

Sydney Yost Smith

(28 Nov 1857 – 29 May 1942)

Smith, Sydney Yost. On Friday, May 29, 1942, at his residence, 1724 Upshur st. n.w., Sydney Yost Smith, husband of Beatrice Cridler Smith and father of Mrs. Edward M. Tyler, Lillian Yost Smith and Wilbur Cridler Smith. Services at the above address on Monday, June 1, at 2:30 p.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

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Sydney Yost Smith, 85, Dead; State Department Patriarch

Sydney Yost Smith, 85, whose 61 years' service with the State Department made him an almost legendary figure in Washington official life, died Friday night at his home, 1724 Upshur street N.W.

Mr. Smith, who rose from a \$900-a-year clerk to the \$5,200 job of principal administrative assistant and drafting officer of the department, found his services regarded as indispensable by successive Secretaries of State, who succeeded each two years in securing an extension of his retirement period.

Secretary of State Hull yesterday sent the following letter to Mrs. Smith:

"I have learned with deepest sorrow of the death of your husband. Mr. Smith rendered very helpful services to the State Department with a great public spirit and whole-hearted devotion over a period of many years. His friends and associates will feel a deep sense of persona loss with his passing."

Possessor of a luxurious white beard, Mr. Smith was the patriarch of the State Department. Most Government workers retired at 70. Exempted from enforced retirement, Mr. Smith set a record for continuous service that had no present-day parallel, according to the Civil Service Commission.

He began working for the State Department when it had only two telephones. Picking up the receiver of one of the two phones 61 years ago. Mr. Smith was informed that President Garfield had been shot. Discussing the incident with a reporter last year Mr. Smith said:

"The telephone was new in those days and I didn't know much about how to handle it. On the second day I was working in an anteroom, the telephone rang and I answered it. At first I couldn't make out what they were saying, then I said to Mr. S.A. Brown, the chief clerk. 'It sounds like someone is trying to tell me President Garfield is shot,' Mr. Brown rushed to the telephone, listened a moment and said, 'My God, it's so.' And that was the first word reaching the State Department about President Garfield's assassination."

Mr. Smith concerned himself mainly in recent years with the formalities involved in negotiating, drafting and proclaiming treaties between the United States and other countries.

Native of Washington

Born here November 28, 1857, Mr. Smith as a boy saw the victorious Union Army parade on Pennsylvania avenue at the end of the Civil War. He was educated at Roys Academy and by private tutors. He worked one year in a real estate office, was assistant reporter of the House of Representatives one year, served in the Pension Office one year and was appointed clerk in the State Department.

He became chief of the Diplomatic Bureau in 1897 and held that position until 1918. He was a member of the Board of Examiners for the diplomatic service.

Mr. Smith was disbursing officer at the fourth international conference of American States held at Buenos Aires in 1910 and the Chilean centennial at Santiago, 1910; was drafting expert to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at Paris, 1918-9.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow at the family residence. The Rev. Charles F. Langlands, rector of St. Matthews' Episcopal Church, Seat Pleasant, Md., will officiate.

Interment will be in Congressional Cemetery.

In addition to his widow, Mr. Smith is survived by a son, Wilbur Cridler Smith of Washington; two daughters, Miss Lillian Yost Smith of Washington and Mrs. Edward M. Tyler of Arlington, Va., two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.