



Poems of Sidney Lanier

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Poems of Sidney Lanier. Edited by his wife Mary D. Lanier. Sidney Clopton Lanier (February 3, 1842 – September 7, 1881) was an American musician, poet and author. He served in the Confederate army, worked on a blockade running ship for which he was imprisoned (resulting in him catching tuberculosis), taught, worked at a hotel where he gave musical performances, was a church organist, and worked as a lawyer. As a poet he used dialects. He became a flautist and sold poems to publications. He eventually became a university professor and is known for his adaptation of musical meter to poetry. Many schools, other structures and two lakes are named for him. Sidney Clopton Lanier was born February 3, 1842, in Macon, Georgia, to parents Robert Sampson Lanier and Mary Jane Anderson; he was mostly of English ancestry. His distant French Huguenot ancestors immigrated to England in the 16th century fleeing religious persecution. He began playing the flute at an early age, and his love of that musical instrument continued throughout his life. He attended Oglethorpe University, which at the time was near Milledgeville, Georgia, and he was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. He graduated first in his class shortly before the outbreak of the American Civil War. He fought in the American Civil War (1861–65), primarily in the tidewater region of Virginia, where he served in the Confederate signal corps. Later, he and his brother Clifford served as pilots aboard English blockade runners. On one of these voyages, his ship was boarded. Refusing to take the advice of the British officers on board to don one of their uniforms and pretend to be one of them, he was captured. He was incarcerated in a military prison at Point Lookout in Maryland, where he contracted tuberculosis (generally known as "consumption" at the time). He suffered greatly from this disease, then incurable and usually fatal, for the rest of his life.

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