

Memorial of David Edward Jensen June 25, 1909–March 14, 1983

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David Edward Jensen, a life member and Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America, died March 14, 1983. He had been in ill health for more than a year. About two weeks before his death he suffered a fall in his home, and spent his final days in the hospital.

He had worked with rocks and minerals all of his adult life at Ward's Natural Science Establishment, retiring in 1974 after a 44-year career. He was first employed by that company when he was a graduate student at the University of Rochester. His first job was helping to clean up after a fire; when he retired he was a director and vice-president.

David was born June 25, 1909 on the family farm. His great grandparents had acquired the lakeshore property in 1823. It was on the east side of Keuka Lake, two miles south of Penn Yan, New York. He always had a speech defect and when he was six months old the family took him to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for major surgery.

His mother had spent a year at Wellesley College planning to become an English instructor. Because of family financial problems she was unable to complete her college education, and she was determined that David would get an education. He was tutored at home and when he was eight he was enrolled in a public school. His mother constantly encouraged him to observe nature and record his observations of what he saw or heard on his walks to and from school. By the time he was in high school he was making daily records of weather, plants, migrating birds and other items of interest.

In September 1926 he entered Cornell University having won a full tuition scholarship. In his second year he elected chemistry, which then became his major interest. In his junior and senior years he was placed in charge of the chemistry stockrooms.

He enrolled in an introductory course in geology, taught by Dr. Heinrich Ries; the lab instructor was Gerard Megathlin, who later became head of the department at SUNY in Geneseo. His mineralogy instructor was A. C. Gill who had studied with Dr. Rosenbusch in Germany. He took a course in ornithology taught by Dr. Arthur A. Allen, who was developing the now famous ornithology lab at Cornell. For some time David thought seriously of going into that program for a career.

In 1922 the Jensen family sold some lake frontage



which was acquired about five years later by Dr. Harold L. Alling of the University of Rochester geology department. Alling, through casual visits with his young neighbor, learned about his interest in geology and encouraged him to do graduate work at Rochester.

A visit to the department was arranged in the summer of 1928, and Alling asked one of his graduate students to show Jensen around. Carnegie Hall, one of the buildings he visited, was across the street from Ward's Natural Science Establishment, and the guide took him over and introduced him to Mr. Hawley Ward, a cousin of the founder, and George Letchworth English, the mineralogist.

Let me digress for a moment to give some background about Ward's.

Henry A. Ward started collecting when he was three years old. His family lived about a half mile east of the falls of the Genesee River. In clearing the land for a building site workers piled stones along the boundary of the property. Henry saw a gray and black banded pebble

and took it into the house. The company which he founded had it on display as recently as ten years ago. By the time he was seventeen he had prospected the entire Genesee valley. Matriculating at Williams College in 1851 he explored the Connecticut valley and collected specimens for himself and the college. Later he joined Professor Louis Agassiz in the laboratories at Harvard. In 1854 Ward went to the School of Mines in Paris. Collecting trips around the continent were made between sessions and soon extended to Egypt, Arabia, and the Nile. His collection included more than 40,000 items.

In the fall of 1860 Ward became professor of Natural Science at the University of Rochester. His European collection was purchased for the University of Rochester with money raised by popular subscription. Vassar College heard about it and ordered from him a complete geological cabinet in 1862. Ward kept busy.

In 1893 a train of freight cars was hired to take Ward's exhibit to the World's Fair in Chicago. Marshall Field purchased the entire exhibit and it became the Field Museum,—which is now the Chicago Museum of Natural History.

A few years later George L. English joined Ward's as head of the mineral department. Ward's employed many widely known people. Among them were osteologists, artists, paleontologists; Carl Akely who did the taxidermy for the African elephant at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City; R. Bruce Horsfall and Charles R. Knight made paintings and restorations of prehistoric animals.

Ward's was a famous and historic place.

In 1927 the University of Rochester acquired the establishment as a legacy, and operated it as the Frank A. Ward Foundation. On September 30, 1930 the building caught fire, resulting in great damage and Jensen was one of the people to get temporary employment, helping to clean up.

In 1931 he was hired to work in the osteology department. In 1934 the firm was acquired by F. Hawley Ward, a cousin of the Founder, and Dr. Dean L. Gamble. Gamble devised new methods for processing specimens, and he soon revitalized the biological department. At this time Jensen was named assistant mineralogist, and Gamble encouraged him to write about minerals and related topics. Many of these articles were published in Ward's catalogs or in Ward's Natural Science Bulletin.

In the late thirties Jensen developed a collection of 100 American rocks to be used for teaching purposes, and wrote a manual to go with the set. This was followed by the development of sets of colored slides and film strips to use in teaching about rocks and minerals.

His wife, Kay, (they had met at a meeting of the mineral section of the Rochester Academy of Science and were married April 12, 1941) was a great help to him in this effort. Born in Ontario, Wayne County, east of Rochester, she had come to the city to attend business school. Her first employment was with the film process-

ing division of the Eastman Kodak Co. The company was developing color film and she was handed rolls of film and told to use them. She enrolled in a number of photography classes offered by the company and became a skilled photographer, especially of minerals. Before long Ward's had an audio-visual department that was grossing a million a year.

After 44 years at Ward's, Jensen retired in 1974. He enjoyed travel, and retirement made it possible to spend more time at it. Wherever he went Kay accompanied him, renewing acquaintances and making new friends.

In his lifetime he was a member of many organizations. He joined the Rochester Academy of Science in 1936 and served as recorder of the Mineral Section, Councilor, and Vice-president. He was elected a Fellow in 1949. He was a member of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland; a charter member of the American Crystallographic Association; a member of the Walker Mineralogical Club; the Geological Society of America, named a Fellow in 1967.

Other affiliations were the Mineralogical Society of Pennsylvania; Fellow of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences; Regional Vice-president, American Gem and Mineral Buyers Association; member of the Geological Section, Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences; member of the Meteoritical Society; charter member of the Mineralogical Association of Canada.

He served as a member of the Curriculum Advisory Committee of the Rochester Public Schools. He was a member of the Geochemical Society; chairman of the Nomenclature Committee and a Director of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. He was active in the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, serving as a general show chairman in 1968-69, Vice-president in 1972, and President in 1973. In 1973 he was named a Research Associate by the Buffalo Museum of Science. That same year he was program director of the "Wildacres Workshop" at Little Switzerland, North Carolina, and 1975 he was co-director of that program. He was an active participant in developing the annual Mineral Symposium of the Rochester Academy of Science. He was a director and member of the executive committee of the Friends of Mineralogy, and Vice-president of that organization.

His first book, *My Hobby is Collecting Rocks and Minerals*, was published in 1955. In 1958 he completed the revision of *Getting Acquainted with Minerals* by George L. English. *Minerals of New York State* appeared in 1975 and *In My Time—Memoirs* came from the press in March 1983.

He and Kay had no children—just a lot of friends. At the funeral service in the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsford, N.Y. the Reverend Richard L. Kesler paraphrased some verses from the Book of Ecclesiastes, reflecting the feelings of many of us, and concluded by saying "We are grateful that we were able to share in the life of this good and gentle man".