

Memorial to Harold MacColl Bannerman

1897-1976

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Harold Bannerman was a widely recognized economic geologist. At first meeting, one sensed that this man had secure confidence in his own judgments. Yet, at the same time, it was manifest that this confidence was fully balanced by his innate modesty. The product of these two traits gave Harold a quiet dignity that won him immediate respect among his associates. Beyond these traits he had a wisdom founded on the belief that understanding was the prime factor of knowledge, whether in human affairs or within the realms of science. Without that guide of understanding few judgments were likely to be sound. This philosophy colored all his teaching and many will remember him as an effective teacher. All who knew him found him to be a man of unwavering integrity, who was

both wise and humane and possessed of a keen sense of humor. Harold enjoyed an animated discussion and commonly took the role of being the "devil's advocate," which would assure that both junior members and minor opinions got their just share of attention.

He liked history and saw in it a source of values and a guide to action. Many times he showed impatience when men in positions of leadership paid little heed to the principles expressed by their forefathers or the wise and courageous actions they took.

Born in Barney's River, Nova Scotia, Harold served in the Canadian Army in England and in France during World War I. He also attended Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, where he received his B.S. in 1924. Bannerman began his career as a research fellow in 1926 at Princeton University, where, in the following year, he also received M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. He became a citizen of the United States on May 13, 1936.

From 1927 to 1930 he was an assistant geologists with the Geological Survey of Canada. During the years 1931 to 1942 Bannerman was a consultant to both the United States and Canadian governments. He was also a member of the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission from 1942 to 1968 and at member of the United States Materials Advisory Board from 1957 to 1962. He served in many other advisory capacities. They included the council of advisors in the Department of Geology at Princeton University (1949-1954); the Department of Geology and Geophysics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1955-1957); an advisor on education in Earth sciences for the United States Operations Mission to Brazil, and the Committee on Geologic Education in the Department of Education and Culture, for the government of Brazil. He was, for a time, representative of the United States Department of the Interior to Brookings Institution as the science executive in government, and from 1954 to 1966 he was a member of the board of directors of the Economic Geology Publishing Company, and president of the board from 1958 to 1966.

In 1927 he joined the faculty of Dartmouth as professor of geology and taught there until the United States entered World War II. He left Dartmouth in the spring of 1942 to join the U.S. Geological Survey's effort in the search for strategic minerals. In that effort he did a distinguished job on pegmatites, the source rocks of beryl, sheet mica, and other minerals—all basic materials for industrial and military uses. In 1944 he was named the Survey's Assistant Chief Geologist for Economic Geology.

One of his happiest and most useful activities while in this office was to repair and build up a spirit of friendly cooperation with the state geological surveys so that both state and federal surveys worked toward a common, national goal. In other constructive ways he improved the Survey's effectiveness in helping industry with its mineral supply problems. Much of Bannerman's effort was directed toward programming and coordinating the Geologic Division's work. Many times he served as Acting Chief Geologist. During the 1950s he conducted several geologic mapping investigations in the northern part of the Adirondack Mountains of New York State.

When he retired from the U.S. Geological Survey in 1967, the family moved to Middletown, Connecticut. He continued his career as a consulting geologist and became an adjunct professor of geology at Wesleyan University where he taught economic geology to graduate students. Repeatedly he served as Acting State Geologist of Connecticut; indeed, he was serving for a year while Joe Peoples was on sabbatical leave from Wesleyan.

Bannerman was awarded an honorary A.M. degree from Dartmouth College in 1934, an honorary LL.D. from St. Francis Xavier University (Canada) in 1953, and an honorary D.Sc. degree from Acadia University in 1955. In 1959 he received the Department of Interior's Distinguished Service Award.

He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, the American Mineralogical Society, the Geological Association of Canada, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was secretary and past president of the Society of Economic Geologists, and a member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the North American Arctic Institute, the Mineralogical Association of Canada, and the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C., of which he was for some time a member of the board of managers.

Harold Bannerman died suddenly at his home on October 30, 1976. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Harriet McIntosh Bannerman, 509 Coleman Road, Middletown, Connecticut, and their daughter Elspeth Jean Bannerman, who teaches in New Canaan, Connecticut.

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