

MEMORIAL OF GEORGE VAUX, JR.*

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On October 24th, 1927, the members of this Society were saddened to learn of the death, early that morning, of George Vaux, Jr. Distinguished for his educational, scientific, benevolent and philanthropic activities, the Society has suffered a great loss. Even more keenly do we personally feel the absence of a friend, whose charm of manner, enthusiasm, and good fellowship endeared him to all his intimates.

George Vaux, Jr., was born in Philadelphia, on December 18, 1863, the son of George and Sarah (Morris) Vaux. He was the ninth of the family, in practically straight succession, to



GEORGE VAUX, JR.
1863-1927

bear that name. The first George was deprived of his property at the restoration of Charles II after Cromwell's death in 1661,—perhaps because he was a Quaker, and therefore a Dissenter. His son, the second to bear the name, was born in 1640 in Essex County, England, and was followed by three more Georges, who were physicians in Reigate and London.

The fifth George Vaux, was born in 1721 and died in 1803. He had three sons, James, Richard, and George. The latter died, and the other two brothers came to Philadelphia. James

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bought a "plantation" in 1771 directly across the Schuylkill River from Valley Forge, and perpetuated the family name in his son George, the seventh. The seventh George was a prominent lawyer in Philadelphia, and one of the founders of the Horticultural Society. His son married Sarah Morris, of Harriton (originally called Bryn Mawr, after an old farm house in Wales; the name was later transferred to the town).

On his mother's side, George Vaux, Jr., was descended from Thomas Lloyd, an early Colonial Governor, and Dr. Thomas Wynne, physician and friend of William Penn.

Mr. Vaux graduated from Haverford College in 1884, and from the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1888. He was admitted to the bar that same year. He entered the law office of Pemberton Morris, where he was associated with Effingham B. Morris.

In the summer of 1887, he first visited the Canadian Rockies, in company with his father, brother (William S. Vaux, Jr.), and sister (Mrs. Charles D. Walcott). Many seasons in later years were devoted to the exploration of the mountains and studies of the glaciers, the results of which were embodied in five papers, illustrated with maps and superb photographs.

It was at Lake Louise that he first met Mary W. James, of Concord, Mass., who became his wife on April 2, 1907. Mrs. Vaux is the daughter of Robertson James, and niece of the late Henry James, the novelist, and Dr. William James, the noted psychologist.

As a member of the Society of Friends, Mr. Vaux Jr., worked assiduously in its service and held several responsible positions. He was on the Committee for the Revision of Discipline, the Friend's book of Faith and Practice. For a number of years he was President of the Friend's Historical Society.

While he was a member of a number of scientific organizations such as the American Philosophical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Mineralogical Society (Great Britain), and the Mineralogical Society of America (of which he was vice-president in 1926), it was as an official of the Academy of Natural Sciences, and of the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society, that his scientific endeavors were especially noteworthy.

Mr. Vaux Jr., was elected a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences on October 25, 1892. In 1894 he was elected Treasurer,

and in 1911, Solicitor of the Academy, serving also as a member of the Council, and of the Board of Trustees. Through his skillfull management the Academy obtained a disputed bequest which doubled the income available for research.

His advice was frequently sought when purchasing specimens for the William S. Vaux Collection of the Academy, and his friendly criticism and aid were of great value in bringing the exhibits up to their present attractive state.

He was deeply interested in the development of the Department of Mineralogy of the Academy, and frequently contributed the means by which its work and researches were carried on. His cooperation made possible the expeditions sent to the Andes of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile in 1921; to Greenland in 1923, and to Bolivia and Chile in 1925. These trips were very successful not only in the number of fine specimens obtained, but in scientific results as well, which included the discovery of eight new minerals.

It was fitting, therefore, that the beautiful blue, hydrous iron and aluminum phosphate from the tin mines of Llallagua, Bolivia, should be named Vauxite in his honor. Related minerals received the names paravauxite, and metavauxite.

