

Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science

Volume 55 | Annual Issue

Article 5

1948

In Memoriam: Ewen M. McEwen; Neil Alden Miner; Homer H. Plagge; Harry Wyatt Richey

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1948 Iowa Academy of Science, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias>

Recommended Citation

(1948) "In Memoriam: Ewen M. McEwen; Neil Alden Miner; Homer H. Plagge; Harry Wyatt Richey," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 55(1), 39-47.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol55/iss1/5>

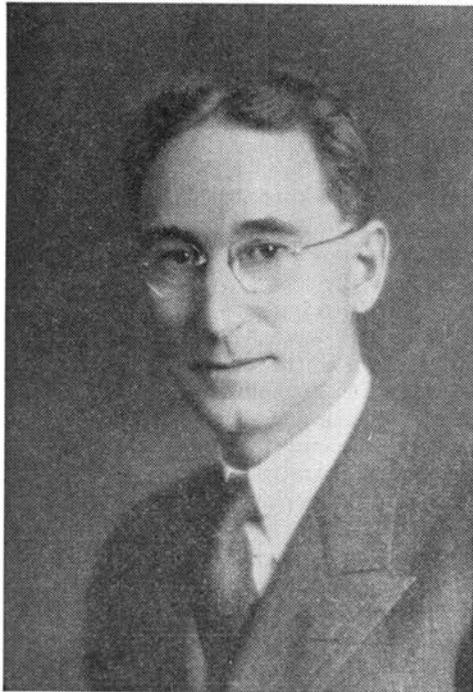
This General Interest Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa Academy of Science at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science by an authorized editor of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

IN MEMORIUM

Dean Ewen M. McEwen

1885-1947

After a few months illness occurred on September 3rd, 1947, the death of Ewen Murchison MacEwen, Dean of the College of Medicine, State University of Iowa. Born on Prince Edward Island on September 16th, 1885, he came to the States with his parents when



Dean Ewen M.
McEwen

a boy of fourteen years. After a year spent in Omaha, Nebraska, the family settled in Battle Creek, Iowa, where young MacEwen completed his high school course. After spending a year at Buena Vista College and one at Parsons he completed his collegiate work at Coe College. He graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in the spring of 1907. The following year was spent as a teacher of general science in the High School at Hampton, Iowa.

From early life MacEwen's ambition had been to enter the medical profession and so after one year of high school teaching it became possible for him to start his medical training. He entered the College of Medicine, State University of Iowa in September 1908. As a freshman student he came under the influence of Dr. H. J.

Prentiss, then Professor of Anatomy, and this contact played a major role in mapping his future career. During his student days he kept in close contact with the anatomical department and upon his graduation from the Medical College in 1912 he accepted an instructorship in anatomy. Thus began his activity in the field of medical education.

By 1920 he had advanced by successive steps to a full Professorship and on the death of Doctor Prentiss in 1931 his appointment as Head of the Anatomical Department was evidence of his success as a teacher and of the esteem and confidence in which he was held by the faculty.

During his teaching period Professor MacEwen did a great deal of anatomical research, giving special attention to the development of anatomical structures and to anomalies of form and position. He, however, published only a few papers. The two most important ones being entitled, "Development of the tooth and alveolus" and "Orbital Variations". The first of these two papers was presented as a thesis for the Master of Science degree which he obtained in 1915. As a major part of his contribution to the field of anatomy one must include the men who were drawn into this field under his teaching. Three of these men became heads of departments of anatomy in other Medical Colleges.

Doctor MacEwen had served as head of the department of anatomy only a few years when he was called to the greater responsibilities of the Deanship of the College, which position he took on July 1st, 1935. For a while he maintained a part of his teaching program, but soon the problems and responsibilities both within and without the College were so many that he was forced to devote all his time and energy to administrative duties.

Early in his administration as Dean, Doctor MacEwen took an active part in the affairs of the Association of American Medical Colleges, and his understanding and leadership in Medical education won him the Presidency of this national organization in 1943 and in the following year the Chairmanship of the Executive Committee of the Association, a position he held until his death.

Dean MacEwen was a member of the Iowa State Medical Society, the Iowa Academy of Science, the American Medical Association, the American Association for Advancement of Science, the American Association of Physical Anthropology, the American Association of Anatomists, the honor medical fraternity of Alpha Omega Alpha, and the science society of Sigma Xi. In 1913 Doctor MacEwen was married to Hazel Martha Hayward, who survives him, as do two daughters, Mrs. Helen Bauer of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Marion Devine of Iowa City.

