

E. Gorton Davis

Professor of Landscape Architecture

May 7, 1880 — May 23, 1930

Professor E. Gorton Davis was born May 7, 1880 at Cincinnati, Ohio, where he spent his early years. He was graduated from Denison University in 1905 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Shortly after graduation he joined Townsend and Fleming, Landscape Architects, and remained with this firm until 1911 when he became a member of the Faculty of the Landscape Department, then in the College of Agriculture. He soon became head of this department and held this position until his sudden death at Ithaca, on May 23, 1930.

During his years at Cornell Professor Davis became outstanding in the educational field of his profession and greatly influenced the course which the teaching of Landscape Architecture throughout the country has followed. He also greatly influenced the development of the School of Landscape Architecture at Cornell and was a vital factor in its progress. As a teacher he inspired the confidence and held the interest of his students. His close contact with them as undergraduates was followed by an equally great interest in them as alumni.

Undoubtedly, his greatest interest was in the History of Landscape Architecture, of which he made a most scholarly study. His compilations and research in this field, particularly as related to the early American work, are a great achievement. They constitute, even in the unfinished state in which he left them, a valuable contribution to our knowledge. It is to be hoped that this work, which he formulated so effectively, may be carried forward.

In addition to his teaching he carried on a private practice; his work in this field bears ample witness to his practical ability as a Landscape Architect.

But the memory of Professor Davis that lives undimmed in the minds of his friends is a warm and human thing that no record of work done can render. His fiery enthusiasm, his gusto in the act of living, even his quick and generous anger, were the marks of such an ardent spirit as we see but seldom. It was this prodigal ardor of his that so caught and held his students that they would crowd his hospitable home, and would return thither year by year when they were undergraduates no longer. One likes to think that this ardor of spirit has worked upon them, and is through them preserved to the future.

Source: Faculty Records, p. 1646 Resolution of the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University December, Nineteen Hundred and Thirty