MEMORIAL

JAMES HENRY GARDNER

April 20, 1883–September 1, 1964
8th President, American Association of Petroleum Geologists

James H. Gardner was born April 20, 1883, on a farm near Sonora, Hardin County, Kentucky, the son of Martin Gardner and Bellena (Brown) Gardner. His ancestors were English, who early emigrated to Virginia and then into Kentucky. His early years were spent on the farm and he had the usual long hours and arduous duties of a farm boy of that period.

The farm was situated on outcrops of the Mississippi Lime, and with his naturally alert and inquiring spirit he early developed a curiosity about the nearby caves and sink holes into which the streams disappeared. From this environmental start his interest broadened into study of all branches of geology, especially clays, coal, and petroleum.

He attended the public schools in his home county, and then attended and graduated from Lynnland Preparatory School near Louisville, Kentucky. He entered the University of Kentucky, at Lexington, in 1900, receiving a B.S. degree in 1904 and an M.S. degree in 1906.

In 1906, he was appointed to the U. S. Geological Survey and while in Washington, D. C., did post-graduate work at George Washington University and from that school received the degree of Ph.D. in 1910.

Being interested from his boyhood days in birds, he took a minor course in ornithology, and that interest was a life-long hobby. He organized the Kentucky Audubon Society, in Lexington, and later was co-founder of the Tulsa Audubon Society, in April, 1935. He could identify many birds by sight and their songs, and deciphered many of their calls. He was the owner of a rare copy (now owned by Philbrook Art Museum of Tulsa) of the Audubon Elephant Folio of American birds in natural size and color, with 151 Lockwood chromo-lithographs, issued in 1860, and formerly owned and autographed by Mark Twain.

From 1906 to 1910, Dr. Gardner was employed by the U. S. Geological Survey, his work being principally on coals and clays. Much of the work on coals was done in southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico, and most of the clay investigations were in western Kentucky. An attached list of publications includes this work. He greatly enjoyed the work from the camping field trips in the West and recounted many incidents that took place, the humorous ones often originating with the horse wrangler.


In April, 1910, Dr. Gardner married Miss Willie Wilkerson Spiers, of Lexington, Kentucky, a