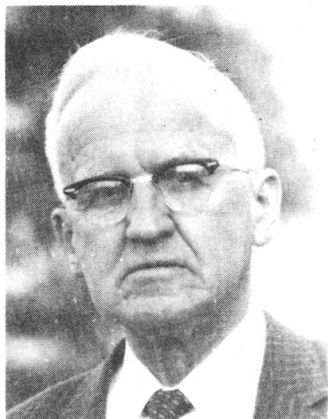


Memorial to Henry Raymond Aldrich

1891–1979

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Henry Raymond Aldrich was known to many geologists as “Mr. GSA” because of his long tenure as Secretary of the Society. He dedicated his life unstintingly to attain the goals set by his colleagues, and the great love of his professional life was the Geological Society of America and its Fellows and Members.

For twenty-six years—from 1934 to 1960—Henry Aldrich was at the helm of the Society, serving both as Secretary and Editor of the *Bulletin*. During these years, the highest honor obtainable in the American geological profession was to be a Fellow in GSA. This coveted goal was an achievement of excellence thought by many to be the capstone of their careers.

Henry Aldrich, with quiet determination, strove to make GSA the epitome of all that was best in a professional society. A legacy of his success is the worldwide recognition of the GSA today.

Henry would insist, were he looking over my shoulder as I write these words, that the founders of the Society were responsible for its greatness, in particular, Charles P. Berkey and R.A.F. Penrose, Jr., whose endowment so enhanced the prestige of GSA. Such modesty was part of Henry’s New England heritage. However, as Ian Campbell said in a letter to Robert Norris, dated January 16, 1961: “[Henry] can, I know, out-think, out-argue, out-write, and out-edit most men ten years his junior.” These qualities and his positive attitude toward everything concerning GSA endeared Henry to many. In a testimonial speech on the occasion of his retirement, one long-time friend and colleague described him as “a master craftsman of the *modus operandi*.”

Henry Aldrich was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on June 8, 1891, and died on January 23, 1979, in Middletown, Connecticut. After his retirement he married Mrs. Helen Buffum who survives him, as do his two sons, Richard Wayland and Robert Clement Aldrich. His first wife, Louise Clement Aldrich, died in 1960.

Aldrich graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1914 with an S.B. degree in mining engineering, earned his M.S. at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis) in 1917, and his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in economic geology in 1931. After graduation in 1914, he became an instructor in geology at Northwestern University, and then a research assistant at Minnesota, 1916–1917. A stint of two years on the War Industries Board in Washington as a statistician in the Division of Non-Ferrous Metals was followed by appointments as Geologist, Wisconsin Geological Survey in 1919, and Assistant State Geologist in 1921.

In 1934 Aldrich joined the Geological Society of America as Assistant Secretary, and in 1941 he became Secretary and Editor-in-Chief of the *Bulletin*. These were the great years of Henry’s life, during which he dedicated himself heart and soul to the Society. He completed this assignment in 1960.

His appointment as Research Associate at Lamont Laboratory at Columbia University followed, and in 1961–62 he was visiting Professor of Geology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Tufts University honored Dr. Aldrich with an Sc.D. in 1956 in recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of the geological profession.

Henry and Helen Aldrich settled in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1963 to be “near home” and to enjoy the association with geologists at Wesleyan University where Aldrich had an office for several years. He continued his interests in many phases of the geological sciences until his death. His garden, his books, his wife, and his family were his joys.

Those who knew Henry will long remember his engaging sense of humor, his pithy remarks, and his keen awareness of and participation in community and national affairs—attributes typical of his determination to enjoy totally the bounties Mother Earth provides for those who know her well. He died peacefully shortly after his activities were reduced by physical infirmities. In his own words, “I am a ‘vagabonder.’ This means . . . driving to some place . . . coming back and then leaving again. No schedules, just a little whimsy.”

His vagabonding at least changed form at age 87, but perhaps it continues in another incarnation as those of us who were privileged to share his friendship fondly hope.

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