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Nicholas Meriwether

Though praised as an outstanding scholar, Robert L. Meriwether was perhaps most proud of his work in helping other scholars as a teacher, editor, archivist, and librarian, with the founding of the South Caroliniana Library as the pinnacle of those efforts. Born in Edgefield County, South Carolina, in 1890, his love of history and affection for his native state seem inextricably intertwined from a young age. This might be expected from someone raised in the wake of Reconstruction in a state that had endured so much loss and upheaval in the Civil War and its aftermath. Indeed, in many ways, his early life illustrates how South Carolinians attempted to recover from the aftershocks of those events.

Though his grandfather, Snowden Griffin Meriwether, had been a well-educated doctor, his Civil War service left him shattered and unable to resume his practice. He retired to the upcountry to be a stationmaster of the small family town of Meriwether, where his grandson spent long hours reading novels to him. This may be where Robert Meriwether’s lifelong love of railroads came from, memorialized in a college essay

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on the construction of a spur line close to Wofford, where he wrote of “the interest that a railroad never fails to have.”

From those early years in Edgefield, Meriwether emerged with an abiding love for the hills and rivers of the South Carolina upcountry, and it is reasonable to assume that in those years he also became fascinated with stories of people and places and history, themes that would become pronounced in his college writings. For that to happen though, the family had to move from Edgefield—the school there went only through the eighth grade, and though both he and his father grieved to leave their beloved upcountry, Meriwether credited his mother with insisting that he get an education. Though he loved his father deeply—indeed, his children said that Meriwether’s fundamental sweetness of nature came from his father—his mother was the one to push him to succeed. His father had been sent into the fields at age fourteen, and he saw no reason for his son not to follow in his footsteps. The move to Allendale was traumatic for both father and son, however, and the father never farmed as successfully there as he had in the upcountry.

The move facilitated Meriwether’s admission to Wofford College; his mother was a staunch Methodist and chose Wofford for that reason. Wofford is where records of his life really begin; ephemera and records of his boyhood are scarce. When the author of this article interviewed his children about him, both commented on his reticence to talk about himself—not from shyness or shame, certainly, but simple modesty. His wife was a superb storyteller though, and much of the family lore surrounding him comes from her recountings to the children. Of his Wofford days, Meriwether said that the minimum necessary for a good college education was two good professors and a library. He was fortunate in that he had both, in the form of the eminent professor of Greek, Arthur G. Rembert, and David D. Wallace, under whose guidance and inspiration he decided to pursue graduate study in history. Years later, he pasted a moving tribute to Rembert in one of his scrapbooks. Wallace had been a fellow member of the South Carolina Historical Association and read early chapters of Meriwether’s monograph on the settlement of the upcountry in manuscript

form (praising it as early as 1935 for its “exhaustive and minute investigations”\(^2\)), and Meriwether wrote his obituary for the association.

Wofford witnessed Meriwether’s intellectual blossoming. Though he played basketball there, it was to literary activities that he devoted most of his time, serving in a number of capacities in the Preston Literary Society, as well as junior class historian, junior-sophomore debater, vice president of the Woodrow Wilson League, and member of the Wofford Council, among others. He excelled at writing both fiction and non-fiction, winning both the Hart Moss History Prize and the Senior-Junior Story Medal as a junior and the State Story Medal as a senior. Called “the real journalist of the class” by his peers in the senior annual, he was also elected literary editor of the Wofford College Journal and editor-in-chief of the annual, the Bohemian. In this early work, so many of the interests that would define his scholarship and career are apparent, from the love of his state and the upcountry to the range of its inhabitants, whether white, black or Native American, from genteel to poor. His early editorials reveal traits that echo throughout the rest of his work: in a thoughtful assessment of the role of exams in education, he contrasted a fair exam with one that “confuses the knowledge the student has, tends to destroy his sense of proportion, and unduly stresses the unimportant detail at the expense of the general and far more valuable outline.”\(^3\) It was a criticism no student would make of his teaching. Another editorial urged students to write for and read their college journals and to evaluate them fairly against the reams of pulp avidly consumed by the undergraduates, saying that college writing fared well in comparison—reason enough to read it, “aside from the interest the student should have in his own college.”\(^4\) The same words could describe his later feelings


when addressing South Carolinians on the need to read and preserve the records of their state.

