then and opened for him the field of New Testament History and criticism, which continued throughout his life to be one in which he read quite extensively and in which he did some study under Albert J. Edmunds and Henry J. Cadbury.

But probably the man who had the greatest influence on him was Francis B. Gummere, who came to Haverford in his Senior year. Gummere's introduction to the treasures of English Literature was one of the strong influences in making him an extensive reader in the domain of letters and the collector of a quite large and good private library. Under Gummere he acquired high standards of English composition, which made him a valued, even if sometimes severe, critic of the writings of others, and so meticulous in criticism of himself that he was willing to write comparatively little, although he had a somewhat more than ordinary gift.

From Haverford he went into business, and from 1890 to 1899 was with R. D. Wood & Sons. During much of that time he was engaged as a salesman for some of the products of their cotton weaving and finishing plants at Millville and Mays Landing.

At the turn of the century, in association with Walter P. Stokes, he bought the Wabash Mills in Manayunk, which were equipped for making coarse grades of cotton yarn, at that time used in carpet manufacture. Within a few years he bought out Walter Stokes' interest and so assumed the sole management. It turned out that the business was an obsolescent one, and several times during the quarter century of his ownership he had to find entirely new markets for his product. He rarely had associates or assistants on whom he could place any large responsibility, and so the enterprise was a difficult and confining one. He prosecuted it with unflagging perseverance and courage and, on the whole, successfully, and sold the mill and retired in 1926.

Immediately thereafter he took a leisurely trip around the world, during the first part of which—in the Orient, India, Egypt and Turkey—he was in company with the well known ornithologist, the late Dr. Charles W. Townsend of Ipswich, Mass. After Dr. Townsend left him, he traveled for many months, making a leisurely and, for a casual traveler, an unusually thorough survey of the remains of Roman civilization in Italy, southern France and Spain, and then came back to this country by way of Portugal and Cuba, following on a small Spanish ship, as nearly as he could, the route which Columbus first traveled.

In 1928, after returning from his trip around the world, he was given charge of the fern collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences—first with the title of Research Associate, and eventually that of Research Fellow. His knowledge of ferns became authoritative and the Academy's valuable collection his primary interest. For a decade he worked at it assiduously, not only without compensation, but much of the time employing an assistant at his own expense. He brought it to high rank among the country's fern collections and left it in model condition. He assembled a valuable library on ferns, containing many rare and beautiful volumes, which he left to the Academy.

He was by no means merely a closet student of Botany, but made many collecting trips, covering quite thoroughly the United States east of the Mississippi River. He explored the southern states, however, more thoroughly than others, including both the lowlands along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf, and the mountain regions of Carolina and Tennessee. On these explorations he was on more than one occasion accompanied by Francis Harper, and in this connection became interested in the travels of John Bartram and the lost locality where the Franklin Tree was discovered by him. The following is from Francis Harper's note in regard to him, published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*, Vol. XX, No. 2, May 14, 1939:

"The plant life of the Southeastern States had a strong appeal for Arthur Leeds, and he made numerous field trips in that region. In 1934 and 1936 he and the undersigned undertook a particular quest in attempting to retrace the routes of the early Quaker naturalists, John and William Bartram, through eastern Georgia. We had the good fortune to relocate many of the points of special interest visited by them. Noteworthy among these was the probable site, in Oglethorpe County, of the Buffalo Lick described in Bartram's 'Travels.' We had planned for the near future much further collaboration in following the Bartram routes, in identifying the plants and animals mentioned by these natu-

ralists, and in publishing certain of their manuscripts. In this undertaking his wide botanical knowledge would have been an especially useful contribution."

He was always keenly interested in Westtown affairs and was active for many years in the Alumni and the Old Scholars' Associations. At the first meeting of the latter he spoke for the 80's—one of the periods of maximum attendance, which saw the beginning of the present school buildings and the last of the dignified and venerable building which had stood since the school's founding. "We are," said he, "the last of the gentlemen of the old school."

