

MEMORIAL OF FRANK ALONZO WILDER

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With the passing of Frank A. Wilder of North Holston, Virginia, on March 8, 1930, the science of mineralogy has suffered a great loss. With a thorough training in pure science as a background, Dr. Wilder found his most important work in life the applying of science to industry, and his chief contributions have been in the field of economic mineralogy. Possessing rare qualities of leadership his value as an executive was paramount and yet in spite of the exacting demands of industry upon his time he never lost interest in scientific research nor failed to realize its value.

Dr. Wilder was born at Akron, Ohio, February 2, 1870. He graduated from Oberlin College in 1892. After graduation he pursued postgraduate studies at Yale, Freiberg and the University of Chicago, receiving the Ph.D. degree in geology from Chicago in 1902. He was instructor in science in the high school at Fort Dodge, Iowa, from 1894 to 1897, and in the Des Moines, Iowa, high school from 1897 to 1900. He was associate professor of geology in the University of North Dakota during the year 1902-03, and was professor of petrology, economic geology and mining in the State University of Iowa from 1904 to 1906. Dr. Wilder was assistant state geologist of Iowa during 1901 and state geologist from 1904 to 1906, when he resigned to organize and become director of the Southern Gypsum Company, with headquarters at North Holston, Virginia. He remained with this company until 1927 when it was purchased by the Beaver Products Company.

Dr. Wilder was a fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America, of the Geological Society of America, of the Society of Economic Geologists, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a member of the Society of Testing Materials and other learned societies.

Dr. Wilder's best known publication is his monograph entitled, "Gypsum: its Occurrence, Origin, Technology and Uses, with Special Chapters Devoted to Gypsum in Iowa," which was published in Vol. XXVIII of the publications of the Iowa Geological Survey in 1918. This splendid scientific and technological treatise remains to date one of the most, if not the most, complete work on the subject of gypsum ever published and is a fitting monument to the name of a thorough and enthusiastic scientist.

In the preface to his treatise on gypsum Wilder says: "This volume is the outgrowth of an interest in gypsum which has extended over twenty-five years. While the writer was teaching science in the Fort Dodge High School from 1894 to 1897 the gypsum beds furnished a most interesting field for personal study and for class excursions. Later while he was acting as assistant state geologist, the preparation of the report on Webster County was assigned to him, and opportunity was given for further study of the Fort Dodge beds. The Webster County gypsum furnished the theme for a doctor's thesis in 1902. During the past fifteen years an active interest in the industrial applications of gypsum has not lessened interest in the theoretical problems connected with this mineral, while it has led to a study of the literature dealing with its technology and chemistry."

Dr. Wilder was a cultured gentleman of wide learning, high character and great usefulness whose passing will be mourned by many friends. During his short tenure at the State University of Iowa, he made an enviable reputation as teacher and scientist which still remains alive.