



VIGNETTES OF COASTAL PLAIN GEOLOGY

WILLIAM HEALEY DALL
(1845-1927)

The single greatest name in American Tertiary Paleontology is, without question, William Healey Dall, whose work spanned over seventy years (his last paper was not published until nine years after his death). In his career he introduced over 5,000 molluscan taxa. A study of the choice of specific names is a good indication of the importance to his work in the Coastal Plain, *e.g.*: *chipolana-us* (53), *floridana-us* (33), *caloosaense-is* (16). His first scientific job was as a naturalist in Alaska, where at age 21 he was chosen to replace the director of scientific work, who collapsed from heart failure brought on by overwork and the stress of the expedition. In 1868, at the end of the expedition, he returned to the Smithsonian Institution to work on the collections and write up the results. He was appointed Honorary Curator of the Division of Mollusks and Tertiary Fossils, a post he held until his death in 1927. In 1884 he joined the newly formed U.S. Geological Survey as Paleontologist and it was in this guise that he made his single most important contribution to Coastal Plain Geology – *Contributions to the Tertiary fauna of Florida* (1890-1903, in 6 parts with 1654 pp. and 60 plates). (From P. Bartsch, H. A. Rehder, and B. E. Shields, 1947, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, vol. 104, no. 15)