

MEMORIAL OF GEORGE STEIGER

JOSEPH J. FAHEY, *U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

After a long period of poor health, death brought to a close the fruitful career of George Steiger on April 18, 1944, in Washington, D. C. His passing preceded by only ten hours that of his lifelong friend and co-worker, Dr. Roger C. Wells.

Steiger was born in Columbia, Pa., on May 27, 1869. His family soon after moved to Washington, D. C., where he attended the public schools and received the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in 1890 and 1892, respectively, from Columbian College, now George Washington University.

He joined the staff of the United States Geological Survey as a chemist in 1892, just before the drastic curtailment of personnel due to a greatly reduced appropriation. In addition to Chief Chemist, Professor F. W. Clarke, George Steiger and W. F. Hillebrand were the only chemists retained, because, as Steiger later remarked "Hillebrand was the best chemist and he (Steiger) was the lowest paid."

In 1916 Steiger became Chief Chemist and held that position until 1930, when at his own request he was relieved of the duties of administration in order to devote all of his time to research in the field of spectrography. This he continued for several years after his retirement from active service in 1939 until a rapidly worsening heart condition made it necessary for him to terminate completely his professional activity.

George Steiger's chief interest was in precise chemical analytical work. His superb laboratory technique made possible his many high quality rock and mineral analyses which have enriched the literature over a period of almost four decades. His bibliography records the work of a great chemist, but it throws no light on the inestimable help he gave to others, particularly to his younger associates, in solving their laboratory problems. His kindly counsel was at all times available and most frequently sought. Neither does his bibliography record the immense amount of analytical data he furnished, especially the long series of rock analyses for numerous geologists.

Steiger remained a bachelor throughout his life. Until failing health in his later years forced upon him curtailment of physical activity, he long had been a devotee of pursuits that brought him in close contact with the woods and waters around Washington. Chief among these was boating. He was the proud owner of a houseboat and several motor-driven boats, which were berthed on the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and on the Potomac River. A charter member of the Sycamore



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Island Boat Club, he was ever ready to tell of his experiences camping and boating along the waterways around Washington.

He described (with Larsen) sulphatic cancrinite and the new chlorite griffithite. The mineral steigerite, a hydrous aluminum vanadate, was named in his honor.

He was a charter member of the Geological Society of Washington, founded in 1892, and a member of the American Chemical Society for more than fifty years. He also was a Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the Washington Academy of Sciences, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, and the Cosmos Club.

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