MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM FREDERICK FOSHAG

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Early Monday morning, May 21, 1956, Bill, as William Frederick Foshag was best known to his host of friends and admirers, peacefully passed on, at the age of 62, as a result of too high blood pressure, in the home that he and Mrs. Foshag had planned and built in Westmoreland Hills, Maryland, just outside of the District of Columbia.

He was born on March 17, 1894, at Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York. As a boy, his interest in things geologic was aroused by a neighboring physician's extensive library of books on geology. Later, his parents moved to California where Bill entered the University of California and chose chemistry as his major subject. While an undergraduate, he worked in the laboratory of the Riverside Portland Cement Company, 1917–1918, where his love for minerals was greatly intensified by close contact with the wonderful Crestmore occurrences.

Events moved quickly for him in the next few years: A.B. (Chemistry), 1919; Ph.D., 1923, University of California; assistant curator of mineralogy, U. S. National Museum, 1919; associate editor, American Mineralogist, 1920; and, in 1923, marriage to Merle Crisler who, with their son, William Frederick Foshag, 3rd, survives him. In 1929, Dr. Foshag became Curator of the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology, and in 1948, Head Curator of the Department of Geology, U. S. National Museum. During these years, both the Roebling and Canfield mineral collections, accompanied by substantial financial endowments, were given to the Museum largely as a result of his efforts. The collection of cut and uncut gemstones has also been greatly augmented by his constant endeavors.

In addition to his heavy duties as Curator in the United States National Museum, Dr. Foshag conducted investigations and published many papers on mineralogy, petrology, meteoritics, gemology, volcanology, and collateral subjects. His bibliography numbers more than one hundred published papers and includes descriptions of thirteen new minerals. Though not very robust physically, he always kept up with the best of us in the field. Much of his time was spent studying and collecting at various mineral localities in Mexico, as well as in the United States, until a few years ago when a weakened heart called for severe curtailment of field activities. As part of his Mexican work, he studied and described the cornfield volcano, Parícutin, from its birth in 1943 to its end. His report thereon, written in conjunction with Jenaro González, appeared two months before his death, as U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 965-D. His analyses of the fumarolic gases and minerals from the volcano

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remain unfinished. Also incomplete is a large report on the minerals of Mexico, as well as a comprehensive report on saline borate minerals. It is hoped that these will be put in shape for publication.

In 1946, four months were spent in Japan supervising the grading, classification, and appraisal for the United States Government of many million dollars worth of diamonds, which had been given by the Japanese people to the Japanese Government to aid its war effort. Shortly thereafter, a study of ancient jade objects found in Central America was made for the Government of Guatemala.

For his meritorious achievements in the mineralogic sciences, Dr. Foshag was awarded the Washington A. Roebling Medal of the Mineralogical Society of America in 1953. In addition to being a charter fellow in our Society, he had also held several offices—associate editor, councilor, vice-president, and president (in 1940). Many of the details of his accomplishments and of his wide interest in earth science are given by Professor Edward H. Kraus in the written record of the Roebling Medal presentation (*American Mineralogist*, vol. 39, 293–295, 1954). Another glowing tribute to Dr. Foshag and his work was placed in the Congressional Record two days after his death by the Honorable H. Alexander Smith, Senator of New Jersey and member of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

On the occasion of the Roebling Medal presentation, Foshag also received a well merited tribute from the Geological Institute of Mexico and from his numerous Mexican colleagues, many of whom he had helped to train, always, as stated in the tribute, "giving his valuable time with unstinting cheerfulness." This last statement, it seems to the writer, carries a thought that is believed to outweigh in actual worth his many accomplishments. Bill had a concept, not held by all curators, that a museum and its contents served best when all facilities were extended to competent applicants. To him, any specimen, no matter how rare or valuable, was most useful when it was fully available for study, and many of us and many institutions have benefited greatly by this wise policy. And always, he was "giving his valuable time with unstinting cheerfulness," whether it was a desired specimen, or an interpretation of a chemical analysis, or a discussion of any phase of mineralogy, or related matters.

Bill and I had much in common—the same teachers in Berkeley (Walter C. Blasdale, Arthur S. Eakle, Andrew C. Lawson), the same love for minerals, for discussions on genetic processes, for talking about California, and many other topics. He had spoken about retiring before his proverbial three score and ten and the Foshags had made tentative retirement plans. His sudden death leaves a great void in our hearts and long will we miss his "unstinting cheerfulness."

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