

Emile Monnin Chamot

March 4, 1868 — July 27, 1950

Emile Monnin Chamot was born in Buffalo, and attended the public schools of that city. He received the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1891 and the doctorate in chemistry in 1897, both from Cornell University. The following year was spent in Europe, studying at the Universities of Nancy and Delft.

During his period of service at Cornell Chamot gave instruction in various branches of chemistry specializing in toxicology and sanitary chemistry, and later also in chemical microscopy. He was largely responsible for introducing the latter field to American chemists, by many lectures before scientific and technical societies, and by his pioneer book “Elementary Chemical Microscopy”, published in 1915 and succeeded in 1928 by the “Handbook of Chemical Microscopy”.

During World War I he carried on extensive studies of small arms ammunition for the Ordnance Department, and was a consultant on explosives during World War II.

In 1924-25 Chamot was appointed an exchange professor in chemical microscopy, visiting a score or more of French Universities, a representative of seven American Universities. In 1937 he was awarded the Longstreth Medal of the Franklin Institute, “for meritorious work in chemical microscopy”. Chamot’s interest in sanitary chemistry was the basis of invaluable service in testing Ithaca’s water supplies during the typhoid epidemic of 1904, and of a long association with the development and control of the purification systems for the city and the university. In 1906 he acted as consultant in a similar epidemic in Scranton.

A large share of the planning and supervision of the construction of the Baker Laboratory of Chemistry was his responsibility—evidence of the engineering bent that was so useful in his technical consulting work.

A lover of nature from his childhood, a student of the biological sciences as well as of chemistry, eminently practical and realistic in the application of his diverse knowledge, Chamot was ever generous with advice and experimental assistance to faculty and students in the Department of Chemistry.

He particularly enjoyed his collaboration in border-line problems with colleagues in biology, geology, archeology, physics and engineering, and continued active in research after his retirement in 1938. He is survived by his wife, Cora Genung Chamot.