It was to the field of Medical Education that Dean MacEwen gave most of his time and energy and his contributions brought him national recognition as a leader. A broad understanding of the problems of medical education, a deep concern for high scholarship and honesty in medical practice were guide posts in his teaching

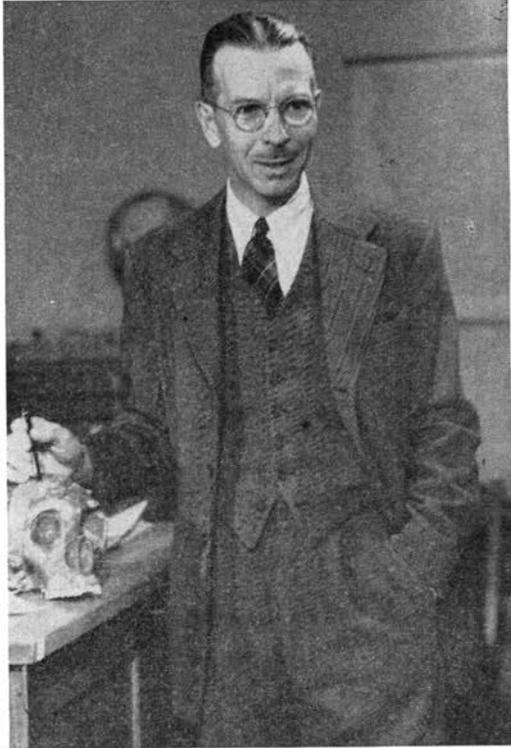
and administrative duties. His period of activity covered the troublesome time of war and its early aftermath but his fearless strength at a time when it was most needed revealed him to be capable of strong leadership. He did an enormous service to the schools of medicine of this country in his leadership for the maintenance of high standards during a most difficult period.

JNO. M. MCCLINTOCK,
Iowa City.

Neil Alden Miner

1898-1947

Neil A. Miner, geologist and humanist, teacher and naturalist, and Professor of Geology at Cornell College, died at his home in Mount Vernon, Iowa, September 16, 1947. His last two years of life were an epic of human courage and determination. We know that Doctor Miner realized his life was fast ebbing away; yet his enthusiasm and humor persisted to the end. Until the last few hours of his life,



Neil Alden Miner

he never gave up hope that he might somehow survive the dread disease, leukemia,

Neil Miner was born at Saranac Lake, New York, September 9, 1898, and spent his boyhood there. He attended the local grade school, later enrolling in Goddard Seminary, a private secondary school, from which he graduated in 1917. He entered Syracuse University in the fall of 1917, but his education was interrupted in his senior year by the death of his father. Neil unselfishly postponed his education to carry on his father's highly specialized business as a taxidermist and furrier. Eleven years later he was able to return to Syracuse. His valuable experience as a taxidermist led to his appoint-

ment, while still an undergraduate, to the staff of the Syracuse University Natural Science Museum. Later he advanced to the directorship of the Museum. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse in 1932 and his Master of Arts degree from there in 1934. During the summer of 1933 he served as geologist on the Syracuse University Gaspé Expedition. He then entered the University of Iowa where he received his doctorate in 1937. While at Iowa, he served as graduate assistant to the late Dean Kay, his major field being Pleistocene Geology. He served as a Ranger-Naturalist in Yellowstone Park during the summers from 1935 to 1939.

In the fall of 1937, Doctor Miner came to Cornell as Instructor in Geology. He was head of the Department of Geology, ranking successively as Instructor, Assistant Professor and Professor. While at Cornell, he served as assistant secretary and secretary of the faculty and as secretary and president of the Science Club. Doctor Miner was the founder and director of the very successful summer geology field camp, Camp Norton, which is located in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming.

Doctor Miner was a member of the Geological Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Iowa Academy of Science, the Society of Sigma Xi, and the College Teachers Association which he was instrumental in founding. He served recently as president of the Cornell chapter of the American Association of University Professors. He was a member of the official board of the Mount Vernon Methodist Church.

Doctor Miner was married in 1934 to Gertrude Shell of Sibley, Iowa. Their home life was shared by a daughter, Janet, and two sons, Richard and Allen.

