

# Henry Neely Ogden

*April 30, 1868 — September 29, 1947*

Henry Neely Ogden was born on April 30, 1868 at Dexter, Maine, the son of the Rev. Charles Talcott Ogden, and a descendant of John Ogden an Englishman, who emigrated to Long Island in 1640 and who finally settled in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in 1664.

As a boy Henry Neely Ogden attended Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia for two years, and Cheltenham Academy in Cheltenham, a suburb of Philadelphia, for five years. During these years he resided with an aunt, Miss Frances E. Bennett, principal of the Ogontz School, and had an opportunity of observing the daily life and problems and compensations of one engaged in teaching as a calling. At Cheltenham Academy he was awarded the Fold Medal for general scholastic excellence.

In fact, when the time came for him to enter college his father and his mother would have preferred to have him prepare himself to enter the ministry, but while the idea appealed to him his interest in things mechanical and his diffidence about speaking in public at that time led him to matriculate in September 1885, in the College of Civil Engineering at Cornell University, from which he was graduated in June 1889 with the degree of Civil Engineer.

From the time of his graduation in 1889 until the time of his death in 1947 his interest in Civil Engineering, particularly in the field of Sanitary Engineering and Public Health, and in the work of the Episcopal Church led him to undertake numerous and overlapping activities.

In September 1889 he became an instructor in the College of Civil Engineering at Cornell University, remaining at such until June 1892. Having decided to obtain professional experience in Sanitary Engineering, he obtained employment with the Sanitary District of Chicago where, from June 1892 to June 1893, he gained experience as transitman, and in the office. From June 1893 to June 1894 he practiced engineering at Norfolk, Virginia, with J. E. Hill, under the firm name of Hill and Ogden. From June to October 1894 he was employed as City Engineer for the city of Deering, Maine. However, in October 1894 his interest in teaching as a vocation led him to return to Cornell University as an instructor and from that time until his death on September 29, 1947 he remained a member of the Civil Engineering Faculty at Cornell, serving as Asst. Professor from 1898 to 1908; as Professor from July 1, 1908 to July 1, 1938; and as Professor Emeritus from July 1, 1938 to the time of his death.

During his period of service as a member of the Civil Engineering Faculty he availed himself of sabbatic leaves on

three occasions: February to June in 1906 and in 1914, and from September 1925 to February 1926. Concurrently with his return to Cornell as an instructor in 1894 he began actively to engage in Sanitary and Public Health Engineering, and in the work of the Episcopal Church.

From 1895 until the time of his death he was employed in numerous engineering and other activities, in addition to his teaching duties. As an engineer and a consultant he served the cities of Ithaca, N. Y.; Akron, Ohio; Binghamton, N. Y.; Grove City, Pa.; Sandpoint, Idaho; Groton, N. Y.; Richmond, Indiana; the New York State Health Department; the public Health Council of the State of New York; and the Government of Cuba.

As an author, in addition to numerous articles of a technical character, he wrote three books: "Sewer Design" in 1899, "Sewer Construction" in 1908, "Rural Hygiene" in 1913, and was a joint author with H. B. Cleveland of "Practical Methods of Sewage Disposal for Residences, Hotels, and Institutions" in 1912.

During his sophomore year in college, again in 1890 and a third time in 1910 he visited Europe going to England, Germany and France to study and inspect the construction and operation of sewerage works. Numerous lantern slides prepared from photographs taken on the last trip attest to his regard for European practice, and now form a part of the educational equipment of the Department of Sanitary Engineering at Cornell University. When he began his career as a teacher of Sanitary Engineering the engineers of this country depended largely upon the result of research at the Lawrence, Mass. Experiment Station and upon European experience and practice. Professor Ogden's high regard for foreign practice is further attested by his attendance at the International Congress of Hygiene held at Brighton, England, in 1890 and his membership in the Royal Sanitary Institute of England. The esteem in which he was held by his English contemporaries is evidenced by his election to honorary membership in the Association of Managers of Sewage Disposal Plants of England, and by his appointment by the Council of the Royal Sanitary Institute to be one of the delegates from the Institute to the International Engineering Congress at San Francisco in June, 1915.

He claimed gardening and carpentry as hobbies, but considered Administrative Church Control as a special avocation. His service as a Trustee at St. Faith's School at Saratoga Springs, N. Y. and of St. Stephen's College, (now known as Bard College) at Annandale, N. Y.; his active participation in the life of St. John's Episcopal Church of Ithaca, over a period of sixty-two years, serving the church for forty-two years as vestryman and warden; his many years of service as a lay delegate to the annual conventions of the diocese, a delegate to the Provincial Synods, and a deputy from the diocese to six General Conventions; his membership in the Diocesan Council and on the

Provincial Board of Religious Education; furnish ample evidence that he had a special interest in such work, and that his father's career exerted a marked influence upon his activity.

As a teacher his success was unquestioned by those who knew him—Colleagues and students alike. Almost to the time of his retirement he was the fortunate possessor of a strong physique which enabled him to work long hours and to carry on numerous activities concurrently. His keen and energetic mind; his constant urge to more activity; his analytical ability and his varied experience which enabled him to present the subject matter of the occasion to his students in a stimulating manner; his early recognition of the value, to the engineer, of a training broader than technical subject matter, which led him to offer instruction in a course dealing with the association of engineers with municipal officials, and in another course involving the use of the written word and called "Technical Reports"; made him an outstanding member of the Faculty of the College during his long career as a teacher. The exhibit which he prepared for the Fifteenth International Congress on Hygiene held at Washington, D. C. in September and October 1912 received a Diploma of Merit awarded to the "Department of Sanitary Engineering, College of Civil Engineering, Cornell University" . . . "for an exhibit of its practical methods of Instruction," and demonstrated his belief in an educational effort extending beyond the classroom.

As a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and a registered professional civil engineer; as a member of the American Society of Municipal Improvements, the Royal Sanitary Institute of Great Britain and the New York State Sewage Works Association; as a member of the honorary scientific society of Sigma Xi; as a trustee of three colleges, including Wells College not previously mentioned; as one who assumed an active part and rendered much service to his College, his church, his home city, and his state, Professor Ogden leaves an enviable record of accomplishment and one which will serve as an incentive and a challenge to those who follow.

*Ernest Merritt, P. H. Underwood, C. L. Walker*