

MEMORIAL TO WALTER WILSON MOORHOUSE 1913–1969

FRANCIS W. BEALES

Department of Geology, University of Toronto, Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada



Walter Wilson Moorhouse, a member of The Geological Society of America since 1948, died suddenly at his home in Toronto on February 26, 1969, a victim of an acute attack of asthma, an affliction that he had suffered from and refused to give in to, for as long as most of us had known him. Despite poor health he was still at work, having lectured the previous day.

He was born on November 30, 1913, at Shetland, in rural Ontario, the son of Walter and Lulu (Dobbyn) Moorhouse. From his father, a Latin Master, he acquired an interest in the classics that he retained throughout his life. Wilson attended school in Islington, Ontario. He graduated a gold medallist in geology and mineralogy from Victoria College, University of Toronto, in 1935, when he received his B.A. The following year he acquired his M.A. from the same institution. The next two years were spent in graduate work at Cornell University, where he met his future wife, Eleanor. From 1938 to 1940 he worked on his Ph.D. at Columbia University, where he began a lifelong friendship with Professor S. J. Shand, who had a profound influence on his interest in petrography. In September, 1940, Wilson returned to the University of Toronto to join the staff of the geology department, where he served with distinction until his untimely death. For a brief period during the War he worked as a meteorologist with the Canadian Department of Transport.

His success as a teacher stemmed not only from his breadth of knowledge but also from his kindly and sympathetic understanding of his students. He was the gentle but firm critic, ever seeking rigorous adherence to detail and strict scientific honesty. He carried a heavy load of geology graduate student supervision at Toronto for many years. His list of publications makes no mention of many studies done jointly with his students, but published without his name, because of his modesty and generosity. Such work ranged from studies of accessory minerals as clues to rock genesis to Precambrian regional and metamorphic problems. He was most keenly concerned with problems of the Huronian stratigraphy of the Sudbury area and of the area along the north shore of Lake Huron, where he initiated a series of graduate research projects, notably by Patchett, Ginn, and Knight. In 1963, Jambor and Boyle of the Geological Survey of Canada named the mineral, Moorhouseite ($\text{CoSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$) in his honour.

Wilson Moorhouse was outstanding in his chosen fields of geological interest, petrography, Precambrian geology, latterly including Precambrian fossils, and volcanic rocks of all ages. Despite his many contributions to his science, he met success with modesty. His most widely known work, his textbook *The Study of Rocks in Thin Section*, met with immediate success. He was amazed to receive a Russian edition and pleased that a student overseas edition was made available for the underdeveloped countries.

His interest in the Precambrian was worldwide, but was no doubt originally kindled by his early field experience with Canadian Precambrian geology. This, coupled with his love of the outdoors from earliest days, along with a "bushman's" sense of keen observation, inspired his travelling to many countries on rock-collecting trips. His phenomenal memory enabled him to recognize the localities from which he had collected any one of his many hand specimens and he could tell you, too convincingly to brook any argument, just exactly where each and every one had come from, or at least almost every one. On one occasion when we were searching for a new sample his wry sense of humor insisted that the outcrop had changed in the intervening years!

His travelling included every mode of transportation: on foot (30 miles in a day was not considered a hardship), by canoe, car, and all types of aircraft, including helicopters. Having twice experienced crashes in the "whirlybirds," he made these experiences a favorite target of his puns. The visits to Precambrian localities in other countries established many contacts with other geologists. In 1965, he was invited to lecture to the Russian Academy of Sciences on the subject of the Canadian Precambrian. On a visit to Scandinavia, a well-known anecdote recounts how, while returning on the train with Professor Neumann from a famous Goldschmidt locality, where much skeptical discussion had developed, Wilson was silent. When asked what the trouble was, he replied, "How would you feel if you had just found out that God was wrong?"

After studying Precambrian volcanic rocks at numerous localities, volcanic rocks of all ages became a favorite subject for research and comparison. J. J. Fawcett is editing a comparative atlas on volcanic rocks which Wilson had largely completed.

Wilson Moorhouse was interested in the application of mathematics to geology. He was interested in statistics and the sampling problem in geology. Coupled with studies of field relationships and a desire to extract the maximum information in the lab from every sample, he maintained a close association with the geophysicists who, throughout his professional career, were developing new methods of dating Precambrian rocks. He supplied many of the samples used for pioneering work in this field and the current interest and eminence of Precambrian geochronological studies at Toronto owes no small debt to his continued support through the formative years.

Wilson Moorhouse's interests were not limited to the field of his chosen profession. Photography was one of his hobbies. He had an extensive collection of classical recordings. He was a prodigious reader and read widely in the classics, the Bible, English literature, archeology, history, philosophy, poetry,

and even the popular detective paperbacks, which he devoured avidly. He regularly re-read the complete works of Shakespeare and other poets. For years, he himself tried his hand at verse. This, along with his propensity for punning, was a source of pleasure: to his children with his illustrated whimsical poetic letters from the field; to his colleagues and graduate students in the annual skits; and to the Canadian Mineralogical Association in his memorable Presidential Address (Moorhouse, 1966).

