

OBITUARIES

ALBERT ERNEST COLBURN, Honorary Life Associate of the A.O.U., was born in Washington, D. C., November 9, 1872, and passed away in Los Angeles, California, January 16, 1953.

His interest in natural history began when he was a boy in Virginia, where he enthusiastically collected birds' eggs and became acquainted with the habits of the birds themselves. At the Smithsonian Institution where he went as a teen-ager to do volunteer work, young Colburn met Frederick Webster and from him learned the art of fine taxidermy. Under Mr. Webster's influence, also, exciting new fields of interest opened to the lad as he investigated the habits of all the living creatures he could discover.

His facile handling of taxidermy work earned for him a good position in a taxidermy establishment in New York when he was barely twenty. He left this at the call of the Smithsonian to prepare the national exhibit of birds and mammals for the Chicago Fair, in 1893. With the Smithsonian, and later with Princeton University, Colburn made several scientific expeditions, travelling to Africa, Newfoundland, Mexico, and Central and South America.

Early in this century he came to Los Angeles and set up a taxidermy business of his own. Soon after this he was married to Annie Laurie Starke, an artist and designer. With his knowledge of animals and furs and her knowledge of design, it was not long before Colburn was persuaded to open a fur shop. During these early years in California, Colburn collected birds extensively in the Los Angeles area and joined the Cooper Ornithological Club. Several of his ornithological notes were published in the official journal of that society, *The Condor*.

In later years, when his business was well established, Colburn turned once more to the enjoyment of scientific expeditions. Two of his longest trips were made at this time—one to the Amazon River and another to the Galapagos Islands. Both were very lucrative of scientific specimens.

Mr. Colburn was one of the fortunate men able to combine business with pleasure. As he rose from taxidermist to the owner of one of the finest fur salons in the west, he never lost sight of the lessons to be learned and the enjoyment to be found in Nature. He will be remembered not only for his achievements but for his kindly philosophy of life which reflected his love and respect for the world of Nature.—
HILDEGARDE HOWARD.

JOSEPH SCATTERGOOD DIXON, a Life Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died June 23, 1952, after a long illness, at his home in Escondido, San Diego County, California at the age of 68. He was born March 5, 1884, near Galena, Cherokee County, Kansas, the son of Benjamin Franklin Dixon and a nephew of the late Joseph M. Dixon, a Senator from Montana and subsequently Assistant Secretary of the Interior. He moved with his parents to Escondido, California, and after graduation from the Escondido High School, entered Throop Polytechnic Institute at Pasadena. Here he met Joseph Grinnell and the two became fast friends for life. In 1910 he graduated from Stanford University. After the establishment of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California in Berkeley, he became a member of the staff and remained there for nearly 30 years.

He was elected an Associate of the Union in 1917 and a Member in 1931. He was also a member of the Cooper Ornithological Club, California Academy of Sciences, the Wildlife Society, and the American Society of Mammalogists.

Dixon was an active, careful, and accurate field worker and made many explorations in California and Alaska. Among his notable accomplishments in the field was

his discovery of the nest of the Surf-bird in the Mount McKinley region during the Alexander Expedition to Alaska in 1907-08. In 1913-14 he was a member of the Harvard Expedition to Alaska and Siberia. Other field work included studies of the mammals of Sequoia National Park, the food habits of the Mule Deer in California, and ecological investigations of the Mount Lassen region. This last resulted in an elaborate publication in 1930 with Joseph Grinnell and J. M. Linsdale on the "Vertebrate Natural History of a Section of Northern California through the Lassen Park Region." He was also joint author with Grinnell and Linsdale of a comprehensive work on the "Fur Bearing Animals of California" and prepared an elaborate Wildlife Portfolio of the Western National Parks. For many years he was a member of the Wildlife Branch of the National Park Service, and for several years, beginning in 1931, he taught in the Yosemite School of Field Natural History.—T. S. PALMER.

LEON NELSON NICHOLS, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, elected in 1917, died in New York City on August 3, 1953. He was born in Middleville, New York, on November 10, 1868. He graduated from Cornell University in 1892 and came to New York City in 1903 as librarian of the Astor Library, later consolidated with the Public Library. Up to the time of his retirement he was in the rare book department of this institution. Long service as deacon of the Broadway Tabernacle Congregational Church led to the preparation of a history of this church. His published writings ranged from genealogy, history, and early printing to natural history.

'Birds of America' (1917), edited by T. Gilbert Pearson, contains 50 articles written by Mr. Nichols, of which 28 are unsigned. He also provided the article on the birds of Long Island in Thompson's 'History of Long Island' (1918). Data were also furnished by him for Griscom's 'Birds of the New York City Region' (1923). He was a member of the Local Avifauna Committee of the Linnaean Society and belonged to the following organizations: National Audubon Society, Wilson Ornithological Club, Linnaean Society of New York, Quill and Dagger, and Bibliographical Society of America.—A. W. SCHORGER.

JOHN MCFARLANE PHILLIPS, a Life Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, elected in 1920, died in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 8, 1953, at the advanced age of 92. He was born in Pittsburgh, February 15, 1861, the son of James and Anna (Provost) Phillips, graduated from the Pittsburgh High School in 1878, and continued his studies under private tutors. He began his business career as Assistant Manager of the mine and mill department of Oliver Bros. and Phillips and in 1885 was made Manager. In 1889 he was associated with his uncle in organizing the Phillips Mine Supply Co. of which he became president in 1906.

He was a member of the State Board of Game Commissioners from 1905 to 1924 and in later years served as its president. He was especially interested in establishing state game preserves near hunting areas and in planting these preserves with food for birds. With the aid of friends he secured the establishment of a large preserve for mountain goats along the British Columbia-Alberta boundary in Canada where he had hunted in former years. He was also interested in the Boy Scouts and organized the first troop in Pennsylvania, the second in the United States. He collaborated with Dr. W. T. Hornaday in the publication of 'Hunting in the Canadian Rockies' (1906) and 'Hunting on Desert and Lava' (1908). Phillips was Honorary President of the Pittsburgh Zoological Society, Honorary member of the Camp Fire Club of America, and member of the New York Zoological Society, the Lewis and Clark Big Game Club, the Boone and Crockett Club, and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce.—T. S. PALMER.