



OLD SKETCH OF HUME SCHOOL ABOUT 1900

Frank Hume

By DAVID JOHN MAYS*

Frank Hume, of "Warwick", Alexandria County, Virginia, was born at Culpeper, Virginia, on the 21st day of July, 1843. He was the fourth son of Charles and Virginia (Rawlins) Hume. His mother was a granddaughter of William Hansbrough, who was one of the early enlisted men from Virginia in the Revolutionary Army, and she was also a first cousin of General John A. Rawlins, General Ulysses S. Grant's adjutant-general, who was afterwards secretary of war.

Mr. Hume's family was descended from the Humes, or Homes, of Wedderburn, Berwickshire, Scotland, one of the oldest and most distinguished of the border families of that country, famous for centuries in its wars, literature and political history. The first of his ancestors of the family name in America was George Hume, born at Wedderburn Castle, Berwickshire, Scotland, in 1698, who was the second son of George Hume, Laird of Wedderburn, and with his father took part in the uprising of 1715 for the Stuarts. In 1721 George Hume emigrated to America, settled in St. George's Parish in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, and followed the profession of surveyor, and was associated with George Washington in many surveys.

While Frank Hume was a young boy his father removed from Culpeper to Alexandria, Virginia, where he resided for two years, afterwards moving to Washington City, and for fourteen years, until the time of his death in 1863, he filled an important position in the second auditor's office of the Treasury Department. As a boy young Hume attended the schools within his reach and after the family removed to Washington, completed his preparation for college at the preparatory school under the principalship of Mr. Z. Richards, a well known instructor.

In the latter part of July, 1861, being just eighteen years of age, espousing the cause of the South in the war then being waged, he felt himself called to the support and defense of his native state, Virginia. Quietly leaving Washington, he crossed the Potomac at Pope's Creek and made his way to Manassas to enlist in the Confederate Army there, but learning that four of his cousins were together in a Mississippi regiment he decided to join them, and enlisted in the Volunteer Southrons (the company which Jefferson Davis had commanded in the Mexican War) Company A, 21st Mississippi Regiment, Barksdale's Brigade, Longstreet's Corps. He served with courage and fidelity until the end of the war, declining promotion. He took part in the engagements of Seven Pines, Savage Station, Maryland Heights, Sharpsburg, Fred-

*Mr. Mays, President of the Virginia Historical Society, delivered these remarks on the dedication of the Hume School Museum, May 10, 1963.

ericksburg, Marye's Heights, Gettysburg (where he was severely wounded), Chester Gap, Chickamauga, Falling Waters, Bunker's Hill, and others. He was also by general orders detailed for scout duty by General J. E. B. Stuart, and while on this duty his chief was mortally wounded at Yellow Tavern. He then reported in person to General Robert E. Lee. His elder brother, Major Charles C. Hume, Confederate States Army, had shortly before been killed while engaged in similar service. After the surrender at Appomattox, he decided to accept General Grant's advice to "go home and make a crop," and for two years he engaged in farming in Orange County, Virginia. The offer of a position in a wholesale grocery house, in 1867, led him to return to Washington and begin active life in the mercantile business of that city, with whose interests he was so closely and prominently identified for the last forty years of his life.

In 1870, he entered into partnership in a large wholesale establishment, but after several years, assumed the entire business. Not only did he manage his own firm in a way that brought him financial success, while his reputation for integrity, uprightness and public spirit was confirmed from year to year, but he also held many positions of trust in business corporations, civil life, and philanthropic institutions of his own state, Virginia, as well as at the national capital. As a member of the Washington Board of Trade, he was chairman of the committee on railroads; he was president of the Independent Steamboat and Barge Company, a director of the Firemen's Insurance Company of Washington, and for a while a director of the National Metropolitan Bank of Washington. He was also prominently connected with the work of financing the development, and the placing on the market, of the famous Mergenthaler type-setting machine, which has so largely revolutionized the business of printing offices of the country. He was one of the originators of the plan for opening the proposed Mt. Vernon Avenue thoroughfare—the "Appian Way" between Washington and Mt. Vernon, and he was also the originator of the Memorial Bridge idea. Deeply interested in Providence Hospital, he served as a member of its board for twenty years. He was also one of the original incorporators of the Episcopal Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital of Washington.

Mr. Hume was a Democrat, and took a deep interest in the welfare of his party, which he repeatedly represented as a delegate to state and national conventions. In 1889, and again in 1899, he was elected, by flattering majorities, from Alexandria City and County, to the Virginia Legislature—in each case declining a reelection at the expiration of his term. In public affairs he discharged every duty, as he did those of his home life, with constancy and unselfishness. For a number of successive years he was the chairman of the board of supervisors of Alexandria County; and beneficial reforms in the

business of the county are distinctly due to his influence and administration.

Sympathizing deeply with the Cubans under the oppression of Spain, he served as treasurer of the National Cuban League; and after all the debts of the League, and all claims against it, had been fully paid, Mr. Hume forwarded the surplus fund by direction of the League to General Gomez to be used for the benefit of the sick and wounded Cuban revolutionists.

Although in business in Washington, Mr. Hume maintained his residence in his native state, his home being at his country place, "Warwick," Alexandria County, Virginia, where he dispensed an old-fashioned hospitality. It was the frequent scene of many notable gatherings of prominent statesmen, and of men who had taken a foremost part in the cause of the Confederacy. Here during the National Encampment at Washington in 1887, he entertained the Memphis Merchant Zouaves and the Volunteer Southrons of Vicksburg, the latter his old company.

Mr. Hume was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was also a Mason.

On the 22nd of June, 1870, he married Miss Emma Phillips Norris, daughter of John E. Norris, a prominent lawyer of Washington, District of Columbia. They had eleven children. His widow and nine children survive him (1907).

After an illness of more than two months, Mr. Hume died on the 17th of July, 1906, at his residence on Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, District of Columbia, where for the past number of years he had spent the winter months. The funeral services were held at the Pro-Cathedral of the Ascension, Washington, District of Columbia, the Rev. Clement Brown, D.D, Rector, and the Rev. Thomas Worthington Cooke (son-in-law of Mr. Hume), officiating. The interment was in the family lot at Ivy Hill Cemetery, overlooking Alexandria, and a short distance from his country place, "Warwick."

The many notable things that he did for his fellow men live after him. This building, which is being dedicated tonight in the cause of history, rests upon the ground that he donated for the cause of education. It is fitting tonight that we pause and pay our little tribute to his memory.