MEMORIALS

HOWARD CLARK
(1885-1972)

With Howard Clark's passing on October 6, 1972, the profession lost one of its oldest and most able surface geologists. His wife, Laura, son William R., who is a geologist in Denver with Continental Oil Company, and two grandchildren survive. He became a member of the Association on February 15, 1923, and was an honorary member of the Tulsa Geological Society.

Howard was born March 8, 1885, on a farm in Licking County, Ohio. He received his education in geology at Doane Academy and at Denison University where he was assistant to department head Frank Carney.

In 1912, Howard was appointed junior topographer with the U.S. Geological Survey and served until World War I when he was commissioned 2nd lieutenant with the 29th Engineers and assigned to the 2nd Division G.H.Q. On arrival in France, in January 1918, he was promoted to 1st lieutenant and placed in charge of the geologic interpretation of air photo maps, so that they could be used as a base for directing artillery fire. Following the armistice, he spent 3 months photographing the battle areas of northern France for the U.S. Signal Corps. On returning to the United States in July 1919, he rejoined the U.S. Geological Survey.

Much of Howard's work with the USGS was connected with classification and evaluation of coal lands in most of the coal producing states. In 1917, in cooperation with the War Department, he did topographic mapping along the Mexican border and in the Big Bend country.

In 1920, Frank Carney was forming a geologic department for the National Refining Company and Howard joined his old professor as surface geologist. After National Refining became inactive, he worked for several small companies including about 10 years with Reserve Development Company. In 1946, Sinclair Oil Company employed him to check its concessions in western Colombia. Surface geology could be done best during the dry season and in 1947 and 1948 he returned to complete his assignment, which required about 9 months field work. Since that time, Howard kept an office in Tulsa, and was an active consultant, working up oil and gas prospects of his own, especially in eastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas. His surface work in Arkansas resulted in the discovery of considerable gas reserves. Some of his work was for the Stephens Production Company and Fort Smith Gas Company.

In May 1914, Howard married Laura McElroy who was to share with him much of the "roughing it" that was part of field geology in those days. This included housekeeping in an Indian hogan in New Mexico and in cabins in the hill country of Kentucky where an active still sometimes interfered with Howard's stratigraphic measurements or closing a traverse.

In 1960, a slight stroke made it impossible for Howard to do field work, but up to about a month before he died, he went regularly to his office and maintained his interest in geology and exploration activity. His friends admired him for this and marveled at his determination to keep active even as his physical condition worsened and walking any distance became difficult. During this long period, in all kinds of weather, Laura was his faithful chauffeur, realizing that Howard's going to the office kept up his morale.

Howard's chief hobby was photography. He