

IN MEMORIAM: ELSIE MARGARET BINGER NAUMBURG

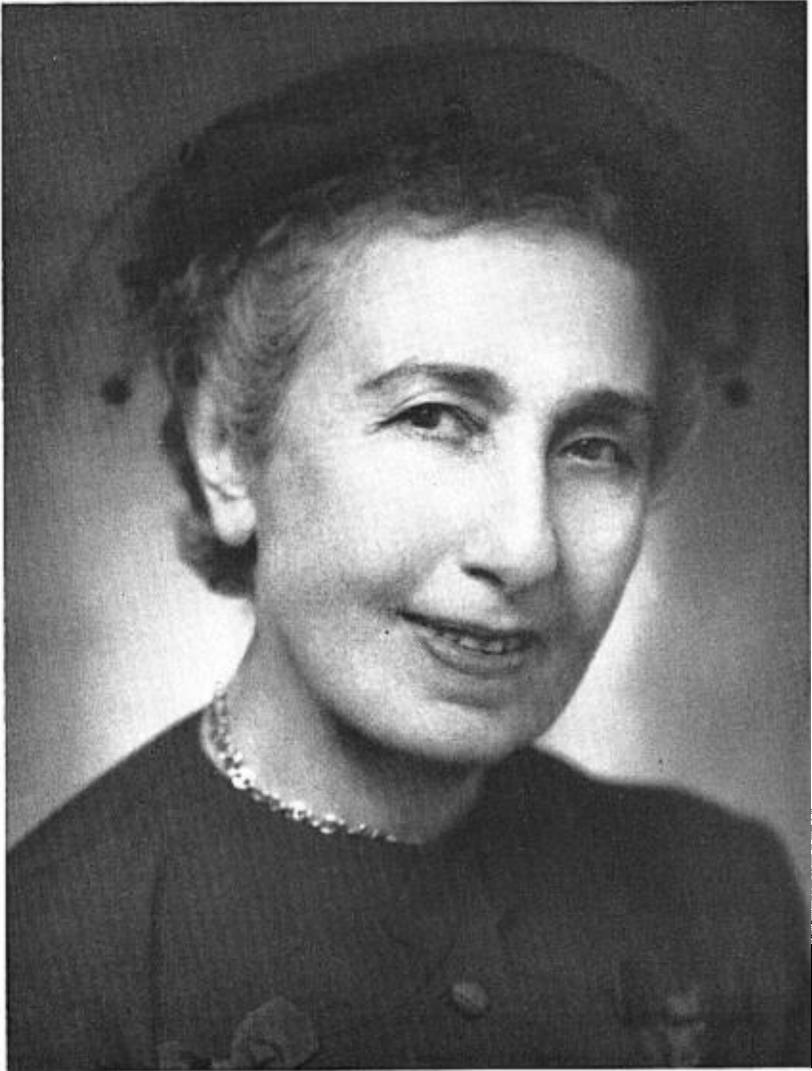
BY JOHN T. ZIMMER

ELSIE MARGARET BINGER NAUMBURG was born in New York City, where she died on November 25, 1953. She was educated in private schools in that city and later attended Sachs Institute at the University of Frankfort and the University of Munich, Germany. While she was in Europe, her attention was drawn to some of the exhibits of tropical birds in the museums, and she thereupon determined to learn more about them. In this way she came under the distinguished tutelage of Professor Carl E. Hellmayr with whom she studied for several years.

The outbreak of World War I brought her back to the United States. Wishing to continue her ornithological studies, she volunteered for work in the Department of Birds in the American Museum of Natural History, of which Dr. Frank M. Chapman was then Curator in Chief, devoting her attention particularly to the birds of tropical America. In October, 1918, she was formally attached to the staff; she was made a Research Assistant in 1920 and in January, 1924, was appointed a Research Associate, a title she held for the rest of her life.

In 1908, she had married Victor Reichenberger, who died in 1913, and her early publications will be found under her married name of that period. In 1923, she married Walter Wehle Naumburg of New York, who survives her. Her most important and extensive publication was her report on *The Birds of Matto Grosso, Brazil*, published in 1930 as Volume 60 of the *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*—a book of over 430 pages with numerous colored plates, maps, and photographs. It was based on the collections made, largely by George K. Cherrie, on the famous expedition to the unknown interior of Brazil by Theodore Roosevelt and Colonel Rondon.

In the meantime, Mrs. Naumburg secured the services of the experienced collector, Emil Kaempfer, whom she employed to collect birds in southeastern Brazil. Until 1931, Kaempfer continued to send back fine series from little-known localities, including many novelties as well as rediscovered and long-lost rarities. Study of these collections was begun and Mrs. Naumburg had issued the first two numbers of a projected series of reports when World War II came to disrupt her plans. She diverted her attention to a multiplicity of relief problems, much of it devoted to the Soldiers' Canteen operated by the Salvation Army of which Mr. Naumburg was a Director. This left her no time to pursue active study of her Brazilian



Elsie M. B. Naumburg.

birds, but she continued to sponsor certain field work and at one time made a brief visit with her husband to Brazil to see the terrain and establish personal contacts with ornithologists in that country.

A short time after Dr. Chapman's death in 1945, she conceived the idea of establishing and building up a memorial to him in the form of a fund for grants-in-aid to younger ornithologists in all parts of the country for projects to be approved by a Memorial Committee; the Fund to be administered by the American Museum of Natural History. She and Mr. Naumburg made the first contribution to this Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund which, under her active leadership, continued to grow, supplying an income that has already been of material service in the manner and for the purposes for which it was planned.

Mrs. Naumburg's interests extended well beyond ornithological bounds. Of allied significance was the cartography of tropical America, particularly with reference to the mapping of geographical and climatic features that influence the distribution of animals and plants. She served as Chairman of a women's educational committee of the American Geographical Society concerned with the extension of modern geographical knowledge in American schools; a member of the Society of Women Geographers; a Trustee of the National Foundation of Junior Museums, Inc. of Sacramento, California; a Director of the Greenwich (Connecticut) Nature Center; formerly a member of the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society; a member of the Linnaean Society of New York, the New York Academy of Sciences, and the (N. Y.) Women's City Club. She shared with her husband many of his notable activities and benefactions in the world of music and was Secretary and Treasurer of the Walter W. Naumburg Musical Foundation and Chairman of the Board of "An Hour of Music, Inc."

Her association with the American Ornithologists' Union began in 1916. She was elected a Member in 1924 and a Fellow in 1952. She was a regular attendant at the annual meetings of the Union and, furthermore, took part in a number of the International Ornithological Congresses, including the Tenth, held at Uppsala, Sweden, in 1950.

Her later years were filled with so many and so varied activities that her list of published writings does not accurately express the extent of her unflinching interest in ornithology.

American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York, March 29, 1955.