In one revealing editorial, “The Need for Steady Work,” urging students to hone their writing skills and contribute to the college’s literary efforts, his language could well describe his own scholarship and efforts as director of the South Caroliniana Library: “It is work, rather than uncertain impulse, perspiration, rather than inspiration, that counts in the long run . . . .” He graduated in June 1912, earning his BA in history, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, and giving a senior commencement address on “The College and the Social Sciences,” a testament to his profound respect for education and its role—and the reciprocal responsibilities it imparted. The rest of his career would show that he was not merely giving lip service to the ideals he expressed in that essay.

After a year of teaching high school history at the Carlisle School in Bamberg, South Carolina, he matriculated at the University of Chicago, studying under M. W. Jernegan and W. E. Dodd. He later credited their courses on settlement and frontier studies with the start of his decades-long research on the settlement of the South Carolina upcountry. He continued that research at Columbia University, where he went next, writing a term paper on the subject for Professor E. B. Greene, earning his MA, and completing the coursework for his PhD there before coming back to the South. At the time, it was common for students to finish their dissertations long after matriculation, in keeping with the department’s stricture that dissertations had to be definitive.

Starting in 1916, he taught history at Selma High School in Selma, Alabama, until interrupted by World War I, enlisting in the Army in September 1917. He was commissioned second lieutenant at Camp Hancock a year later and served there until mustered out in December 1918. After a semester of teaching history at the Alabama Women’s College in Montgomery, he was elected associate professor of history at the University of South Carolina in the fall of 1919, where he stayed until his death. Carolina offered him the chance to teach his favorite subject, South Carolina history, which he would do faithfully

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every semester for the rest of his life. He threw himself into his teaching, directing his first masters-level student in 1924 and his first two PhD theses starting in 1931, all of which were published, the latter becoming "well-thumbed classics for the use of students in S. C. history." The year 1924 also witnessed a personal milestone, his marriage to Margaret Babcock, who later worked alongside him at the South Caroliniana and wrote dozens of articles on it and its holdings in her years there.

Teaching remained a lifelong passion for him, even after his duties as director of the South Caroliniana Library forced him to step down as head of the history department, a position he held for twenty years beginning in 1929. Instrumental in earning him that place was a series of articles written for the new *Dictionary of American Biography*, edited by noted Jefferson biographer Dumas Malone, who asked Meriwether to write fifteen biographies of South Carolinians, five of them considered major scholarly efforts. Written between 1927 and 1933, these established his reputation as the most promising young South Carolina historian of the time, and already a distinguished one. Throughout, he continued to work on his dissertation, initially stymied by the scarcity of records and their haphazard distribution throughout the state, region, and country. Terms such as "oral history" had not yet emerged in the discipline, but Meriwether’s dogged determination to ferret out the facts meant that he developed a methodology that is still recognized as seminal by scholars today. In writing his acknowledgements in the published dissertation, his last paragraph gives "grateful mention of the fine courtesy and helpfulness of farmers, tenants and field laborers who discussed with me soil problems and helped to identify forgotten roads and sites of the old back country."

Concomitant with that work was a growing outrage and despair at what he discovered was happening to South Carolina’s archives and records. In 1930 he was appointed to a committee of the South Carolina Historical Commission,

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6 “Robert L. Meriwether,” Memorial Exhibition Notes, South Caroliniana Library, September 1958, in author’s personal collection.

charged by the state legislature with the responsibility to "examine the records, to consult with the Secretary, and to report on publication policy." Authoring a report two years later, he called the state archives "a magnificent collection" deserving "far more generous provision than the state has ever given." The woefully inadequate current support meant "grave handicaps to the work, difficulties so great that the Commission and the Secretary are almost crippled." His summary was scathing: "These conditions are nothing short of a disgrace to the state." He knew those conditions intimately, illustrated by one bit of family lore: years later, he remarked to his wife that he had not been able to complete his dissertation until the state archivist had finally, with much reluctance and at great prodding, given him a key to the state archives. His mother-in-law took the key and had it mounted in a keystone, still a prized family heirloom and in the author's possession today.

Meriwether's commitment to the state's history was holistic, and he pursued the quest for preserving records on a number of fronts in addition to his work on the commission. In 1931 he helped found the South Carolina Historical Association (SCHA), serving as officer in a variety of capacities for nearly a decade until resigning to devote more time to the South Caroliniana Library. As member of the executive committee, editor of the Proceedings, and second president of the association, he was the guiding voice in the organization's early years. Writing in the first issue of the Proceedings, a colleague called their first meeting on March 14, 1931, "both a fulfillment of hopes long brewing in the past and a promise for the future. The hopes had their origin years ago with Professor R. L. Meriwether, had been imparted to others and cherished by them, and in the spring of 1930 were put into definite form." The SCHA became one of the fora Meriwether used to trumpet the

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8 Robert L. Meriwether, Report of the Historical Commission of South Carolina to the General Assembly (Columbia, SC: General Assembly of South Carolina, Joint Committee on Printing, 1932), 3.

