

OBITUARY

ALBRO D. MORRILL
1854-1943

ALBRO D. MORRILL, emeritus professor of biology in Hamilton College, died on June 8, 1943, following an attack of apoplexy. He was born in Northfield, N. H., on August 29, 1854. As a boy, he spent much time working in his father's nursery. It was here, while budding fruit trees, that he first became interested in biology.

Professor Morrill received his bachelor of science degree from Dartmouth College in 1876 and his master of science degree from Dartmouth three years later. Belmont College gave him an honorary master of arts degree in 1886, and in 1926 he was honored with a doctor of science degree by Colgate University.

He began his teaching career in 1878 as science teacher in an academy at Lewiston, Pa. In 1883 he accepted a professorship at Belmont College and in 1888 he went to Ohio University as professor of geology and biology. He came to Hamilton College in 1892 as professor of chemistry and biology, but from 1896 until his retirement in 1928 he devoted himself to biology.

Professor Morrill's greatest professional achievement was the creation and development of the biology department at Hamilton. During the early days of his professorship at Hamilton emphasis was on classical study, yet in his quiet, independent and creative way he got a department of biology going. His first laboratory was in an old dormitory where there was not even running water. Yet, on his retirement in 1928, after thirty-seven years on the Hamilton College faculty, he turned over to his successors one of the best college biological laboratories in the country, an unusually good natural history museum and an excellent library.

At the time of his retirement the hundreds of students who had majored in biology under his instruction established a fund in the interest of an A. D. Morrill Biological Library to which Professor Morrill added his personal collection.

Professor Morrill always retained one characteristic of his New England ancestry: he was sparing in his use of words, yet he was a gifted teacher. He stimulated students to find out things for themselves. In spite of his reserved manner he acquired the true affection of his students, and one of his greatest satisfactions was the feeling that he had contributed to the world of science through the successes of the men who had been students of his during their college years.

He was one of the pioneer research workers in the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Mass., and at the laboratories of the U. S. Bureau of Fish-

eries at Beaufort, N. C. At the age of fifty, under advice from his physician, he broke with the habit of years, that of spending nine months in his college laboratory and then three at Woods Hole. In the summer of 1904 he accepted the opportunity to join a picked group to be trained by the Bureau of University Travel as leaders of future parties of European travelers. For the next ten years he spent his summers in this work.

Professor Morrill was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the American Society of Naturalists, the American Society of Zoologists, the Boston Society of Natural History and the College Faculty Club. He was associated with the Presbyterian church of Clinton, where he taught a Sunday-school class for many years.

On December 23, 1879, he married Miss Lena E. Carver, of Binghamton, N. Y., who died in 1934. His sister, Catharine Morrill, who has made her home with him, survives.

WALTER N. HESS

ELIZABETH TOWAR PLATT

ELIZABETH TOWAR PLATT, librarian of the American Geographical Society, bibliographer, informed geographical student, respected editor, died in New York City on May 22 in her forty-fourth year. Although her professional life was comparatively brief, her contributions to geography were many and, fortunately, of an enduring character.

Elizabeth Platt was born on February 25, 1900, into a family prominent in the anthracite coal industry in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Trained as a librarian at Columbia University, her appointment to the staff of the American Geographical Society in 1920 gave definition to her career. Early sensing the importance of securing a broad geographical background, she supplemented her formal library training with studies in geology and geography at Columbia, leading to the bachelor's degree in 1930 and the master's degree two years later. Thus a fortunate combination of native abilities and training, strengthened by practical experience, bore fruit in the adaptation of library methods to the requirements of geographical research. Advanced to the position of assistant librarian in 1925, Miss Platt gradually assumed administrative charge, under the general direction of Dr. John K. Wright, and became largely responsible for book selections and cataloguing. Her promotion in 1937 to the position of librarian was a fitting sequel to these events.

