

MEMORIAL OF EDWARD WIGGLESWORTH

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The death of Edward Wigglesworth on May 6, 1945 brought to an untimely close a life unselfishly devoted to mineralogy and its related sciences. Few members of our Society have joined to the responsibilities of large means and inherited business affairs such varied and burdensome scientific occupations.

Wigglesworth was born in Boston in 1885 in a family with traditions reaching far back to colonial times. He was the seventh successive member of the family to bear the name of Edward. He entered Harvard in 1904 and, coming early under the influence of the late Professor Woodworth whose summer field courses attracted many young students into his science, he concentrated in Geology and graduated in 1908. He received the A.M. degree in the following year and in 1910 associated himself with the Harvard instructing staff by accepting the Curatorship of the Gardner Collection of photographs, an honorary position which he held for seven years. From 1911 to 1915 he was also Assistant in elementary geology courses under Professor Woodworth.

Wigglesworth's early interests were in Petrology and Glacial Geology. With the late Professor Wolff he studied the serpentine rocks of Vermont, a field and laboratory study, published in 1915. With Woodworth he devoted several field seasons to the study of the geology of the Island of Marthas Vineyard. This work was finally developed into a thesis, presented in 1917, for the degree of Ph.D. It was not published until many years later. Woodworth's glacial studies of the southern New England region were collected and edited by Wigglesworth after Woodworth's death in 1925, and the thesis became an important part of the volume published in 1934 as a Memoir, No. 52, of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Harvard under joint authorship.

Meanwhile Wigglesworth became interested in Mineralogy. In 1914 he became Honorary Custodian of Mineralogy for the Boston Society of Natural History. He established an office in the Museum building on Berkeley Street and gave a large part of his time for many years to the improvement and increase of the mineralogical and geological collections. In 1919 he became Director of the Museum, now known as the New England Museum of Natural History, and so remained until 1940. His principal aim during his long Directorship, so far at least as regards the mineral collection concerning which the writer was not infrequently called into consultation, was to transform it from a general display of minerals into a strictly New England collection. He exchanged



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most of the materials on exhibition which were derived from sources outside of New England for those of local origin. He purchased with his private means several local New England collections and many individual specimens; he rearranged and recased these in an attractive way and succeeded in gathering together a very remarkable display of the products of New England's mines and quarries. He particularly improved the display of gem minerals, both cut and uncut, sparing no expense or time to make it complete.

It was the difficulties Wigglesworth encountered in thoroughly identifying his cut stones that led him into his last and perhaps most absorbing mineralogical study, that of Gemology. He took the courses established by the American Gem Society for the identification of gems by optical and physical tests and became a certified Gemologist in 1939. He organized a series of loan exhibitions of gems at the Museum with the coöperation of Boston jewelry firms. He became closely associated with Robert M. Shipley, Jr., founder of the Gemological Institute of America in Los Angeles; he established a New England center of the Institute in Boston, where he taught many students of the subject; and on withdrawing from the New England Museum in 1940 he opened an office on Newbury Street as the eastern headquarters of the Institute. At the time of his death he was President of the Institute and Secretary of its Examination Board. With Mr. Shipley he compiled a dictionary of gems and gemology. Thus his personality and influence was known to a country-wide group of gem students and dealers.

Wigglesworth kept up an association with his Harvard teachers and friends by accepting membership in the Visiting Committee for the Geological Sciences through the years 1919-1945. He was a faithful attendant at the committee's annual meetings and maintained an active interest in the development of the Division and particularly in the Mineralogical Museum.

He was a charter member of the Mineralogical Society of America, became a life Fellow in 1925 and was Vice-President in 1929.

Dr. Wigglesworth endeared himself to his many friends by his simplicity and charm of manner. He was all too humble in estimating his very real accomplishments, insisting, as he always did, that he was but an amateur in the mineralogical field. The science has lost by his death an able worker and the Society a worthy and valued member. The writer mourns the loss of a tried and true friend. Our acquaintance began when he was an undergraduate in the elementary course in Mineralogy and it ripened into a lasting friendship.