

# John Sanford Shearer

Professor of Physics

1865 — May 17, 1922

In the death of John Sanford Shearer, Science in America has suffered a great loss.

He entered the university as an undergraduate with some previous experience as a teacher and with a decided taste for the study of physics and mathematics. He received the degree of B.S. in 1893 and of Ph.D. in 1901.

He was a member of the instructing staff from the time of graduation until his death on May 17, 1922 and during this long period of nearly twenty nine years he was continually in active service with the exception of the year 1910-11 when he was on leave of absence and acted as associate professor of Columbia University and of the war period (1917-19) when he was in war service. Skill and originality as a demonstrator combined with unusual mathematical ability characterized Professor Shearer's work as a teacher and in his capacity as one of the lecturers on experimental physics he exerted an inspiring influence upon many thousands of undergraduates

The installation of the department of physics in Rockefeller Hall afforded opportunities for the development of an eminently practical side of his character and he was largely responsible for the planning and successful operation of the liquid air plant and for many other important features in the equipment of the laboratory.

Later on Professor Shearer turned his attention particularly to the development of courses in X-rays for students of medicine and in connection with this work he acquired a knowledge which included with almost equal intimacy the theoretical, technical and therapeutic aspects of radiology. In this specialty he became an eminent authority and his advice was sought far and wide by physicists, instrument makers and physicians.

Upon the entrance of the United States into the world war Professor Shearer was called to the service of his country and was charged with the development and organization of the X-ray equipment of the army and with the training of its personnel for field and hospital duty at home and abroad. For his distinguished services in France he was three times decorated and received among other honors the *medaille d'honneur*. In 1919 he retired from the Sanitary Corps with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

There is reason to believe that Professor Shearer's early death was due to his exertions in war service and that he is to be counted among those who gave their lives for the country. In him the Trustees and Faculty have lost a valued colleague, the community a public spirited citizen and the sciences of Physics and Radiology a worker of eminence and renown.

*Source: Fac. Rec, p. 1290 Resolutions Adopted by The Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University June, Nineteen Hundred And Twenty-Two*

Instructor, Assistant Professor and Professor of Physics, 1893 — 1922