



**EDWARD ASAHHEL BIRGE**  
**1851-1950**

The death of Edward A. Birge on June 9, 1950, marked the end of the longest and one of the most distinguished careers in the field of hydrobiology. Born at Troy, New York, on September 7, 1851, Dr. Birge attended Williams College, receiving the A.B. degree in 1873 and the A.M. degree in 1876, and Harvard University where, in 1878, he received the Ph.D. degree. The year 1880-1881 was spent in Leipzig, Germany, studying physiology under Carl Ludwig.

Birge's long and fruitful career of teaching, research, and administration at the University of Wisconsin began in 1875. He was chairman of the Department of Zoology from its beginning until 1906. In 1891, he was made Dean of the College of Letters and Science. From 1900 until 1903, he served as Acting President and between 1918 and 1925, as President of the University. His unusual capacity for serving state and national organizations was appropriately recognized and utilized. He was commissioner of fisheries for

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Wisconsin (1895-1915), a member of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission (1908-1915), commissioner of forestry (1907-1915), director of the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (1897-1919), president of the American Microscopical Society (1902), president of the American Fisheries Society (1907), and president of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters (1890 and 1918-1921). The wide recognition of his attainments is evidenced by honorary doctors degrees conferred upon him by the University of Pittsburgh, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University of Wisconsin and the University of Missouri.

The early research interests of Dr. Birge lay in the taxonomy of the Cladocera, of which group he is considered the pioneer American student, in the ecology of fresh water lakes, and during his later years, in the physics and chemistry of lake waters. The extensive publications by him and his associates on the ecology of Wisconsin lakes have played a dominant role in the origin and development of the science of limnology.

Dr. Birge was a scholar possessed of broad intellect, of inspirational leadership, and of brilliant imagination. His passing marks the end of a long and distinguished record of academic achievements.

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