

## MEMORIAL OF FRANK ROBERTSON VAN HORN\*

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In the death of Professor Frank R. Van Horn on August 1, 1933, at Cleveland, Ohio, the Mineralogical Society of America lost an enthusiastic and loyal member and an efficient officer, who had been extremely active in promoting the founding of the organization. His loss is great to the Society and to his many friends who had come to know him as one of the stalwarts of American mineralogy.



FRANK ROBERTSON VAN HORN  
1872-1933

Frank Robertson Van Horn was born at Johnsonburg, Warren County, New Jersey, on February 7, 1872. He was proud of his Dutch ancestry which he traced to Cornelius Jan van Hoorn, who settled in New Amsterdam in 1640. Professor Van Horn's early training was obtained in the schools of Trenton, New Jersey. In the fall of 1888 he entered Rutgers University, from which he was graduated in 1892 with the degree of Bachelor of Science. During

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the following year he served as an instructor in Mineralogy at Rutgers University and at the same time pursued graduate studies. In 1893 he received the degree of Master of Science. Having at this time definitely decided upon a career in Mineralogy and Geology, he spent the next four years at the University of Heidelberg where he studied with the eminent petrographer, Karl H. F. Rosenbusch, and with the equally distinguished mineralogist and crystallographer, Victor Goldschmidt.

While he was at Heidelberg, the vacation periods were used to visit important geological and mineralogical localities in Central Europe, for purposes of study and collection. Professor Van Horn delighted in relating interesting incidents of these trips. In 1897 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Heidelberg and in 1919, for distinguished service as a scientist and teacher, his alma mater, Rutgers University, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Since the laboratories of Rosenbusch and Goldschmidt at Heidelberg were largely visited by ambitious young geologists and mineralogists from all over the world, Professor Van Horn was able to develop friendships with many men who afterward became recognized leaders in the earth sciences. He cherished these friendships and sought to deepen them.

At Heidelberg Dr. Van Horn became acquainted with Ezekiel Davidson, then a recent alumnus of the Case School of Applied Science at Cleveland, Ohio, who urged the Case authorities to place him in charge of Geology and Mineralogy. This was done, and in the fall of 1897 Professor Van Horn began his effective career at Case which continued for thirty-six years until the time of his death. He was first appointed as instructor in Geology and Mineralogy, a position he held for two years. In 1899 he was promoted to an assistant professorship and in 1902 he became full professor.

Because of the excellence of the courses he conducted and the well-equipped laboratory he was able to develop, Professor Van Horn was recognized by his colleagues and students as an effective teacher and capable scientist. For many years it was the custom of Professor Van Horn to visit important mining districts in this country with his students. On these trips every effort was made to assemble extensive collections of typical specimens from the various localities. Accordingly, the collections of his department grew rapidly and today the Case School of Applied Science is unusually

equipped with extensive collections of rocks, minerals, and fossils.

Trained in the German methods of identifying rocks and minerals, Professor Van Horn was extremely proficient in the rapid recognition of specimens at sight and in the identification of the localities from which they were obtained. There are few men in America who could equal him in this respect.

At the Case School of Applied Science, Dr. Van Horn was more than a teacher and scientist; he was also the friend and counselor of students and men. His acquaintances among the alumni and student body numbered more than those of any other member of the faculty. This was largely due to the intense interest he took in the athletic and extracurricular activities of the institution. Indeed, he was known as the "father of athletics" at Case. The Van Horn Athletic Field and the Case Club House were made possible because of his untiring efforts and skillful management. They will long bear testimony of the high esteem in which he was held by students and faculty alike. That the students had a deep affection and a high regard for Professor Van Horn is shown by the fact that for many years he was known and addressed as "the Count." This appellation was given to him because of the Van Dyke beard which was so characteristic of him for over a quarter of a century.

In spite of heavy teaching duties and his many extracurricular activities, Professor Van Horn was a frequent contributor to the mineralogical and geological periodicals of this country and Germany. Appended to this memorial is a bibliography of twenty-seven titles.

Professor Van Horn was a member of various national and international scientific organizations, of which only the following will be mentioned: Geological Society of America, of which he was a councilor at the time of his death; American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers; and the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland. He was also a member of several international geological congresses. Indeed, it is thought that the injury he sustained in the summer of 1929, while attending the International Geological Congress in South Africa, contributed indirectly to his untimely death, for he never fully recovered from the effects of that accident. That he was unable, on account of illness, to attend the last International Geological Congress which was held during the past summer in this country, he deeply regretted.

As is well known, and as has already been indicated, Professor Van Horn was one of the founders of the Mineralogical Society of America. At the organization meeting at Harvard University in December, 1919, he was elected a member of the council. For ten years, beginning in 1923, he was the secretary of the Society. Much of the success of our organization has been due to his enthusiasm, loyalty, insight, and efficient management. While his presence at our meetings will be greatly missed, we shall long feel the influence of his forceful and sympathetic personality.

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