

Fred Asa Barnes

June 17, 1876 — April 5, 1950

Fred Asa Barnes, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering, died on April 5, 1950 at Pleasant Valley, Connecticut, where he and Mrs. Barnes lived since leaving Ithaca in 1949. He was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, June 17, 1876, the son of Albert W. and Una M. (Thompson) Barnes. He graduated from Cornell University, obtaining the C. E. degree in 1897 and M. C. E. in 1898. He was married on April 15, 1903 to Bertha Lula Birdsall, who survives him together with one daughter, Mary Louise Hall also of Pleasant Valley, and two grandsons, Nicholas B. and Stephen M. Eddy, both of whom attended the School of Civil Engineering to which Professor Barnes devoted more the forty years of his life.

Before entering his real life work of teaching Professor Barnes spent four years in a variety of engineering positions, first in the District Engineer's Office at Washington, D. C, and later in Cuba, working successively for the Hydrographic Office at Santiago, for the Ponupo Mining Company, and for Hugh Reilly, consulting engineer. In September 1902 he was appointed an instructor in what was then the College of Civil Engineering, thus beginning a teaching and administrative career that continued until his retirement in 1944. He was promoted to the grade of assistant professor in 1905 and was made Professor of Railroad Engineering in 1915. When in 1920 the College of Civil Engineering became the School of Civil Engineering, Professor Barnes became the School's first Director which position he held until 1930.

Throughout his many years of service he played a prominent part in solving the educational and administrative problems of the College and School, being particularly interested in his own department of Railroad Engineering. He was responsible for the initiating and organizing of many new courses in the curriculum, including Railroad Operation and Management, Railroad Construction and Maintenance of Way, Costkeeping and Management, Engineering Construction, and Transportation.

Professor Barnes was joint author with Professor C. L. Crandall of two textbooks, one on "Railroad Surveying" and another on "Railroad Construction". He also wrote many articles dealing with the design, operation and management of railroads, and with other aspects of the transportation field. He was an enthusiastic and active member of numerous professional and honorary societies. The honorary societies included Sigma Xi, Tau Beta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi and Chi Epsilon; and his professional affiliations included life membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers, honorary membership in the Steuben Area Chapter of the New York State Society of

Professional Engineers, and membership in the American Railway Engineering Association, the American Society for Engineering Education, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was particularly interested in the Ithaca Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and it was through his personal efforts that this local section was founded in 1932. He was one of the Section's early presidents and his enthusiasm and wise counsel contributed in a large measure to its continued successful operation.

One of Professor Barnes' remarkable characteristics was his ability to remember the names and faces of Civil Engineering alumni. For many years he kept up to date a file of their addresses and occupations. It is probably true that no member of the faculty has ever done more to create and maintain a strong bond between the alumni group and the School of Civil Engineering and Cornell University. As a consequence few faculty members were ever more popular with returning alumni on their visits in Ithaca.

Cornell alumni have lost a real friend, and the faculty a highly regarded colleague, in the passing of Professor Barnes. He will be kindly and gratefully remembered for his genial personality, his warm sympathy, his willingness to advise and help all who came to consult him, and his strong loyalty to the School and to the University.

W. R. Cornell, J. E. Perry, R. Y. Thatcher