From 1898 until 1918 he was on the Publication Committee of the *WESTONIAN*. A greatly interested member and constant worker, he gave much time to editorial work and had his share in making the *WESTONIAN* the valuable journal that it is, reflecting the educational, literary and religious interests of the Society of Friends in and about Philadelphia. He wrote little for the paper, with the possible exception of some unsigned editorials. One of the few communications over his name is a review of Dr. Henry S. Conard's fine monograph on "Water Lilies."

In 1896 he became Chairman of the Arboretum Committee of the Alumni Association, and from then until 1910 was on that committee, or its successor, the Committee on Greenhouse and Lawns, of the Old Scholars' Association. He took an active part in the plantings of those years which, among many others, include the present Oak Lane, the large magnolias on the west lawn, and the hemlock grove on Walnut Hill.

When the Picture Committee was appointed in 1914, to expend an anonymous gift of \$500.00 for pictures for the Westtown walls, he was made its Chairman; and from that time until 1924 he is described by one of his co-workers as the "guiding spirit" of that Committee. There were a subsequent gift of a like amount and a number of lesser gifts, as well as appropriations from the Old Scholars' Association. With his associates, Walter Price, Sarah Mickle and, later, Anna Hartshorne Brown, he gave much time and effort to the selection of pictures which should interest the boys and girls and at the same time develop in them an appreciation of the truly good in art. That committee selected the pictures now hanging in the boys' parlor, the dining room (excepting the Wyeth painting—the gift of the Class of 1910), the first floor girls' parlor, and the girls' and boys' collecting rooms.

He was Treasurer of the Westtown Old Scholars' Association from 1909 to 1918.

It was at his suggestion that his father and brother joined him in transforming the Faculty Room, in 1916, into the Mary Leeds Room of today; and he, much more than either of the others, was responsible for its design and the selection of its furnishings.

His botanical interests led him to be a founder of the Philadelphia Botanical Club, of which he became Treasurer within a few years, continuing to serve in that capacity for forty-five years, until the end of his life. He was always an active member of the Club and allowed very few other engagements to interfere with his attendance at its meetings. Probably more than any other member, he made himself responsible, financially and editorially, for the Club's dignified publication *Bartonia*.

His interest in books, both as a reader and a collector, made him accept with pleasure in 1908 membership on the committee having charge of the

Friends' Free Library of Germantown, in which he continued a very active interest until his death. Throughout the term of his service he was a member of its Book Committee, and regularly reviewed, generally with much care, books suggested for its shelves. This service took a good part of his available reading time. Of his contribution to its work a minute of the Library Committee says: "His fine literary taste, combined with his love of a discriminating use of the English language, made his presence on the Book Committee valuable to the Library and stimulating to his fellow-workers. His scholarship in the natural sciences enabled us to maintain a high standard for the books in this field."

In 1929 he was elected a member of the Board of the Apprentices' Library of Philadelphia, and from 1935 on was its Treasurer.

He was a member of the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia from its organization in 1904; its President 1917-1919; a Councillor 1919-1924; Chairman of the Publication Committee 1922-1925. He was actively interested in the Society's merger, in 1924, into the Older Historical Association, of which he became a member of the Board of Directors.

From 1915 until his death he was an Overseer of the William Penn Charter School. "An active member of the Building Committee at the time of the moving of the school to Germantown, he was especially helpful in the landscaping and planting of the grounds, in which his knowledge and love of trees served him well. He also had much to do with setting high standards in the furnishing and decoration of the School building."

He left the bulk of his estate to the Friends' Free Library of Germantown, the Germantown Friends' School and Westtown—a final evidence of his concern for the welfare of these institutions.