9 Ibid., 4.

need for the state to preserve its records, both great and small, and for citizens interested in the sale or preservation of records to think of their own state's repositories and not send them away. In particular, he urged citizens to put materials in fireproof depositories—and, notable in the face of the often contentious atmosphere of lowcountry versus upcountry, competing civic and government institutions, and squabbling smaller libraries and archives, he strongly advocated cooperation.\textsuperscript{11}

His knowledge and experience with government and state-affiliated institutions may have prompted his decision to form a private organization devoted to the preservation of the state's history and ephemera, the University South Caroliniana Society, formally incorporated in 1937. Meriwether served as secretary-treasurer for twenty-one years, until his death, giving him the opportunity to essentially provide the state with a report card on its progress in preserving its records. In his first report, after praising the progress made, he ended by somberly noting the organization's lack of funds and the continuing need to make citizens aware of the importance of preserving their records within South Carolina: “We have not yet the material resources needed for our purpose, nor have the people of the State been brought to realize that when they have South Carolina papers to give or to sell they should first think of their own libraries before sending them out of the State.”\textsuperscript{12} Three years later, when the University of South Carolina moved its non-South Carolina holdings out of the old library into new quarters, Meriwether's vision would become a reality in the form of the South Caroliniana Library.

By 1935 his own work on what was to become \textit{The Expansion of South Carolina} was largely complete and already


\textsuperscript{12} Report of the Secretary and Treasurer for 1937, \textit{University South Caroliniana Society} (Columbia, SC: University South Caroliniana Society, 1937), 11.
cited in scholarly articles. Nonetheless, he was dissatisfied and continued writing for the next three years. Some of this was a pleasure; in his tramps through the upcountry, examining abandoned graveyards, tracing rivers, and talking to farmers and sharecroppers, he also camped throughout Oconee and Pickens counties, looking for a piece of mountain land with a view reminiscent of the Stevens Creek of his boyhood—one that might be for sale. In 1936 he found one next to the Keowee River, and the next summer he and his son camped there. His son recalled in an interview: “He took his typewriter, and . . . he made the typewriter table out of rocks. It was on the hillside, and he sat on one rock, and there was a flat rock up from there, and his typewriter was on it. And he would get up at daylight, put in a good four hours of typing, sometimes doing things by hand to be typed later.” In the afternoon, they canoed and built a small cabin with rocks dragged from the river and the surrounding hills, using sand and water from the Keowee; it survived until the 1990s.

He finished the dissertation in 1938 and received his PhD from Columbia the following year. Family lore recounts a story of one of his committee members commenting to him that it was one of the great Columbia University history dissertations, but that he just wished it had been done on a topic of greater significance—to which Meriwether replied that he did not know of a topic of greater significance. Published a year later in 1940, the book received highly favorable reviews, especially among South Carolina historians. One reviewer wrote that Meriwether “has honored his state and distinguished himself,”

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13 Wallace, “Some Unexplored Fields,” 28. The manuscript was also cited in the same issue by Gilbert P. Voigt, “The Germans and the German-Swiss in South Carolina, 1732–1765: Their Contribution to the Province,” 17–25; in footnote 1, he states: “This manuscript has been of great assistance to the writer.”


praising his “mature scholarship, painstaking attention to detail, and a warm attachment to the subject.”  

Another praised his “clear and interesting style,” his “nice discretion,” and his “outstanding achievement” in compiling “authoritative figures on population, both slave and free,” for a period of time lacking any census. The reviewer concluded that “the book is honest, accurate, and thorough, a major contribution to a field in which it will remain the standard reference.”  

Perhaps the praise he would have valued the highest, though, came in the pages of the prestigious *American Historical Review*, which noted that “the author of this useful study has been so modest in his statement of its contribution—so reticent, even, in his generalizations—that some readers may overlook its merits. It is a substantial contribution.”  

