



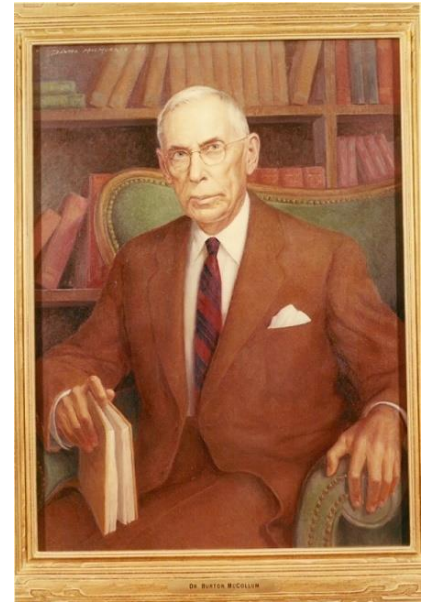
CLAN MACCALLUM - MALCOLM SOCIETY

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Burton McCollum (1880 - 1964)

Burton graduated from the University of Kansas in 1903, with a degree in Electrical Engineering. That same year, while still a student, he filed his first patent for an improvement in electric motor design. Burton taught Physics at the university for 2 years, and earned a Master's Degree in 1904. Beginning in 1910 he worked for the National Bureau of Standards (NBS), focused on electrolytic corrosion research.

Burton's most notable achievements started in 1921, when he designed and patented a technique for oil exploration involving using seismic waves, the echoes of which are detected and measured to determine the nature of underground features, and predict where the oil can be found. The first oil well based on this new technique began producing in 1924. Burton's name is still well-known in the early history of oil exploration.



A painting of Burton McCollum, from the University of Kansas in Lawrence

Throughout his career, Burton authored at least 36 patents, and co-authored at least 16 papers while working at NBS. He also headed 3 companies related to oil exploration in the 1930's and 1940's.

Burton passed away in 1964, leaving half of his estate to the University of Kansas at Lawrence. His famous brother Elmer made a similar donation before he passed in 1967. The university named a large dormitory building after the brothers in 1965.

See also: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/44215506/burton-mccollum> for info about Burton's family connections.