

## MAURICE GREER SMITH

*By Homer L. Dodge.*

Maurice Greer Smith was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, January 5, 1902. He was stricken with typhoid fever early in October and died at the University of Oklahoma Infirmary on October 22, 1930.

Doctor Smith began his college training at the University of North Dakota, where he completed his freshman year while working on a newspaper in Grand Forks. He left college to continue his newspaper work and for some time lived in North Dakota, Montana, and in the city of Chicago. In 1920 he matriculated in the University of Nebraska. Here he soon attracted the attention of the faculty by his intense eagerness for knowledge and his brilliant record as a student. He received his undergraduate degree in 1922, having majored in economics. In 1923 he took his master's degree in anthropology at the same institution. During the next two years he was an instructor in economics in the University of Nebraska and also taught anthropology during the absence of Professor Hutton Webster. Doctor Smith proved to be an excellent teacher and gave early promise of becoming a productive scholar in his chosen field.

In 1925 he was awarded a fellowship in anthropology and economics at the Robert Brookings Graduate School in Washington, D. C. During the summer of 1926 he taught anthropology in the summer session of the University of Minnesota. In the fall he returned to Washington where he completed his work for the doctorate in 1927. He was appointed assistant professor of sociology and anthropology in the University of Colorado where he remained until 1929 at which time he was made associate professor and head of the department of anthropology at the University of Oklahoma.

With characteristic thoroughness and enthusiasm Doctor Smith bent his energies as a teacher toward creating an interest in his subject and toward building up the department. His interests in research were of the kind that lent themselves to field work in Oklahoma, for he had always been interested in primitive economics and social institutions.

Oklahoma is rich in anthropological material, and soon after coming to Oklahoma Doctor Smith began his researches on the Peyote cult to which he devoted much time during the academic year of 1929-30, following this with ten weeks of active field work during the summer. This study began as a local project among the Indians of Oklahoma, but as the work progressed it developed into a problem that was national in its scope and would have taken Doctor Smith to every reservation in the country during the next few years. In August, 1930, he was invited to come to the Bureau of Ethnology in Washington, D. C., to work over the Peyote material in the files with the hope that he would be able to use some of the unpublished material in connection with his own studies. Doctor Smith's work had attracted the attention of eminent anthropologists and was receiving encour-

agement from many sources. In his field work during the past summer he was assisted by a grant-in-aid from the National Research Council.

Doctor Smith had a keen interest in his students and encouraged them in all phases of their college work. His vital interest in anthropology and the energetic manner in which he pursued his work have been an inspiration to many, both students and colleagues.

Doctor Smith was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Anthropological Association, the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, the American Folk-Lore Society, and the Oklahoma Academy of Science. His published works, quite extensive for a man of his years, were an indication of what he would have been able to accomplish had he been spared for the normal span of human life. His master's thesis on "A Council Among the Plains Indians" was published in the University of Nebraska Studies; an article in "Anthropology" was published in the University of Nebraska Science Reports in 1923; a summary of his master's thesis had been accepted for publication by the American Anthropologist. He had contributed numerous short articles and reviews to the Journal of Sociology, the American Economist, the Journal of Social Forces, and the American Athropologist, as well as to various newspapers and popular periodicals.