

Heinrich Ries

April 30, 1871 — April 11, 1951

Heinrich Ries, Professor of Geology, Emeritus, died unexpectedly and suddenly at his home in Ithaca on April 11, 1951. He is survived by two sons. Since his retirement in 1939, he had continued his consulting work in geology and was especially interested in research on molding sand. He was to have received a bronze placque at a testimonial dinner in Statler Hall on April 13 for his contribution to the foundry industry.

Dr. Ries was born in Brooklyn, New York on April 30, 1871. He received his early education partly in Europe and partly in the United States, and in 1892 he was graduated from the Columbia School of Mines. His graduate work was done at Columbia University, where he was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in 1894 and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1896. The following year he studied at the University of Berlin.

Professor Ries came to Cornell in 1898, at a time when the importance of geology in mineral deposits and in engineering construction projects was not well understood. Recognizing the need for textbooks in these branches of geology, he wrote "Economic Geology", the first edition of which appeared in 1905 and the seventh edition in 1937, and was senior author of five editions of "Engineering Geology". These texts were very widely used and Heinrich Ries soon became well known, not only within the United States but also abroad. His advancement at Cornell was rapid. He was appointed Instructor in Economic Geology in 1898, Assistant Professor in Economic Geology in 1902, Professor in Economic Geology in 1906, and Head of the Department of Geology in 1914, a position he held until 1937.

He was a member of sixteen scientific societies and served on many committees. In 1910 he was elected President of the American Ceramic Society, and in 1929 he achieved the most distinguished elective office in geological affairs, the Presidency of the Geological Society of America.

Dr. Ries was an authority on the geology of clays and molding sands, and many of the more than two hundred technical papers and bulletins that he wrote dealt with these important materials. In addition, he established at Cornell the first laboratory in the country for research on foundry sands.

From 1928 to 1945 he was Technical Director in charge of sand research for the American Foundrymen's Association, and much of this research was done at Cornell. At the time of his death, he was still active in research

on molding sand and was writing the fourth edition of his "Clays, Occurrence, Properties and Uses". It may well be said that he led an active and full life to the very day of his death.

During forty years of teaching at Cornell, Heinrich Ries gave thousands of students their first insight into geology through his lectures to large classes in the elementary courses. But his greatest satisfaction came from the group of more than fifty students who completed their advanced degrees under his direction. Perhaps his most lasting memorial will be the contributions this group makes to geologic science.

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