



Collier Cobb and Allen D. Hole: Geologic Mentors to Early American Soil Scientists

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Many influential individuals involved in the early United States soil survey program were trained as geologists rather than as agronomists or soil scientists. Several geology departments served as pipelines for students interested in a career in soil survey. This presentation looks at the professional history of two early mentors of these geologists turned soil surveyors and some of the students they sent on to the U.S. soil survey and other soil science careers. Collier Cobb (University of North Carolina) sent over 10 students to the soil survey starting in 1900 when U.S. soil survey was in its infancy, including individuals of note such as Hugh H. Bennett, George N. Coffey, Williamson E. Hearn, and Thomas D. Rice. Allen D. Hole (Earlham College, Indiana) worked on soil surveys for the state of Indiana and sent over a dozen students on to U.S. soil survey careers between 1911 and 1937, including Mark Baldwin and James Thorp. Francis Hole and Ralph McCracken, other students of Allen Hole, also went on to have distinguished soil science careers. These mentors and students clearly show the close ties that existed between soil science and geology in the United States during the early 1900s.