

Men of Mark in South Carolina

Ideals of American Life

A Collection of Biographies of Leading Men
of the State

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COOPER, PRESTON SAMUEL, president of the Bank of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, and of the Merchants and Planters bank at Mullins, South Carolina, formerly a wholesale merchant and mayor of Mullins, was born at Cool Spring, Horry county, South Carolina, on the 10th of March, 1870. His father, Noah Bryant Cooper, was a man of wide acquaintance, who, as state tax collector, as treasurer of Kingston parish, South Carolina, from 1861 to 1865, as probate judge of Horry county, South Carolina, as member of the South Carolina house of representatives, and as mayor of Mullins, made a reputation for honesty, perseverance and faithfulness to duty which is an inheritance prized by his sons. Eleven of his grown children came together at the old homestead in August, 1906, to honor the memory of their father; they gathered around the table of their mother and assured her of their loving respect. She was Mrs. Lucinda (Jenerette) Cooper, descended from one of the families of French Huguenots whose exile from their native land did so much to impoverish France. Her ancestors fought in the Revolutionary army. Elias Jenerette, who came to Virginia in 1755, was the great-grandfather of the subject of this sketch. His paternal great-grandfather was John Cooper, who, with his son, Ezekiel, came from Wales in 1761, and both father and son fought in the Continental army during the Revolutionary war.

Reared in the country, Mr. Cooper writes of his boyhood: "I loved flowers, dogs, horses, trading and dreaming." He was taught to do his share of the work about home, in his early boyhood cutting and carrying the wood, feeding and caring for the stock. He attended the elementary schools within reach of his home; but he did not attempt to prepare himself for a college course.

While still a boy he took a place in the mercantile life of Mullins in 1885. His father's business gave him good opportunities to develop that aptitude for trade which he seems to have inherited, and he soon became president of the Cooper & Cooper Wholesale Grocery company, of Wilmington, North Carolina. Later he was chosen cashier of the Bank of Mullins, South Car-

olina until January, 1908, at which time he was elected president of the bank.

His fellow-citizens recognized his enterprise, good judgment and public spirit by electing him mayor of Mullins.

On the 25th of May, 1897, Mr. Cooper married Miss Lela Madge Smith, daughter of B. G. Smith, of Mullins, South Carolina. They have had five children, of whom three are now living.

Brought up in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Mr. Cooper has been heartily identified with the life and work of that church in his native town, and for some years has been superintendent of the Sunday school of the Methodist Episcopal church of Mullins, and is now a steward in the Hyde Park Methodist church at Tampa.

In his political relations he acts and votes with the Democratic party. His favorite forms of amusement and exercise are walking and swimming.

He is a member of the Damascus lodge of Masons; he is treasurer in the Knights of Pythias lodge; he is an Odd Fellow,—a member of the Enterprise lodge of Mullins, South Carolina.

His address is Tampa, Florida.