He was keenly alive to the interests of the Society of Friends and was a regular attender of the First-day meetings for worship, and the business meetings, of Germantown Meeting, of which he was a member. He served on the Tea Meeting Committee and as its Chairman. He was an Overseer from 1932 to 1939. Probably his most outstanding contribution to the Meeting was in his service on the Standing Nominating Committee. He was an early advocate of the usefulness of such committees and was on the Germantown committee from the time of his appointment in 1913 to 1916, and again for three year terms from 1920 to 1923 and from 1933 to 1936. He was impressed, as others have been, with the tendency of the Society to load its responsibilities on a comparatively small number of people, who, because they have served well and have become known, are likely to be thought of when new appointments are to be made. He aimed, and with a good degree of success, to lessen the burden of such Friends and to increase the interest and usefulness of others by drawing new people into the service of the Meeting.

He was one of the first Friends appointed on the Standing Nominating Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He was appointed from Abington Quarter and served, when appointments were made annually, during 1926, 1929 and 1931. Later he was appointed for the three year period 1934-35-36.

He was a founder member of the Ozone Club in 1901, and for years thereafter a quite regular golfer. Later his interest in the game waned, although his interest in the members of the Club, among whom were some of his oldest friends, did not, and he continued as a non-playing member for the sake of its associations, which he cherished.

In outdoor recreation his chief enthusiasm was for canoeing and camping. Beginning with a trip with his brother and Master Thomas, to the Dismal Swamp in the spring of '89—followed by one on the Egg Harbor in 1890, in which President Sharpless took part—he was generally one of the group which, during some twenty years, with Master Thomas, frequently spent a week or ten days in the spring on the little rivers of New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and finally, in 1915, on the Waccamaw in North Carolina. He was an enthusiast in the art of canoeing—always interested in the Botany and the local history of the regions through which he traveled—and a most welcome contributor to the evening's talks about the campfire, which he illuminated with his wit and his wide knowledge.

He greatly enjoyed canoeing on the upper Delaware and the lower Susquehanna, and made many trips on each.

With others of his canoeing and camping associates, he was a founder member of the Four Way Lodge, near Mays Landing, N. J., where it was his delight to enjoy with his friends the zest of the out of doors and the indoor talk around the table and before the fire. It was one of his great pleasures to entertain there groups of his intimates, both old and young.

He was outstandingly interested in the people whom he drew into the circle of his friendship, and as years went on he extended it to include many much younger than himself, and always there were in it some small children. He eagerly cultivated this circle, and it was not uncommon for him to forsake the well loved company of books, the fireside and the easy chair and start on an evening of calls, with the remark that he must "be about repairing his friendships." One who knew him well speaks of him as "apt in bridging the gap of age, genuine in his camaraderie, moving with ease and with a fine spirit, always a welcome guest and friendly counselor." Another, not an intimate, says, "With him I always had the feeling of a warm friendship coming to meet me"; and still another, "What a rare combination of sweetness and gaiety and eager intellect he had and was moreover so ready to share."

Margaret M. Cary has given poetic expression to what he was to his friends in the following beautiful tribute:

"Thou who has opened doors for us down spacious ways,
Careful explorer of the wonders here at hand or far afield,
Naturalist, scientist, but most of all our friend, our well-beloved friend,
Down all the years,—we give thee tribute for thy matchless flame,
Deep sharer of our happiest days, but also fully knowing
All of our losses and our pain. Oh joy of well remembered days
Of swamp and field and wood, of freshened life from flaming logs
Piled high into the night, where talk goes deep finding itself communion.

We know that spring will come again and all the earth be green,
Under the leaves we know that we shall find arbutus still,
Hunting, we may even find Schizaea in that elusive bog,
And with our flashlights in the piney woods bright eyes may shine;—
We know that thou most valiantly would have us hide
Our emptiness, our loneliness in missing thee, courageous friend.
Yes, it must be that we shall walk the April woods again,
Face forward, eagerly, even as thou, into a bright new day."

01/25/2013

FT 282670

5

82

00

HF GROUP - IN