It is gratifying to report that the bulk of his current research will be carried on by his colleagues at Toronto, where the petrology and Precambrian studies that he loved and to which he devoted his life, still flourish. Through the years he built his own reputation and that of his university. His hammer and his microscope helped to solve many academic problems. We mourn the loss of an eminent scientist and a much loved friend. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor, his son, Owen, and his daughter, Ellen, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WALTER WILSON MOORHOUSE

- 1938 Some titaniferous magnetites in the San Gabriel Mountains, Los Angeles County, California: *Econ. Geology*, v. 33, p. 737-748.
- 1939 Geology of the south Onaman area: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 47, pt. 8.
- 1941 Geology of the zinc-lead deposit on Calumet Island, Quebec: *Geol. Soc. America Bull.*, v. 52, p. 601-632.
- Geology of the Eagle Lake area: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 78, pt. 4.
- 1942 Gold mineralization in minor igneous intrusions: *Econ. Geology*, v. 37, no. 4, p. 318-329.
- 1944 Geology of the Bryce-Robillard area: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 50, pt. 4.
- 1946 Geology of the northeast portion of the Timagami Lake area: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 51, pt. 6.
- Norites and related rocks from Eagle Lake, Ontario: *Royal Soc. Canada Proc.*, Sec. IV, v. 40, p. 59-71.
- 1951 Geology of Osway Township: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 58, pt. 5.
- 1956 Geology of O'Sullivan Lake area: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 64, pt. 4.
- The paragenesis of accessory minerals: *Econ. Geology*, v. 51, p. 248-261.
- 1957 The Proterozoic of the Port Arthur and Lake Nipigon regions, Ontario: In the *Proterozoic in Canada*: Royal Soc. Canada Spec. Pub. no. 2, p. 67-76.
- 1959 The study of rocks in thin section: New York, Harper and Bros., 514 p.
- 1960 Gunflint iron range in the vicinity of Port Arthur: Ontario Dept. Mines Ann. Rept., v. 69, pt. 7.
- 1961 Complex folding and associated minor structures on Reno and Waldie Mountains, southeastern British Columbia: *Royal Soc. Canada Trans.*, v. 55, Ser. III, Sec. 4, p. 29-39.
- 1962 (with F. W. Beales) Fossils from the Animikie, Port Arthur, Ontario: *Royal Soc. Canada Trans.*, v. 56, Ser. III, p. 97-109.
- 1963 (with N. Shepherd) Hypersthene and cummingtonite from Payne Bay, New Quebec: *Canadian Mineralogist*, v. 7, p. 527-532.
- Concretions from the Animikie of the Port Arthur region, Ontario: *Geol. Assoc. Canada Proc.* v. 15, p. 69-89.
- 1964 Structure at Tintina Silver Mines, Ltd., Yukon: *Geol. Assoc. Canada Proc.*, v. 15, pt. 2, p. 69-89.
- 1965 Stratigraphic position of sulphides in the Archean: *Canadian Inst. Mining and Metallurgy Trans.*, v. 68, p. 261-264.
- Report on a visit to the U.S.S.R., Soviet Academy of Sciences, Exchange Agreement: Rept. no. 35.
- (with S. M. A. Butcher, and G. L. Davis) New potassium/argon and lead/uranium ages from two localities in the Canadian Precambrian: *Canadian Mineralogist*, v. 8, pt. 2, p. 198-203.

- 1966 Summation and appraisal: In Precambrian Symposium: Geol. Assoc. Canada Spec. Paper No. 3, p. 137-144.
- Presidential address: Canadian Mineralogist, v. 8, pt. 5, p. 656-659.
- Memorial to Elwood S. Moore: Geol. Soc. America Bull., v. 77, p. 225-232.
- (with S. M. A. Boutcher and A. S. Edhorn) Archean conglomerates and lithic sandstones of Lake Timiskaming, Ontario: Geol. Assoc. Canada Proc., v. 17, p. 21-42.
- 1967 (with R. M. MacIntyre and D. York) Potassium-argon age determinations in the Madoc-Bancroft area in the Grenville Province of the Canadian Shield: Canadian Jour. Earth Sci., v. 4, no. 5, p. 815-828.
- 1969 Memorial to Elwood S. Moore: Am. Mineralogist, v. 54, p. 634-638.
- (with R. K. Lal) Cordierite-gedrite rocks and associated gneisses of Fishtail Lake, Harcourt Township, Ontario: Canadian Jour. Earth Sci., v. 6, no. 1, p. 145-165.
- (with D. L. Cooke) Timiskaming volcanism in the Kirkland Lake area, Ontario: Canadian Jour. Earth Sci., v. 6, no. 1, p. 117-132.