Possibly the best assessment of *The Expansion* and its place in the historiography of the Colonial era came years later, when a northwestern professor wrote Meriwether’s son and commented: “It is an understatement to assert that the scholarly work of your father . . . is among the most unappreciated I know. If studies like his were available for other colonies, many mysteries would be revealed. The details of the book and its unadorned style have discouraged the casual scholar . . . but your father knew what he was talking about, he was accurate, and the imprint of his book is permanent.”  

With one book of his planned two-volume study complete—volume II would take the history up through the Revolution—he reluctantly laid his already-voluminous notes aside to focus on the new South Caroliniana Library. This was the culmination of his efforts

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19 Clarence L. Ver Steeg (fellow academic), letter to James B. Meriwether, January 7, 1969. Ver Steeg also wrote an introduction for an unpublished reissue of *The Expansion of South Carolina.*
for the past twenty years to inculcate an awareness of the value and need for the state to preserve its history.

Though devoted to his own scholarship, he may not have found the decision so very difficult. Perhaps his best explanation was written in the preface to *The Expansion*: "For the actual processes of South Carolina settlement—the primary concern of this book—there are, in comparison with other states, enormous and surprisingly complete records. Of material for some of the most important phases of intellectual life and daily routine, however, there is little or none. It is partly to compensate for the incompleteness of the picture, partly for their own inherent interest, that I have devoted so much attention to the prosaic yet eloquent records of individual settlers."\(^{20}\) That focus on all South Carolinians, high and low, was to become a cornerstone of the library's acquisitions policies.

After the doctorate was awarded, Meriwether took his campaign for the preservation of South Caroliniana to the public, writing a guest editorial in the local newspaper modestly entitled, "Let's Preserve Our Records."\(^{21}\) Called by current director of the South Caroliniana Library Herb Hartsook "a very sophisticated and comprehensive proposal addressing many issues which confound archivists to this day, such as cooperation among a state’s repositories, placing restrictions on access to holdings, and so forth,"\(^{22}\) it is also Meriwether’s manifesto on the role and responsibility of a state’s archives. "Among the great, unrealized, unexploited resources of our state are the dusty printed and manuscript papers of our attics and basements," he wrote. In order for these to be appreciated, though, South Carolinians had to stanch the hemorrhage of papers he had witnessed. "The export of manuscripts and newspapers distinctly South Carolinian must be stopped if we are not to suffer permanent loss. If it is a mistake to send out the best of our present day living talent, it is likewise a blunder to export the written record of our brains of the past." Equally great a prob-


\(^{22}\) Herb Hartsook, letter to the author, October 2003.
lem was inattention. "Preservation of our manuscripts has depended on chance and whim," he wrote. "For every page so saved from fire, rat and rot there perish a thousand that would reveal the problems with which our public leaders have grappled, the careful planning of agricultural or industrial executives, or the daily life and thinking of the plain and shrewd folk whose record is as essential to the writing of our history as their work is to the life of our state." Nor were these to be the exclusive preserve of the university scholar. "Access to these survivals of the past will enable the student of every degree, whether a trained and experienced scholar, high school pupil, or club-paper reporter to draw the knowledge which will give us greater appreciation of the problems and possibilities of our people and give depth and richness to our culture." Outlining the role of small and large repositories, he provided a blueprint for how they could cooperate—and within two years, the South Caroliniana Library came into being in its own building, the reification, at last, of his words and the culmination of more than twenty years of effort.

For the remainder of Meriwether's life, the library was at the heart of his efforts. When the university trustees voted for the beautiful old building housing the university library to become the South Caroliniana, Meriwether was appointed director. By the following year, 1942, the fifth year of the University South Caroliniana Society, his wife could say in her report on the society that "in the five years of its existence, the society has been successful beyond the hopes of its founders," citing the tripling of the manuscript and newspaper holdings, the massive sorting and filing made possible by the Work Projects Administration, and most of all, crediting the society for its "immense influence" in persuading the university trustees to convert the old library building to the South Caroliniana Library.23 It was a move not unnoticed on campus, generating an admiring article in the student newspaper the following year that praised the "vast collection of rare and valuable literature" but bemoaned the requirements for using the library, as well as the fact that "an attendant is assigned to watch you" when

such works were consulted. Mindful of the library’s mission, Meriwether wrote a letter to the editor in reply, saying that the library staff “thanks you very warmly for your notice of the Library’s treasures and our ‘Commando Tactics’ adopted to guard them. The people who give their valuable and invaluable family papers and fine old books could not be better pleased with our custodianship than by your reporter’s account of our grim watchfulness. That is our permanent attitude with all our irreplaceable acquisitions.” However, he hastened to point out that duplicates were on open shelves, available for casual perusal, and ended by saying: “When we say that readers will be welcome in our library we mean it very heartily.”