The expansion of the society's library from 80,000 volumes in 1925 to nearly 120,000 in the present year provides an impressive measure of Miss Platt's mounting responsibilities. More than this, the collections were carefully listed and organized into the cognate fields provided for in the Research Catalogue, which was established in 1923 and improved and extended under Miss Platt's direction. Consultants seeking aid beyond that offered by the Research Catalogue would find Miss Platt a ready and reliable source of suggestion and advice. Her ability in assembling materials on the comprehensive problems often confronting geographical investigators is well remembered by the many, from this country and abroad, who have studied in the society's library. Warm acknowledgments to the librarian's unstinted aid appear in the prefaces and footnotes of numerous volumes.

During the past decade, Miss Platt's services to research workers extended far beyond the confines of the library. *Current Geographical Publications*, issued monthly except during the summer, was launched in 1938 entirely as a result of her enterprise and industry. True to its title, this bibliography lists significant literature—the word is used in the broad sense—under the categories of the Research Catalogue. Valued by investigators in geography and allied fields, *Current Geographical Publications* is now the only publication of its kind in existence. In addition, Miss Platt prepared the society's annual contributions to *Bibliographie Géographique Internationale* from 1923 to its suspension of publication after 1938. The material included in the *Bibliographie* embraced all geographical works published in the United States, covering the field of geography as a whole, and the geography of Latin America, and its preparation involved a large amount of collation and editing during two or three months each year. Only a small group of colleagues knew of Miss Platt's contributions to the distinguished French bibliography; fewer still are aware that many unsigned notes and reviews in the *Geographical Review* and the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* were likewise hers. She was a member of the advisory group which helped found *Social Science Abstracts*, and was a regular contributor to the *American Year Book*. She also founded and assembled an extensive photographic collection.

In keeping with Elizabeth Platt's interests and skills were two other tasks of a high order—one unfinished, the other completed just before her death. Since about the year 1930, she had been systematically accumulating references to geographical and cartographic bibliographies, an extensive compilation which was to have been used this summer, in collabo-

ration with Dr. Wright, in preparing a new edition of "Aids to Geographical Research," originally issued by the society in 1923. It is encouraging to learn that this revision will be carried through by its senior author and that, in its new and enlarged form, an additional monument to Miss Platt's work will be available. During the closing year of her life, Miss Platt edited "Mirror for Americans: Likeness of the Eastern Seaboard, 1810," forming Special Publication 27 of the society. This volume, involving the use of sources to a new purpose, presented an editorial challenge to one versed, as was Miss Platt, in the handling and interpretation of geographical and near-geographical literature. The editorial work was performed with enthusiasm and devotion to the difficult task at hand. The memorialist, who is also the author of the book, may be permitted to record that Miss Platt prepared the citations in the bibliography and that a large proportion of the notes, occupying nearly forty closely printed pages, received the benefit of her expert knowledge. The format, typography and many of the illustrations were suggested by her, and throughout are numerous evidences of her good taste and discrimination and of her love of books. It is a matter of deep regret that, so closely did Miss Platt's death follow the appearance of the printed volume, she was unable to see the results.

Miss Platt was a member of many societies representing the two fields of her chief intellectual interests, bibliography and geography, and enjoyed the distinction of being a representative to the Division of Geology and Geography of the National Research Council. She was a member of the American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, the Bibliographical Society of America, the New York Library Club; and at one time served as treasurer of the New York Group of the Society of Woman Geographers. She was elected this year to the Association of American Geographers one of whose members, upon learning of her unexpected death, framed the combined sentiment in saying, "We could not afford to lose her."

RALPH H. BROWN

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

RECENT DEATHS

DR. FREDERICK J. TAUSSIG, professor of clinical obstetrics at Washington University Medical School, St. Louis, died on August 21 in his seventy-first year.

PHILIP N. MOULTHROP, assistant in charge of mammalogy at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, died on August 21 at the age of thirty-one years.