# Memorial to Reuben Clare Coffin
## 1886-1972

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Reuben Clare Coffin passed away in Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 10, 1972, after a brief illness. His death in his 86th year ended a long and distinguished geological career. Among his many accomplishments, he made notable contributions to science in the application of geological interpretation of geophysical data. His endeavors encompassed many minerals, in addition to petroleum, and he was continually in search of new methods and improving those methods in use. The enthusiasm with which he entered into all of his activities was an inspiration to his many friends and colleagues.

Clare was born October 29, 1886, in Longmont, Colorado, into a pioneer family. In 1866 his father, Reuben Coffin, a Civil War veteran, crossed the plains from Illinois in a horsedrawn wagon and established the Walnut Grove farm near Longmont, which remained the family home for forty-three years. He was married in 1877 to Lydia Evangeline Gregg who had arrived by stagecoach from Hebron, Ohio. Clare was the fourth of six children, five of whom attended college and became leaders in their community.

Northern Colorado was pioneer country in Clare's boyhood. He had access to mountainous areas and large open spaces, of which he took full advantage. His attraction to earth science started at an early age. He attended Longmont elementary and high schools where he was an excellent student and an active participant in athletics. He later coached the Longmont teams in track and football. He enrolled at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1905 where he continued to excel in academic work and athletics. He received the bachelor's degree in 1909. In 1950 Colorado University awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Following his graduation, Clare remained in Boulder for eleven years. He joined the staff of the Colorado Geological Survey, and, by 1915, had become Assistant State Geologist while also an instructor in geology at the University. As a student in the geological department, I can well remember the inspired approach he displayed in encouraging enthusiasm for geology.

In June 1920 Clare accepted a position as geologist on the staff of the Midwest Refining Company in Denver. He was placed in charge of field work in the western Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico regions. His knowledge of this area qualified him as an authority. He had previously published much of his findings concerning uranium ore deposits in state bulletins, and this new position gave him the opportunity to use this knowledge in the search for oil. In the spring of 1926 he became Chief Geologist of the Midwest Refining Company. During his seven years in this position, the company carried on aggressive exploration in the Rocky Mountain region, western Kansas, and

northwestern Texas. His early and active interest in geophysical methods was rewarded in the discovery of Hobbs Field in New Mexico, located after a wide regional magnetometer survey. The Hudson Pool in Kansas, as well as company acquisition of leases in numerous areas which became oil productive, were accomplishments of this period. He introduced the use of the torsion balance into the Rocky Mountain region soon after it became an important tool in the Gulf Coast region.

The operations of the Midwest Refining Company were curtailed because of the depressed conditions of 1932 and 1933, which applied in full measure to the Rocky Mountain region. In 1933 the company was merged with the Stanolind Oil and Gas companies, both subsidiaries of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. Clare moved to the Tulsa headquarters and remained in charge of Stanolind's geological work in the northern region of the United States and as consultant in the geological aspects of all geophysical activities. In 1940 he became manager of the newly formed Geophysical Department. His chief interests as always were in the science of methods of discovery and so in 1942 he became coordinator in the geological interpretation of geophysical data, a relatively new endeavor at that time. He continued in this capacity until his retirement at age 65 in 1951. However, the value of his work was such that, as a special case, he was retained by Stanolind on a consulting basis for the following ten years. Thereafter, he established his own office and was very successful as a consultant in the geological interpretation of geophysical data. He interpreted data sent to him from many regions of the world and was still actively engaged in this work at the time of his death.

Clare and Jessica Edmonds were married in Boulder, Colorado, in August 1914—a long and happy marriage which lasted fifty-two years. Jessie passed away in February 1966 after an extended illness. They are survived by two daughters, Mrs. Betty Clare Hiller of Muskogee, Oklahoma, and Mrs. Barbara Ann Thiele of Arvada, Colorado, and five grandchildren.

In addition to his fellowship in The Geological Society of America, Clare was an Honorary Member and Past President of the Tulsa Geological Society, an Honorary Member of Sigma Gamma Epsilon, a member of Sigma Xi, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the American Geophysical Union, the Society of Economic Geologists, and Sigma Nu social fraternity. The uranium mineral Coffinite is named for him.

An insight into Clare's thoughts and philosophy of exploration can best be understood by a quote from the conclusion of one of his writings:

> Let the geologist roam with his imagination within this zone of conjecture and speculation; provide him with the tools now available with which to improve his data; encourage him to reduce his visionary solution of problems to maps; help him keep his geologic wits at a high pitch; and he will be the first to recognize any new evidence, and thus remove his geologic possibilities from this "twilight zone" into the class of geologic realities.

Clare Coffin truly lived a full and useful life, and the world is better for his having been here.

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