Neil's remarkable personality endeared him to all who came in contact with him. His buoyancy and humor, his enthusiasm for natural science and his intense interest in each of his students as a person, attracted many to his classroom. His courses always emphasized the human angle, for his love of people could not be held out by the cold barrier of scientific fact and figure. Cornell students regarded him as a friend. Here was a professor they could talk to as man to man. No problem was ever too insignificant or too difficult for his consideration, if a student could be helped. Undoubtedly he made his greatest contribution to the science of geology through his students, many of whom have made superior records in graduate study and in industry. His community was very much a part of his life. His cheery greetings and his fondness for a few friendly words endeared him to all who knew him. One of his young neighbors summed up Neil Miner's personality in these simple words, "He was a great fixer."

HERBERT E. HENDRIKS,
Mount Vernon.

Homer H. Plagge

1894-1947

Dr. Homer H. Plagge passed away very suddenly on June 5, while attending a food conference at Ames. Homer was born at Barrington, Illinois, May 12, 1894. He came to Ames and graduated in Forestry in 1916 with the degree of Bachelor of Science. In 1917 he accepted a fellowship in Plant Physiology and earned the degree



Homer H. Plagge

of Master of Science in 1919. He then in 1920 joined the staff of the Pomology Subsection in the Horticulture Department. He continued his studies and earned the Ph.D. degree in 1932. He remained continuously with the department from 1920 until his death in 1947. During this period he conducted the cold storage investigations, and when locker storage plants needed help, took up a study of the frozen food field. His work in cold storage and in frozen food research was widely known, and he was regarded as an authority in the cold storage of apples and in the frozen food industry as it is related to locker plants. A few weeks before his death, Doctor Plagge had accepted an appointment to head a new department of Food Technology at the University of Georgia.

Doctor Plagge was a most careful worker and conducted his research work in a most meticulous manner. He took a deep personal interest in his work and gave it his best. His ingenuity, patience and ability to give close attention to detail gave character to his work.

Homer leaves a good heritage. He always gave inspiration to his

associates, and his students found in him the inspiration and the determination that impelled them to put their best into their studies.

Doctor Plagge was a member of Chi Phi social fraternity and three honor societies—Sigma XI, scientific; Phi Kappa Phi, scholastic; and Gamma Sigma Delta, agriculture. He also belonged to a number of state and national professional societies and on many occasions appeared on their programs.

Homer maintained high ethical standards, was a loved and respected colleague, neighbor, churchman, brother and husband—"not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" and his fellow men—that is his contribution.

Homer Plagge was buried June 9, in the college cemetery. It is a very beautiful spot and in it sleep a worthy company of Homer's friends and associates.

B. S. PICKET.

Harry Wyatt Richey

1890-1947

Harry Wyatt Richey was born April 30, 1890, at Norwich, Ohio. He obtained his bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska in 1914. During the same year he joined the staff of the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State College as an instructor. In 1916 he went to the University of West Virginia, and two years later to the Uni-



Harry Wyatt Richey

versity of Maryland. He advanced rapidly in both teaching and research in these institutions and in 1921 was recalled to Iowa State College as Professor of Horticulture and personal assistant to the late Professor S. A. Beach, former head of the department. Before returning to Iowa State, Professor Richey augmented his scholastic training with graduate study at the University of Chicago. He remained continuously in the department until his death, which occurred after a prolonged illness, on June 16, 1947.

Although Professor Richey's major interest centered in Pomology, he believed in a well-rounded education in all branches of horticulture and was largely responsible for the development of the general course in horticulture required of all agricultural students. As counselor of students in the department, Professor Richey gave unstintingly of his time, and he possessed that rare combination of ingenuity, patience and understanding rarely found in one individual. The constant vigil and faithfulness of his major students during his long illness attest to the esteem in which they held him. The welfare and

progress of his students was uppermost in his thinking and no sacrifice of time and effort in their behalf was too great for him. At the occasion of his funeral, Professor Richey's friend and pastor, the Rev. Arthur McLaughlin, paid tribute to his outstanding career as a teacher, in this words: "It is not easy to make appraisal of his work, for its results will continue in the years to come. He held himself rigidly to high standards of excellence, which accounts, in part, for his well-earned reputation as a master in his chosen life work. He was ever in quest of more truth to which he brought a keen mind and high consecration of his profession. In his classroom he gave something more than information—he gave himself. Young people whose pathways he crossed are better men and women because they knew him. His knowledge, plus his understanding, plus his sympathy with their problems, were added to his character which made a lasting impression upon them.

"Buildings and equipment are necessary parts of Iowa State College, but it is the high character of the men and women who teach that really determines the quality and sets the pattern for a school like ours. And Professor Harry W. Richey did that. He was a good teacher."

E. C. VOLZ.