

MEMORIAL OF CHARLES HENRY RICHARDSON

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Professor Charles Henry Richardson died at Syracuse, New York, on September 19, 1935, at the age of 73. He was a fellow and charter member of the Mineralogical Society of America, and until very recent years had been a constant attendant at its annual meetings, from which he always derived a large measure of profit and enjoyment. He was also a fellow of the Geological Society of America, and a member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers.



CHARLES HENRY RICHARDSON
1862-1935

For many years he was professor of mineralogy at Syracuse University, and the enthusiasm and interest with which he endowed his courses were gratefully appreciated by his many students. He was an able mineralogist, but he was better known for his teaching in the theoretical field of the science than for his research, for he chose to employ his knowledge and ability in the fields of applied economic mineralogy and geology, leaving problems of laboratory research to those who had far better facilities at their disposal. He keenly felt the lack of necessary equipment for fundamental research, but with a characteristic optimism directed his energies into active field work. His training in the earth sciences was

broad and varied, and enabled him to bring to his classroom and field work a high degree of collateral knowledge and a wealth of experience.

Doctor Richardson was born in Topsham, Vermont, on September 26, 1862. His childhood was spent amid the rigorous environment and vicissitudes of a small Vermont farm. His early education was fitful at the "little red schoolhouse," where the terms were short and interrupted. At the age of twenty he had never been farther away from home than Montpelier, 18 miles distant, and had never been in either a grammar or a high school. Yet he decided that he wanted a college education and proceeded to lay plans to obtain one. Though his ambition was frowned upon at home, his father subsidized the project with an old valise "that he said he would never want again." With a bare 35 cents in the pockets of his homemade clothes the ambitious boy started out on foot, as uncertain about his destination as he was certain about his goal. He landed at Montpelier Seminary "and registered, I believe, as the greenest country boy ever entering the school." Except for an occasional box from home, he boarded himself, and, as he relates, "I cooked everything I ate, but did not eat everything I cooked. My brown bread crusts were better fitted to hurl on the heads of students three stories below 'nigger heaven' where I roomed."

After four years at Montpelier he went to Bates College at Lewiston, Maine, where there seemed to be more opportunities for earning his way. At Lewiston, whenever the need for cash exceeded his meager income, he would sell a short story to one of the typical "home-and-fireside" magazines of the day. Later in his college career he occupied pastorates in nearby churches. After three years of work a period of serious illness ended his studies at Bates and he returned home to recuperate. In January, 1891, he entered Dartmouth College, for which purpose he was able to borrow some money. During the period at Dartmouth he served as supply preacher in local country churches. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1892 with special honors.

On June 16, 1892, he married Katharine May Davis of Corinth, Vermont, also a graduate of Montpelier Seminary. They had one child, a daughter, Evelyn Dee.

Upon graduation from Dartmouth he was appointed principal of Black River Academy, at Ludlow, Vermont, and next year was called to the principalship of Green Mountain Academy at Waterbury, Vermont.

It is not clear when he began to take a particular interest in minerals and rocks. To a boy of his ambitions, brought up among the rocky hills of the Green Mountain State there must have come an early questioning. Perhaps a long dormant interest was aroused on the numerous

hikes when, as Academy principal, he led a little band of his pupils up the rugged slopes of his beloved Green Mountain peaks, Mt. Mansfield and Camel's Hump, and tried, as he records, to answer their eager questionings. At any rate he returned to Dartmouth for graduate work in chemistry and geology. Although his teaching fellowship, which he held for three years, was in chemistry, he definitely entered the field of geology under the tutelage of Prof. C. H. Hitchcock, and in 1898 presented a dissertation, "The terranes of Orange County, Vermont," for which he received the degree of doctor of philosophy. Four years later he spent a semester at the University of Chicago studying under T. C. Chamberlain, R. D. Salisbury, and J. P. Iddings. In 1906 he spent half a year at Johns Hopkins University.

From 1898 to 1906 he was an instructor in chemistry at Dartmouth College, with some work in mineralogy and geology. In 1906 he was appointed assistant professor of mineralogy at Syracuse University, and in 1909 became professor and head of the newly established department of mineralogy at that institution. In 1933 he was retired as professor emeritus but was given the privilege of continuing to teach one course in mineralogy. He greatly appreciated this permission for he loved the contacts that teaching affords. He has said many times "The saddest thing to me is the fact that we must grow old and lose somewhat the contact with youth."

He was an honored member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and served prominently for many years as chairman of the national scholarship committee. He felt honored by election to membership in fourteen scientific, professional, and honorary fraternities, but probably his greatest gratification came in 1932 when he was given an honorary degree of Doctor of Science by Norwich University.

In the course of his professional experience he examined many mining properties in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. His chief interests lay, however, in the geological problems of Vermont, and for forty years he served as a geologist on the Vermont Geological Survey. In this capacity he made his greatest contribution to the science, for he recognized the Ordovician age of certain formations of eastern Vermont, and traced them and the contact with beds of probable Cambrian age from the Canadian boundary to the Massachusetts line. His finding of certain graptolites in the northern part of the State established the age of the beds, and his mapping has laid the foundation for later work on the stratigraphy and structure of the metamorphic belt in eastern Vermont.

His professional writings numbered 45 titles, chiefly in areal geology and non-metallic mineral resources. In addition to this bibliography are 32 published titles relating to education, fraternity problems, book

reviews, and museum reports. Short stories, and an as yet unpublished book of verses entitled "Songs of a Scientist" complete the list of his authorship.

Doctor Richardson lived a full and varied life. The hardships he had undergone in his earlier days served only to increase his helpful and sympathetic understanding of others. He was tolerant almost to a fault. He was a conscientious citizen. A man of integrity, with fine ideals, and unselfish; devoted to his family, and thoughtful of his friends; beloved teacher and adviser, his passing will be felt by many, and memory of him will live in their hearts.

He was buried among the hills of his beloved Vermont.

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