

EDGAR BILLINGS HOWARD, 1887–1943

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EDGAR B. HOWARD died at San Diego, California, March 18, 1943. His death occurred, as he doubtless would have wished, while he was at work for his country at his post in the Engineering Department of the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation. Having failed, because of the condition of his heart, to receive the army appointment to active service that he had sought, in September he removed with his family to La Jolla, California, so that he might both engage in defense work and be close to ancient archaeological sites. In his death American archaeology loses a sound, enthusiastic, and thorough student, Philadelphia an unusually public-spirited citizen, his family a beloved husband and father, and his colleagues a loyal, cheerful, admired, and lovable friend.

Though born in New Orleans February 28, 1887, the son of Frank Turner and Emma Cora Howard, Edgar Howard passed his adult years in the Philadelphia region, making his home in Bryn Mawr. On October 1, 1910, he married Elizabeth Newhall, who, with five sons, four of whom are now in their country's service, survives him.

After preparation at St. Paul's School he attended Yale University and graduated with the degree of Ph.B. from the Sheffield Scientific School in 1909. After a few years in business he served his country as Captain in the 313th Infantry during the First World War. He saw active service overseas and was made Liaison Officer, owing to his knowledge of French. His fellow officers and men loved and admired him, remarking that he would never send a man where he would not go himself. After the war he again engaged in business until 1928 when he retired to devote himself to scientific research. From that time on, his primary interests were in archaeology, geology, and paleontology. He received his M.A. degree in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930 and his Doctorate in the Department of Geology in 1935. His thesis on *Early Man in North America* was published by the University Museum (see bibliography). For several years his major interest varied between archaeology and paleontology, but finally centered in the problem on which the two sciences most closely collaborate, that of most ancient man; in this field he limited his studies to America and contiguous Asia.

Dr. Howard was connected with several different institutions and in all of them he took a prominent part in planning policies and activities. From 1934 on, he was Research Associate of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and since 1939, Research Associate of the Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe. His most active associations,

however, were with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania, and the University Museum.

He took a great interest in the affairs of the Department of Earth Sciences during his close association there. In 1938, at his instigation, a joint committee of the Department and of the Academy of Natural Sciences was formed for the purpose of cooperation between these organizations and for the expansion and improvement of the Department and the reorganization of its curriculum. Dr. Howard was secretary of this committee. As a result of its recommendations the name of the Department was changed from "Geology and Mineralogy" to "Earth Sciences," and the present four-year course in the earth sciences was established. Dr. Howard was appointed Special Lecturer in Paleontology and for one year gave lectures on the evolution of man and in the field of vertebrate paleontology.

Dr. Howard became a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1924, was appointed Research Associate in 1931, and was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1935; he resigned from the latter position in 1938. In 1936 he was appointed Acting Curator of the Department of Geology and Paleontology and for several years maintained his personal office at the Academy. During his association with the Academy he conducted a number of expeditions to the southwestern states in search of early man and his association with extinct fauna. Some of these expeditions were financed entirely by the Academy, others jointly with the University Museum.

One of Howard's most important accomplishments during his association with the Academy of Natural Sciences was the organization of the *International Symposium on Early Man*, held at the Academy March 17–20, 1937, in connection with the celebration of the Academy's 125th Anniversary. The idea was his, and he was appointed Secretary of the organizing committee. The symposium was one of the most outstanding and successful of its kind ever held in this country, with authorities from all over the world attending and reading papers. Thirty-six of these were later collected and published under the title "Early Man" (Philadelphia, 1937). It is characteristic of Edgar Howard's modesty that, though he was the moving spirit and organizer, he did not contribute an article on his own investigations to appear in this outstanding work. But he is seen at work in the anonymous frontispiece.

Dr. Howard became a Research Associate of the University Museum in 1929 and held this position until 1942 when he was made Research Fellow. He always took a lively interest in the activities of the

Museum, and during the last years of his life almost all his interests centered there. He conducted several expeditions for the Museum. He was instrumental in having the University Museum set aside a sum of money for grants-in-aid for research on early man in America and headed the committee for the allocation of such grants. Only a few months before his death he was elected Vice-Director. His cheerful personality and wise counsel will be greatly missed by his colleagues.

His civic and philanthropic activities played a large part in Dr. Howard's life, but one of course slightly known to his archaeological colleagues. He took his public obligations as conscientiously as his scientific ones. Throughout his life, as a trustee, he took a great interest in the welfare of the Howard Memorial Library in New Orleans, founded by his grandfather. He served for a number of years as a member of the Radnor Township Board of School Directors, part of this time as President of the Board. He was also a member of the Boards of Directors or Trustees of several Philadelphia hospitals and other philanthropic institutions. For more than a year he was head of the Philadelphia Committee for the Care of European Children, an activity that occupied almost all his time, to the detriment of his scientific research. He was an honorary member of the First City Troop of Philadelphia.

Dr. Howard belonged to Delta Psi and to Sigma Xi fraternities, to the Boston Club of New Orleans and the Yale Club of Philadelphia. He was a member of most of the national anthropological societies and of several local ones in the East and Southwest. In 1938 he was president of the Society for American Archaeology.

By limiting his interests and activities strictly to one comprehensive topic Dr. Howard rapidly became one of the foremost authorities in the field of earliest man in America. From 1929 to 1935 inclusive he conducted excavations in New Mexico and Texas, his most important work being at Burnet Cave and at Clovis. In 1938 he added Nebraska and Saskatchewan to his itinerary, and in 1941 excavated in Wyoming. For the purpose of studying archaeological objects from eastern Siberia that might resemble American material he visited Russia in 1935. Probably no other archaeologist working in this field had such a good background in geology and paleontology, or such wide acquaintance with specialists in these lines. He stressed the necessity of collaboration between archaeology and these other sciences in the solution of problems. He always conducted his excavations in collaboration with some geologist, and his reports were frequently published jointly with a geologist.

An outstanding characteristic of Dr. Howard's scientific approach was that he was not satisfied merely to obtain new evidence on some

moot point and to record it properly. He spent much thought and effort on the problem of making it quickly useful, that is, of having it, along with other increments of factual knowledge, considered and adjudicated by his colleagues. One of his chief aims, which is not very apparent in his publications, was to reduce the area of controversy by frequent conferences and by cooperative planning of field studies. Had he lived, after the war he would undoubtedly have attempted to establish some sort of clearing-house for the exchange of information and of specialized assistance in matters relating to the problem of early man in America.

Another facet of his character known to only a few friends was a readiness to go far out of his way in helping and encouraging younger men to come into his field.

Friendliness, modesty, and an ability to work with others were among Edgar Howard's outstanding personal characteristics. In his scientific work he was thorough and conservative. His death is a great loss to American archaeology.

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