In 1922, Mr. Vaux Jr., was elected President of the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society. He was reelected to this office for the fifth consecutive term on October 26, 1927. On this occasion he addressed the Thirty-fifth Anniversary meeting of the Society, and spoke on "1892-1927: A Retrospect and Some Comments on the Future."

His long experience as a mineralogist made his counsel invaluable, and his enthusiam was a splendid inspiration to the members. His pleasing personality and ready wit made him an ideal presiding officer.

To most mineralogists, George Vaux, Jr., was best known through the magnificent collection of minerals he had assembled. Due to his enthusiasm he had accumulated approximately 10,000 specimens, including 850 species. He regarded the science of mineralogy as "The most delightful of pastimes, . . . one of the most fascinating subjects to which one can devote himself." It was a surprise to him that more persons were not interested in this science.

Mr. Vaux Jr., began collecting while still a young boy. He became acquainted with the collection of his uncle, William S. Vaux, at that time the finest mineral collection in America; and had the pleasure of associating with the naturalists who met at their house on Saturday afternoons. It is of interest to note that it was his grand-uncle, Joseph Sansom (1767-1826) who brought together one of the first mineral collections in America, which was later given to Haverford College. When George was 19 years old his uncle, William Vaux, died, and the collection was bequeathed to the Academy, with a fund of \$10,000 to maintain it. The family was given the privilege of retaining twenty-five specimens.

The collection of George Vaux, Jr., grew rapidly in the course of years, as he realized that the opportunity of acquiring good specimens was limited and it was his endeavor to obtain the best specimens available.

In 1910 he built a beautiful Colonial house at Bryn Mawr, and shortly after, a large fire-proof extension, for his mineral collection.

In the center of the room is the treasured desk about which the friends of his uncle, William S. Vaux, gathered to examine minerals in the days of his youth. To the right, on a cabinet stands a small upright case with a glass front concealed by a wooden shutter. This contains the twenty-five specimens, including the marvelous proustites, which were collected by his uncle. Abutting the windows are twelve drawer-cabinets, and four vertical cases with glass fronts which contain the larger and showier minerals. Most of the specimens are in cardboard trays in drawers. Each is carefully labeled and tastefully arranged; individual crystals being mounted on stands to display them to best advantage.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the collection was the development of suites, it having been his endeavor to obtain as complete a series of fine specimens of each mineral as possible. Mineralogists will readily recollect the impressions received upon seeing the drawers of Joplin golden calcite, Tsumeb azurite, and Vöröspatak gold, specimens of unrivaled perfection, beauty of color, and variety of form.

The French Creek mines, being but an hour's drive by automobile from his house, were frequently visited, and his col-

lection was enriched by many fine specimens from this locality. He had prepared, shortly before his death, an article on this district for the *American Mineralogist*.¹ A visit to Franklin in 1922 resulted in the acquisition of some very fine specimens, the pick of one of the local collections.

Mr. Vaux was much interested in education, and was a member of the Board of Managers of Carson College, Haverford College, and the Wistar Institute of the University of Pennsylvania; a director of the Cheyney School for Teachers, and a member of the Committee of the Westown School and the Friend's Select School.

In 1906, President Roosevelt appointed him a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and he served as chairman of this Board from 1907 until his death. He gained a wide knowledge of the life, customs, and general affairs of the American Indian by personal contact with them, making especial studies of the Sioux of South Dakota, the Quapaw, Osage and the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma; the Papago, Pima, Apache, Hopi, and Navajo of Arizona; the Pueblo of New Mexico; and the Mission Indians of Southern California.

It was largely due to his efforts that the Geronimo band of Apaches, who had been held prisoners of war at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, were released, and apportioned to lands in western Oklahoma, and southern New Mexico. As a result of recommendations embodied in his reports, many remedial changes were made in the Federal administration of Indian affairs.

With the beautiful simplicity of the Society of Friends, he was laid away in the Harriton family plot: sequestered in the extensive oak groves of his Bryn Mawr estate, the resting place of his ancestors for over two hundred years.

He is survived by his widow, and two sons, George and Henry James, and his sister, Mrs. Charles D. Walcott.

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¹ *Am. Mineral.*, 13, 25 (1928).

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