

LESLIE GRAHAM BERRY

1878 - 1931

Leslie Graham Berry was the founder and president of the Southern Engineering Company of Charlotte, N. C. He passed away at the age of fifty-two and was well known for concrete design and steel construction. Berry Hall, a dormitory at North Carolina State College, and Berry Circle were named in his honor.

Mr. Berry was born in Camden County, North Carolina, September 16, 1878. His father was Isaac C. Berry and his mother was Pauline Bell Berry. They were both from the eastern section of the State.

Leslie Berry received his early education in the public schools of Washington, N. C. He went to Raleigh in September, 1896, and entered N.C. A and M. College, and after completing the four year course in Civil Engineering, he was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in 1900. After graduating he was instructor in drawing and mathematics at the College for a short period.

Then came a time when he gained valuable experience and advancement by holding different positions and traveling throughout the country. He worked in Alabama, Delaware, Pennsylvania and in Chicago. In 1904 he became contracting manager of the Des Moines Bridge and Iron Works, Des Moines, Iowa. On April 18, 1906, he was married to Miss Gracie Ellen Griswold, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Griswold of Des Moines; the former was an Iowa State Senator. To this union came two daughters, Pauline Marie and Helen Jean, and two sons, Leslie, Jr., and Floyd Griswold.

Mr. Berry became designing engineer for the Corrugated Bar Company in St. Louis, Missouri. While in St. Louis, he took a course in Concrete Engineering.

In June, 1911, he returned to North Carolina, his native state and

went into business for himself in Charlotte. He had valuable experience, the courage of his convictions, untiring energy, a genius for organization and a lovable and forceful personality, which qualities of mind and heart brought him success. He was a pioneer in reinforced concrete engineering in this section of the United States.

During the last year of his life, he spent much time at Langley Field, Virginia, where he did an outstanding engineering job in the design and supervision of a Full Scale Wind Tunnel for testing government airplanes. It was the largest wind tunnel in the world at the time. This project brought national wide recognition to Mr. Berry and to his firm.

The following is quoted from the N.C.State Alumni News, February, 1931, p.119:

"Leslie Graham Berry Passes  
Attained Fame in Design Concrete and Steel Construction"  
N.C.State Alumni News - February 1931, P.119

"Regarding Mr. Berry's work at Langley Field, Mr. H. J.E. Reid, engineer in charge, Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory writes: 'Many of our laboratory staff have had considerable to do with Mr. Berry during his stay at Langley Field in connection with the erection of our Full-Scale Wind Tunnel, and many of the problems which it was necessary to take up with Mr. Berry were of such nature that the relations could easily have been unpleasant, if not to say disagreeable. Owing to the splendid personality of Mr. Berry and his willingness to cooperate and render his best service, the relations were always very cordial and splendid. All of us feel that we have not only lost a good friend to deal with in a business way, but also a kindly personal friend.

and this atmosphere always surrounded him and his work. He was loved by all with whom he came in contact."

He was interested in civic affairs in Charlotte. He served on the Board of the City of Charlotte. He was a member of The First Presbyterian Church, The People of the Mystic Shrine, the Rotary Club, Engineers Club, Phi Kappa Phi Fraternity and the Myers Park Club. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees of North Carolina State College.

Before Mr. Perry died, contractors all over the country were talking about a new type of building construction known as the "Perry Method" which he had patented. The Poplar Apartment in Charlotte is an example of this method.