

MEMORIAL OF ALJA ROBINSON CROOK

A. J. WALCOTT, *Northwestern University.*

Doctor Alja Robinson Crook was born in Circleville, Ohio, June 17, 1864. His father, Rev. Isaac Crook, was a Methodist minister.

Dr. Crook graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1887. After graduation he held the position of Superintendent of Public Schools, at Mt. Carmel, Ohio, from 1887-1889. From 1889 to 1892 he spent much of his time abroad continuing his scientific preparation. He acquired this preparation by studying in a number of leading Institutions. Among these should be mentioned the British Museum in London, Jardin des Plantes in Paris, University of Zürich and the University of Munich. The degree of doctor of philosophy was conferred upon him by the University of Munich. Dr. Crook pursued his major work for the doctor's degree in the field of paleontology and presented a thesis entitled: "Ueber einige Fossile Knochenfische aus der Mittleren Kreide von Kansas." This was published in *Paleontographica*, Vol. 39, 1892.



Alja R. Crook
1864-1930

After returning to America Dr. Crook served for one year, 1892-93, as professor of natural history at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. In 1893 he came to Northwestern University as professor of mineralogy and petrology. This title was changed to professor of mineralogy and economic geology in 1898. He was head of the department in which he held his professorship. During his first two years at Northwestern University Dr. Crook collaborated with the department of geology by teaching in this department two courses, one in paleontology and one in historical geology.

In the summer of 1906 Dr. Crook was appointed curator of the State Museum of Illinois, which was then housed in one room of the State arsenal. Under his direction the museum expanded very rapidly and it now occupies a large part of the space of the new Centennial building of the State fair grounds.

Since 1917 Dr. Crook has served as chief of the State Museum Division of the Department of Education.

Dr. Crook died at his home in Springfield, Illinois, on the afternoon of May 30, 1930. His death means a great loss to the educational interests of mineralogy. He possessed a great love for minerals and sincerely believed that a study of them was of great cultural value, and that it helped in the preparation for right living. Dr. Crook admired Werner and adopted Werner's methods in teaching mineralogy.

Dr. Crook was a great lover of the out-of-doors. It is said of him that he was an enthusiastic mountain climber. In connection with his teaching he conducted many field excursions. He attended the International Geological Congress when it met in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1897, and brought back from his trip a large number of specimens and photographs. In the summer of 1899 he conducted a party of students to a number of well-known western localities to collect fossils.

After the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, it was largely through his influence that a large portion of the natural history collection was obtained for the museum of Northwestern University.

Dr. Crook was the author of several publications. Among these the *Guide to Mineral Collections* is used as a text in a number of colleges and as a standard reference work in museums. During the year 1914-15 he was president of the Illinois Academy of Science. For a number of years he was instrumental in having the proceedings of the Academy properly arranged and published. He left unfinished a large chart showing the various formations of the earth's crust. For this work he had obtained samples from many parts of the world.

Dr. Crook was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Geological Society of America, Mineralogical Society of America, and a member of the Deutschen Geologischen Gesellschaft, the American Association of Museums and Sigma Xi.