The campus newspaper article underscored how quickly the library and its mission had become publicized: holdings were already up to 12,000 books, 6,000 pamphlets, and 5,000 manuscripts, figures which did not include the vast holdings of newspapers. In addition, Meriwether must have been pleased that the campus reporter noted that readers were as likely to encounter visiting distinguished scholars as often as undergraduates. Sadly, the article also singled out the collection of Benjamin R. Tillman as one of the two most significant, which was not to remain the case. In 1947, incensed at the inclusion of a letter from the collection that had been quoted in a recent biography of Tillman, the Tillman family insisted that the collection be removed and placed at Clemson University. Meriwether checked the correspondence files personally and immediately wrote the family, saying that he believed the library was not responsible for the dissemination of the 1902 letter from President Theodore Roosevelt in which he withdrew an invitation to Tillman. When the family proved that the library had, indeed, been the source, Meriwether immediately responded, writing a colleague that the circumstances “showed quite plainly that the Roosevelt letter business was a

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26 Ibid.
blunder and no wilful negligence, but that such a mistake, and my bonafide but mistaken denial, precluded the library pressing its claim to the papers any further. Therefore I was delivering in person, part of the papers with this letter, and would deliver the others as soon as possible.” He ended with his characteristic self-deprecation: “I should say that it is obvious enough that two thorough-going bunglers—B. R. Tillman and myself—were the prime factors in the mix-up.”

It was the only major acquisitions setback the library received during Meriwether’s tenure. Two years later, he resigned as head of the history department in order to dedicate himself more fully to his South Caroliniana responsibilities—not only the library, but more importantly, a project of national significance: the publication of the papers of John C. Calhoun. Though that was his primary focus for the remainder of his life, in addition to Calhoun, an entire series of publications devoted to the materials collected by the library was planned. By 1951 several volumes of documents from the collection were in preparation, with the first one appearing in 1951. As general editor of the series, Meriwether spent much time on each volume; for one, he spent hours poring through the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, the voluminous series of official Union and Confederate communiques in the Civil War, tracing the official accounts of the burning of Columbia by Sherman’s troops in February 1865, and how the story and cover-up developed. It is still a remarkable condensation of one of the most contentious events of the war—and all based on official Union documents.

27 Robert L. Meriwether to A. G. Holmes of Clemson, SC, June 24, 1947, Office Correspondence, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. I am indebted to Herb Hartsook, director of the South Caroliniana Library, for providing me with these quotations and the details of this incident.

28 Hennig Cohen, ed., A Barhamville Miscellany: Notes and Documents Concerning the South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute, 1826–1865, Chiefly from the Collection of the Late Henry Campbell Davis. South Caroliniana Sesquicentennial Series: From the Collections of the University South Caroliniana Society and the South Caroliniana Library, No. 5. Columbia, SC, 1956. Details of the extent of Meriwether’s involvement appear in remarks written by his son in September 1968, tipped into a family copy of the pamphlet.
Around the time that the first volume of the South Caroliniana Series appeared, the executive director of the National Historical Commission, Philip M. Hamer, stated that a comprehensive edition of South Carolina statesman John C. Calhoun was "among the foremost needs of students of American history." \(^{28}\) Controversial, brilliant, and a leading figure in American politics for most of his life, Calhoun was a logical choice for the commission, particularly because he had been so poorly served by previous editions, which were woefully inadequate and in many cases absolutely misleading. Indeed, one editor had notoriously emended Calhoun's earlier nationalistic writings to conform with his later sectional views.

For Meriwether, this officially inaugurated his last great effort, the building of the South Caroliniana's Calhoun collection and the establishment of an editorial process that would last until 2003, encompassing twenty-eight volumes. It was an achievement that came at some personal cost. When the Publication Committee of the Papers of John C. Calhoun formally met with Hamer and requested that Meriwether be the editor in March 1952, it meant he had to postpone his own work on South Carolina. Years later, his son remembered his mother saying that "he laid [his notes] aside with extreme reluctance to do Calhoun. And my mother said it would have broken his heart had he known that he would never finish it." \(^{29}\) Freed from history department administration, he threw himself into his editing work, as well as writing a series of short articles and reviews for the *American Historical Review, the Journal of Southern History*, and other periodicals, one of his most productive periods of scholarship, in terms of publication. These later efforts still demonstrate his belief in consulting primary evidence, as well as his sense of balance and fairness; they also frequently show his willingness to confront controversy. Writing of Preston S. Brooks and his infamous beating of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, he cited *The Congressional Globe*, as well as the House committee which inves-


\(^{29}\) James Babcock Meriwether, interview by the author.
tigated the attack, concluding "both men were acting without regard for the possibilities to the immediate victim nor to their country."³⁰ For Calhoun, an even more controversial figure, Meriwether would need and rely on all of those instincts.

