

- MOSS, W. W. 1966. *Dermanyssus gallinoides* n. sp. (Mesostigmata: Laelaptoidea: Dermanyssidae), an acarine parasite of woodpeckers in western North America. *Can. Ent.*, **98**: 635-638.
- MOSS, W., C. J. MITCHELL, AND D. E. JOHNSTON. 1970. New North American host and distribution records for the mite genus *Dermanyssus* (Acari: Mesostigmata: Dermanyssidae). *J. Med. Ent.*, **7**: 589-593.
- NORDBERG, S. 1936. Biologisch-ökologische Untersuchungen über die Vogel-nidicolen. *Acta Zool. Fenn.*, **21**: 1-168.
- NIXON WILSON, *Department of Biology, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613*, and EVELYN L. BULL, *Research Wildlife Biologist, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Route 2, Box 2315, La Grande, Oregon 97850*. Received 6 February 1977, accepted 21 March 1977.

## OBITUARY

## ELIZABETH S. AUSTIN

Elizabeth S. Austin, well-known authoress of bird books for young people, frequent contributor to the Recent Literature section of *Bird-Banding*, and wife of Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr., died in her sleep on 23 May 1977, after a long illness. Elizabeth, or "Sliver," as she was affectionately known to her husband and many friends, was born in New York City, 23 January 1907. Her early life was spent largely in the New York City area, where she attended Saint Elizabeth Academy, Convent Station, New Jersey. Her early interest in and talent for writing was at first directed toward verse and romantic tales. Following the Academy, while traveling abroad she continued to write; but interests in and devotion to natural history were not kindled until her marriage to Oliver, whereupon she "found birds a more interesting subject than anything I had ever imagined in my wildest dreams."

Raising her children, Anthony and Timothy, occupied much of her attention until the late 1950's, when the Austins moved to Gainesville, where Oliver assumed the curatorship in ornithology with the Florida State Museum. In this stimulating atmosphere of a world of nature and scholarly endeavor and while her husband labored on his magnum opus "Birds of the World," Elizabeth's authorship blossomed in a variety of ways. For a time she wrote a weekly column, "Wild Adventure," for the Florida Times-Union Sunday Magazine. Surely her most important scholarly publication was the book "Frank M. Chapman in Florida: His Journals and Letters" (1967). But just as surely she was most widely acclaimed for two excellent books for young people: *Penguins, the "Birds with Flippers"* (1968) and *"Birds that Stopped Flying"* (1969). She co-authored with Oliver: "The Random House Book of Birds" and was a contributor to the "Golden Book Encyclopedia of Natural Science." Readers of *Bird-Banding* and *Auk* will perhaps best remember her careful literature reviews and as a specialist on

detecting and exposing nature fakery in popular nature literature. Elizabeth, who became an Elective Member of the A.O.U., possessed an amazing fund of knowledge in ornithology for a person without any formal training, and she knew when to consult others and the literature for information that she did not have. She was not a long-winded critic—quite the opposite, for her incisive, terse style could be almost brutal in dispensing with a piece of published ornithological trivia. Her writing also displayed a wry sense of humor that bedeviled fumbling authors and delighted her public that depended upon her to tell the truth. Her work was formally recognized in 1973 when she was the recipient of the Arthur A. Allen Medal of the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology.

In the period 1973-76, in my position at the Florida State Museum, and while Sliver was enjoying a period of relatively stable, though by no means robust health, I came to know her well, as a friend, extremely gracious and entertaining hostess in her beautiful old home, and as a stimulating colleague. I thoroughly enjoyed her, listened to what she had to say, and found her to be a lively challenge in debate. We were greatly saddened when her vitality suddenly slipped in mid-1976 so that her visits in the Museum ceased. I called on her around Christmas to find her spirit still intact but her forces otherwise lagging steadily. Her passing was as nearly painless as such things can be.

Those who knew her will certainly remember her wonderful smile, her love of life, and her contributions to our appreciation of nature and those who write about it.—John William Hardy.