

Bernard Alfred Etcheverry, Civil Engineering and Irrigation: Berkeley

1881-1954

Professor of Drainage and Irrigation, Emeritus

Bernard Alfred Etcheverry served the University of California, Berkeley, continuously for forty-six years and for a total period of forty-seven years. His first appointment was as Instructor in Civil Engineering, held during the academic year 1902-1903. After two years as Associate Professor of Civil Engineering and Physics at the University of Nevada, he returned to Berkeley in 1905 to serve successively as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor of Irrigation and Drainage until his retirement in 1951. Throughout that time he acted first as Chairman of the Department, later the Division of Irrigation.

Professor Etcheverry was born in San Diego, California, on June 30, 1881; completed his high school work at Lycée de Bayonne, Académie de Bordeaux; and was graduated at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1902 as University Medalist, with a B.S. degree in civil engineering. He was married to Helen Hanson on August 6, 1903, at Berkeley. He had two sons, Bernard Earle Etcheverry and Alfred Starr Etcheverry. He died on October 26, 1954, in New Haven, Connecticut.

He was a member of Psi Epsilon fraternity and of six honor societies in the University--Phi Beta Kappa, Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, Chi Epsilon, Alpha Zeta, Sigma Iota Phi--and was awarded National Honor membership in Chi Epsilon in 1954. He was also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Geophysical Union. At various times he served on numerous committees of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and was President of its San Francisco Section in 1926, and a National Director of the Society during 1934-1937.

Professor Etcheverry was engineer on the construction of the Greek Theatre. During the early years of his teaching, his summers were spent on irrigation problems in western Canada and on an investigation of the use of concrete in irrigation systems. This latter work was performed in behalf of the Irrigation Investigations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In 1912 he had begun the preparation of his three-volume treatise, *Irrigation Practice and Engineering*. These were published during the years 1915-1917. They became and have remained through forty years standard treatments of the subjects covered. He thus gained recognition, both at home and abroad, as the leading author in this field. He was also author of *Land Drainage and Flood Protection*, first published in 1931.

Professor Etcheverry was continuously active in professional practice. From 1912 to 1917 he made investigations for the City of San Francisco of the uses of water from the Tuolumne River. In 1915 he was a member of the Board of Review for several projects of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, passing on repayments under these projects. He was consulting engineer for the State Reclamation Board from its organization in 1913 until his death, advising the Board on the many engineering and policy matters arising out of its supervision of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Drainage District. For several years he was a member of the Board of Appraisers assessing benefits resulting from the project of the State Reclamation Board. As the leading witness for the Board in litigation relating to those assessments, he successfully defended both the methods used (largely developed by him) and their results. In later years he served as one of the consulting appraisers for the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation in its acquirement of lands and water rights for its Central Valley Project.

He was a member of the consulting board which was appointed by the State Engineer to assist in the preparation of the State Water Plan adopted by the legislature in 1931, and continued to serve as a general consultant for the State Engineer on numerous special assignments. In 1945, at the time of its organization, he

was appointed by Governor Warren a member of the State Water Resources Board, and was its Vice-Chairman at the time of his death.

Professor Etcheverry acted as consulting engineer for many other public and private organizations during the course of his long career. These included a report on the water needs of Kern County made for that county. In recent years he was consulting engineer for the Kern County Land Company on its plans for water development. He had been a consulting engineer for the Kern River Water Storage District at the time of its activity. He was a member of the board to review the appraisal of the properties proposed to be acquired by the San Joaquin River Water Storage District. Other clients included the Madera Irrigation District and several of the reclamation districts in the Sacramento Valley. He was consulting engineer for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in litigation over water rights on Pit River, for the California-Oregon Power Company in matters involving Klamath Lake, and for the City of San Francisco in its early litigation with the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts. He was an expert witness for the Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District in litigation over water rights on Kaweah River.

Professor Etcheverry represented an outstanding example of the fortunate combination of an effective teacher of engineering and a successful practicing engineer. His high academic record demonstrated his scholastic abilities. His professional record demonstrated his ability to apply his knowledge to important problems in the field of irrigation engineering. His personal qualities enabled him to meet the contacts of the classroom, of professional practice, and the trying field of expert testimony in such a way as to secure and retain the respect and confidence of responsible persons in all of these fields.

Bernard Etcheverry was a man of extraordinary friendliness. He was highly regarded and deeply esteemed by his students and colleagues, alike. He was intensely loyal to his professional tasks and to his intimate friends.

S. T. Harding F. L. Hotes C. G. Hyde
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