By 1956 the work of collecting Calhoun’s papers was far enough advanced for him to give a talk to the Southern Historical Association on the editorial problems he had encountered.³¹ After six years’ work, more than 30,000 documents had been assembled, catalogued, and preserved. Volume One was in galley proof, which he had read, when he died two years later. In the foreword, one of his staff wrote: "The building of this collection, which brings together . . . all of the known extant words of Calhoun, was R. L. M.’s great primary accomplishment."³² He might have disagreed, but the magnitude of his achievement was recognized by the reviews the book received, the American Historical Review calling it the "capstone" of his scholarly career and noting that "the expression ‘accurately edited’ fails to do full justice to Meriwether’s work, for the standards represented on his pages are high. First-rate judgments are mirrored in the introduction and in the short essay on editorial procedure."³³ Part of the work’s value was to list the holdings of the Calhoun collection, now housed in the South Caroliniana Library, making the tome, in every way, a testament to Meriwether’s efforts as a scholar and to his vision of what the library should be.


Ch~ronologies do not reveal personalities fully, though, a fact that informed Meriwether's methodology and research in his own scholarship. One central aspect of the man was his sense of humor, commented on by his peers in his Wofford College senior biography and a central quality his children remember today. It was an endearing trait to his students as well. Though dignified, he did not take himself too seriously, and one newspaper photograph shows him at the annual "powder puff" girls' football game, serving as one of the faculty cheerleaders, grinning widely and clearly enjoying himself. 34 When appropriate, he also let a certain dry humor show in his scholarship—several of his reviews have lines that must have brought smiles to readers, such as a review of a biography of famed South Carolina Unionist Benjamin F. Perry. After Perry had dueled with and mortally wounded a political opponent, Meriwether comments: "It is not surprising that he could say that thereafter the Nullifiers treated him with marked courtesy." 35 The photograph the university used at his death shows him striding down the sidewalk toward the South Caroliniana, trademark grin in place, exuding great good humor.

On August 24, 1958, he died from a massive coronary thrombosis on the way back from his cabin at the Keowee. The funeral was held in the foyer of the South Caroliniana, and he is buried in the family graveyard at Asbury Methodist Church, now in McCormick County, South Carolina. Had he lived to retire—though it is difficult to imagine his doing so—it is hard to decide what Meriwether would have said was the accomplishment of which he was most proud. A historian, teacher, and writer first and foremost, he might have pointed to the first or perhaps the second volume of his history of the South Carolina upcountry, the latter unfinished at his death, but with the research substantially complete. He would have certainly pointed to the Carolina history department and its graduate program, which occupied so much of his time and thought. However, the focus of his career was unquestionably the South

34 "Scenes at Yesterday's Powder Puff Football Game," The State (Columbia, SC), March 25, 1945.

Caroliniana Library, rightly called "a monument to the dedication of the founder"\(^{36}\) by the *Journal of Southern History*. It was a sentiment that was echoed by others: in perhaps the most eloquent tribute he received after his death, the president of the University South Caroliniana Society wrote: “The South Caroliniana Library, its vast collection, and the University South Caroliniana Society, its patron organization, are truly monuments to Dr. Meriwether, and through them his work will endure. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man.”\(^{37}\)

**Nicholas Meriwether** is a writer, now living in Columbia, SC. His fiction has been published in a number of literary and experimental magazines. His non-fiction includes essays, articles, and reviews on topics in Southern history and literature, the Beats, the counterculture, and modern popular music, for a wide range of books and magazines. Nicholas is the grandson of Robert Meriwether, though they never met. Robert died six years before the birth of Nicholas.


\(^{37}\) “South Caroliniana Society Honors Meriwether,” *The State (Columbia, SC)*, September 19, 1958. The quotation is from a statement by Caroline McKissick Belser, president of the University South Caroliniana Society.