



Henry Timrod was born on December 8, 1828, in Charleston, South Carolina. He studied at the University of Georgia but returned to his hometown due to illness. Although his deceased father had been a poet, it was not an occupation Timrod initially desired. He first became a lawyer while writing poetry on the side but shortly abandoned his law studies to focus the majority of his time on writing and tutoring. Under the pen name “Aglau,” he submitted poems to the *Southern Literary Messenger* from 1848-1853.

Becoming a teacher in 1856 aided him in his writing since one of his students, Katie Godwin, later became his wife and the inspiration for many of his poems. From 1857-1859, Timrod also wrote for *Russell’s Magazine*. Examples of these submissions are “The Arctic Voyager” (April 1857), “Dreams” (May 1857), and “Sonnet: At Last, Beloved Nature” (February 1859).

Henry Timrod is most known for being the poet laureate of the Confederacy. Poor health prevented him from serving as a soldier, but many of his poems, such as “A Cry to Arms,” encouraged young men to enlist. He also used his poetry as a tribute to those fighting for the Southern cause: “The Cotton Boll” and “The Two Armies.” Also, “Carolina” and “Charleston,” both published in 1862, praise the Southern soldier and urge him to defeat the enemy. In short, writing proved to be his most notable contribution to the war effort, and “Ode Sung on the Occasion of Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead, at Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, S.C., 1866” honored all the men who died for a “fallen cause.”

Only a few years after he tried but failed to be a war correspondent, Timrod returned to Columbia and became the editor of *The South Carolinian*. The newspaper office was destroyed during the burning of Columbia, which occurred when the city was occupied by General Sherman’s army in 1865. In 1867, Henry Timrod died in poverty at the age of thirty-eight. He is buried in the churchyard of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. In 1901, a bronze bust of Timrod was dedicated in Charleston, and in 1911, the South Carolina General Assembly chose the verses of “Carolina” to become the lyrics of the state’s official anthem.

-Sarah Marie Williamson

1992 Inductee to the South Carolina Academy of Authors

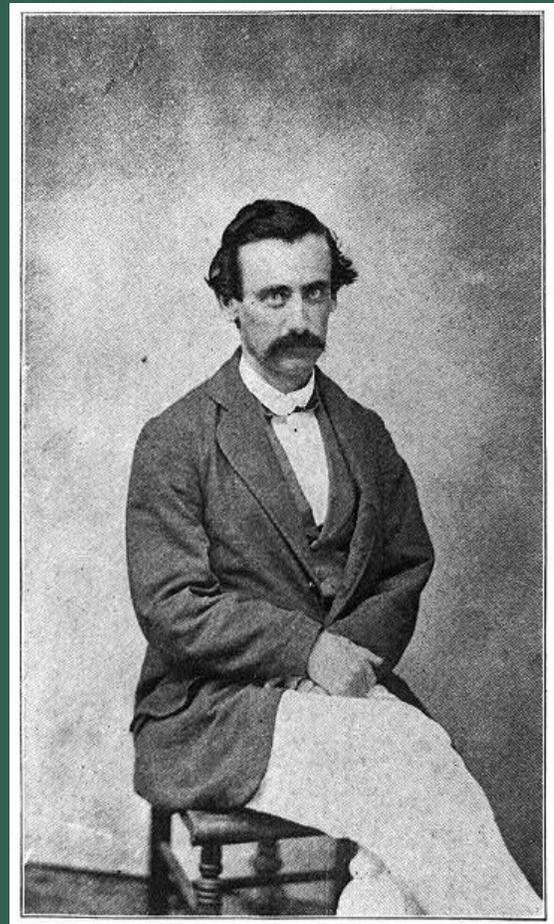


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Henry Timrod