

Adam Capen Gill

Professor of Mineralogy and Petrography

August 22, 1863 — November 8, 1932

Death came suddenly in the evening of Tuesday, November eighth, 1932, to Adam Capen Gill, Professor of Mineralogy and Petrography. Earlier in that day he had engaged in animated discussion of the issues of the national election with some of his colleagues. It is thought that a minor physical strain suffered in the afternoon induced conditions that caused his death a few hours later.

Professor Gill was born at Chesterville, Maine, August 22, 1863. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Amherst College in 1884, and, in 1893, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Munich where he studied with Groth who later spoke of Gill as his most brilliant pupil.

In 1894 Adam Capen Gill was called to Cornell University as assistant professor of mineralogy and petrography, and in 1910 he was promoted to the full professorship. In June of the academic year 1931-32 he was retired with the title of Professor Emeritus, after thirty-eight years of service.

Professor Gill had outstanding ability as a teacher and devoted himself without reservation to his pupils. Both undergraduate and graduate students who had work with Professor Gill often declared that he was the most competent and inspiring of the instructors with whom they had come in contact. Although his teaching was primarily directed to give an understanding of the branches specifically in his charge, he also maintained that a division of knowledge into branches was mere convention, and that a teacher should be free to use the content and interpretations of other fields in serving the general cause of education.

Professor Gill kept abreast of the advances in his own subjects and on many topics his ideas were ahead of investigations in progress. Such ideas he gave freely to his students and colleagues, and in consequence he gained wide recognition outside Cornell University and was known as an authority in his field. His chief legacy to science is the considerable group of pupils who, as investigators and teachers, are doing significant work in mineralogy and petrography.

Those who were intimately acquainted with Professor Gill found him a friendly, genial, sympathetic man with whom they could always advise to advantage. He was actively engaged in the preparation of a book on Crystallography, a cherished project, during the months following his retirement from teaching. The loss caused through his death will be deeply felt by the University community.

Source: Faculty Records, p. 1764 Resolutions of the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University, September, Nineteen Hundred And Thirty-Three

Retirement: Faculty Records, p. 1748