

Hugh McCormick Smith

(21 Nov 1865 – 28 Sep 1941)

Smith. On Sunday, September 28, 1941 at his residence, 1209 M street northwest, Dr. Hugh McCormick Smith, husband of Emma H Smith and father of Mrs. Edmund Vincent Cowdry and Mrs. Harry Claudy and brother of Mrs. Frederick W. Klingelhofer. Services at Gawler's chapel, 1750 Pennsylvania avenue northwest on Wednesday, October 1 at 2 p.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery.



The Evening Star, September 29, 1941, A10

Dr. Hugh McCormick Smith, Ex-Chief of Fisheries, Dead Famous Scientist Had Made Studies Throughout World

Dr. Hugh McCormick Smith, internationally prominent ichthyologist and former United States commissioner of fisheries, died yesterday at his home, 1209 M street N.W. Dr. Smith, who was connected with the United States fisher service for 36 years, was commissioner from 1913 to 1922, having served as deputy commissioner from 1903. He was adviser in fisheries to the Siamese government from 1923 to 1934.

He was born in Washington, November 21, 1865, the son of Thomas Croggon and Cornelia Hazard Smith, and was educated at Central High School and the Medical School of Georgetown University, from which he received his medical degree in 1888. He also received an LL. D. degree from Dickinson in 1908.

Entered Service in 1886

Dr. Smith's interest in scientific work was awakened while he was still in high school by Prof. Spencer Baird, who was commissioner when Dr. Smith entered the Fish Commission in 1886. He was assistant in charge of the division of fishery industries from 1893 to 1897, and from then until 1903 was assistant in charge of inquiry on food fishes and fishing grounds.

In 1900 he was named to represent the Government at the first international fishery congress at Paris, and represented the country at the third congress at Vienna in 1905 and served as secretary general of the fourth congress held here in 1908.

In 1901 and 1902 he was director of the marine fisheries biological laboratory at Woods Hole, Mass., and from 1907 to 1910 served as director of a Government expedition to investigate development of fisheries in the Philippine Islands. Dr. Smith was a member of the medical faculty of Georgetown University from 1888 to 1902.

Dr. Smith was named expert special assistant to the United States counsel at the arbitration hearing of the North Atlantic fisheries dispute held at The Hague in 1910, and was appointed by President Taft the same year as a member of the international commission for the settlement of disputes arising with Canada and Newfoundland under the award of the Hague tribunal. Two years later he represented this Government on the permanent international council for the exploration of the sea and the following year was appointed by the President as joint commissioner on behalf of the country for the control of fisheries in the boundary waters of the United States and Canada.

International Studies

In the 21 years from 1900 to 1921, Dr. Smith investigated fisheries in Canada, France, Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, the Philippines, Borneo and Ceylon. He also made a number of extended trips in this country.

At the time of his resignation in 1922, he was the only fish commissioner since the establishment of the bureau who had risen from the bottom to the top. When Herbert Hoover, was Secretary of Commerce he wrote of Dr. Smith:

"I believe your service for 36 years, rising from the bottom to the top, in one of our great scientific bureaus, is unique in the history of the Government."

Dr. Smith not only put into effect many constructive economic measures in commercial fisheries regulations and discovered a number of new species, but confirmed the existence of the "archer fish." This fish, by propulsion of a drop of water along its grooved tongue could bring down insect prey from branches well out of water.

In 1923 Dr. Smith was invited by the royal government of Siam to become special assistant to the crown to study and develop the fisheries of that country and three years later was named director of the Siamese Department of Fisheries. He dealt directly with the royal brothers and brothers-in-law in high government positions. Dr. Smith was given a residence, a laboratory with assistants and two boats.

On Smithsonian Staff

Since his return from Siam, Dr. Smith had been engaged in research work in regard to Siamese fish and had almost completed an elaborate monograph on fresh-water fish of Siam, with some 300 illustrations. He was associate curator of zoology at the Smithsonian Institute and had gone to his office there until the latter part of last week.

Dr. Smith had written a number of articles and papers on ichthyology for Government and other publications. He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, member of the American Ornithologists Union, American Society of Naturalists, American Fisheries Society, serving as president, 1907-8; president of the Biological Society of Washington in 1919, member of the District Medical Society, a member of the Cosmos Club and a vice president of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants.

Held Many Medals

Dr. Smith was the holder of a number of medals, including a gold medal from a fishery exposition in Bergen, Norway, in 1898; a medal in the same year from the Trans-Mississippi International Exposition, Omaha, for services in preparing exhibit of the Bureau of Fisheries; silver medal award in 1908 from the Imperial and Royal Austrian Society; several bronze commemorative medals from Siam and a commemorative medal in 1931, following cruise of a Danish research vessel.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Emma H. Smith, and two daughters, Mrs. Carl H. Claudy, jr., of Washington, and Mrs. E.V. Cowdry of St. Louis, Mo.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., Wednesday at Gawler's funeral home, 1750 Pennsylvania avenue n.w., with burial in Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, September 30, 1941, p. A10

Rites to Be Tomorrow For Dr. Hugh McC. Smith

Funeral services for Dr. Hugh McCormick Smith, famed ichthyologist and former commissioner of fisheries, who died Sunday at his home, 1209 M street N.W., will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Gawler's chapel, 1750 Pennsylvania avenue N.W. He will be buried in Congressional Cemetery.

Among the honorary pallbearers will be a number connected with the Smithsonian Institution, where Dr. Smith was associate curator of zoology. They are: Dr. Charles G. Abbott, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Dr. Leonard Stejneger, Dr. Paul Bartsch and H.S. Bryant.

Other honorary pallbearers named were Rudolph Max Kauffmann, Dr. A.K. Fisher, Dr. Paul Galtsoff, Dr. S.F. Hildebrand, Dr. R.W. Baker, Dr. William Charles White, Col. William Lyster, Dr. Lewis Radcliffe and Dr. John M. Hanford.

The six active pallbearers will be Dr. Waldo Schmitt, Dr. Herbert Deignan, Dr. Leonard Schultz, Carl H. Claudy, jr., Dr. William D. Claudy and W.F. Barto.