

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT



Ezra Henry Moss

1892 — 1963

Ezra Henry Moss, eminent Canadian botanist and formerly Head of the Department of Botany at the University of Alberta, died on February 8, 1963 at Edmonton, Alberta. Dr. Moss had remained active and productive after his retirement in 1957 until the onset of his illness which confined him to hospital on November 19, 1962.

Born in Thorndale, Ontario on April 11, 1892, Ezra H. Moss did his undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Toronto and received the B.A. in 1916, the M.A. in 1920, and the Ph.D. in 1925. Although his teaching career began at Toronto, where he was an assistant in botany for two years, the major portion of his working years was spent at the University of Alberta at Edmonton, Alberta. He joined the faculty there as a lecturer in 1921, became Assistant Professor in 1926, Associate Professor in 1934, and served as Professor and Head of the Department of Botany from 1938 until his retirement in 1957. His final teaching assignment was as Visiting Professor at the University of Western Ontario in 1959-60. During the first World War he served in the Signal Corps of the Canadian Army from 1916 to 1919, being awarded the Military Medal "For bravery in the field." Dr. Moss was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Ecological Society of America, the Botanical Society of America, the Mycological Society, and was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Dr. Moss is survived by his widow, Margaret and two married daughters, Eleanor and Marion.

Dr. Moss' most significant research contribution involved the description and interpretation of environmental effects on composition of plant communities in Alberta. During these investigations he became interested in various problems concerning the component species, with the result that he wrote several papers on morphology and autecology, and finally, in 1959, after his retirement he completed the first flora of Alberta.

Prior to his arrival in Alberta only one short paper had been published on the native plant communities of that province. Dr. Moss cooperated in these efforts of F. J. Lewis and went on to produce several major papers which resulted in an understanding of the interrelations between the various plant communities throughout the province. The first of these was concerned with swamp, moor and bog forest vegetation, a project in which he cooperated with F. J. Lewis his departmental head, and with E. S. Dowding. He then turned his attention to the poplar forest and produced a major work in 1932. Later he worked in the grassland region and wrote significant papers on the southern grassland in 1944 and 1947, as well as a very interesting report on an isolated grassland region far within the forest zone (in 1952). In later years he again studied the forests and bogs of northern areas. These studies culminated in his monumental review paper on the vegetation of Alberta. This work is valuable as representing a uniform treatment by the same author of the vegetation of an extensive area of Western Canada.

Dr. Moss was a pioneer working in a region where contacts with botanical colleagues were few. He was not, therefore, aided in his vegetation studies by taxonomic research of others.. He found it necessary to collect, identify, and catalogue large numbers of plant specimens. The herbarium which he built up contains more than 10,000 sheets of his own collections. This collection would have been used by many ecologists only as a tool for vegetation research, but Dr. Moss persisted in its study to the point where he was able to publish a major flora which marks the first milestone in taxonomic study of that province.

During his research on the vegetation and flora he became interested in several problems. He wrote four papers on the formation of interxylary cork in stems and roots of both herbaceous and woody perennials. His researches in autecology included a valuable contribution on the longevity of seed and establishment of seedlings in species of *Populus*. Among his other contributions to the ecology and taxonomy of the flora included work on *Lilaea scilloides*, *Pinus* spp., *Ambrosia artemisifolia* and *Galeopsis speciosa*. While his major interest was the vascular plants, three of his papers dealt with lower plants (rusts, bryophytes and puff-balls).

Students of vegetation owe Dr. Moss a very great debt because of his persistence in investigating the natural vegetation of a relatively primitive area in the face of several obstacles. His researches were conducted in regions which were difficult to reach and in which none of the amenities of life was available. Many of these activities took place at a time when a financial depression interfered not only with the supply of funds for research, but prevented the availability of laboratory staff which would have been of great advantage in relieving him of minor clerical duties, particularly in regard to the herbarium. Botany has not usually been an important consideration in the establishment of universities in pioneer communities and Alberta was no exception. Ezra H. Moss will be missed on the Canadian landscape.

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