

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT



DR. GEORGE BURTON RIGG

George Burton Rigg was born near Woodbine, Iowa, on February 9, 1872 and died on July 10, 1961. His boyhood on an Iowa farm instigated his interests in plants and nature at an early age, and he was active in this field up to a year or so before his death at an age of over 89 years. His botanical interests and background were broad and varied, but his first love was ecology and in this field, he was especially interested in Sphagnum bogs, which were very common in the Puget Sound area when he first went to Washington in 1907 as a high school teacher. In 1909 he became an instructor in botany at the University of Washington, Seattle, was one of the trimverate of botany at that institution until 1937 when new staff members were added. The other two were Dr. T. C. Frye who went to Washington in 1903 and Dr. J. W. Hotson in 1911. Dr. Rigg was chairman of the department from 1940-42.

Dr. Rigg took his B.S. at the University of Iowa in 1896, his M.S. at the University of Washington in 1909, and his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1914. Under the influence of Henry C. Cowles, Chicago, he became interested in plant succession and physiographic ecology, out of which developed his interest in Sphagnum bogs. While most of Rigg's research was concerned with Sphagnum bogs he also did some work on marine algae and made field investigations of Pacific Coast kelps in the San Juan Islands and Alaska during the summers of 1911, 1912, and 1913. His studies of Sphagnum bogs were concerned chiefly with peat stratigraphy,

typology, vegetative composition of peat, and bog flora. Although most of his bog work was done in the Pacific Northwest, Rigg also made investigations in Alaska, British Columbia, Minnesota, Ohio, West Virginia and the New England States. He published some 50 papers in this field.

During his later active years, Dr. Rigg collaborated with Howard R. Gould in tracing the distribution of volcanic ash from Glacier Peak in North America by its occurrence in peat bogs. Rigg's most extensive piece of research is embodied in "Peat Resources of Washington," published by the Washington State Division of Mines and Geology in the Department of Conservation in 1958. This 272-page report presents a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the peat areas in the State of Washington, showing the distribution, location, and extent of peat deposits with their profiles and stratigraphic development and peat typology. Dr. Rigg was active in the field work for this project which was begun in 1949 and completed in 1953, when he was over 80 years old.

During his career as a teacher, Rigg taught thousands of students in botany, and served as major professor for many graduate students. His understanding, helpfulness, and sympathy for the young botanist were an inspiration, and his excellent teaching helped to reveal the world of plant life to both professional and amateur. In tribute to his long life as an ecologist and teacher, he received the title of "Eminent Ecologist" from the Ecological Society of America in 1956, a recognition well deserved by a scholar, a teacher, a scientist, and a gentleman. Henry P. Hansen, Oregon State University, Corvallis.