

1951, when Chester was nearly 70 years old, reads in part: "I got back yesterday from a camp in . . . Jalisco . . . I sure had a wet and hot and mosquito infested camp. In the 18 days I was there we had four 'tormentas' and besides them it rained two days and two nights without stopping. Two of the 'tormentas' flooded my camp to the depth of 6 inches and for two afternoons I went around barefooted. Finally I worked out a drainage system. It was a fine place for birds . . ." Another letter, written in January 1952 and headed "20 miles east Colima, Col. 2000 ft" describes his first trip following a hernia operation: "Well here I am down in the semi tropics . . . With a little work got the car down beside a nice river. Fine for swimming. Now I am feeling fine. It sure is a relief to be able to run around without one's 'guts' hanging out. Just killed a nice fat armadillo, so will have some good meat for a couple of days."

Chester was one of the last of the old-time professional collectors. Braving frequent hardships and at times danger, these men were true pioneers who opened up great ornithological terrae incognitae. Times have changed, but we should not forget their unique and highly important contributions to ornithology.

Chester Lamb is survived by his wife, Luz, and six children, Chester, Edna, Luz, Lilly, Robert, and Sylvia. I thank Luther Little, Alice Landauer, and John William Hardy for supplying important information used in this obituary.—JOHN DAVIS.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir:

The published first occurrence of the Orange-breasted Bunting (*Passerina leclancheri*) of southwestern Mexico in the United States in Texas (Novy and McGrew 1974, Auk 91: 178–179) is suspect on the following grounds: (1) the species is extremely sedentary, to the extent that it has never been recorded even in appropriate habitat in states adjacent to those of its normal geographic range; (2) the species is a very common cage bird in Mexico and until recent restrictions at least was imported into the United States in large numbers; and (3) brilliance and perfection of plumage are not foolproof clues as to whether a bird, especially a seed-eating fringillid, has been in captivity. Small finches adjust readily to captivity and accept dry food quickly, often within a few hours. Plumage fades only after a few months with inadequate diet. Immediate examination of the claws and toes might have revealed abnormally long claws or irregular growth features as better clues to captive existence. Had the bird been killed and preserved immediately this evidence would have been preserved. (I am indebted to Kenneth Stager for pointing out to me the telltale character of long claws on a specimen of Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris*, that I shot in southern California several years ago and took to be a wild bird!) Now that the Orange-breasted Bunting in question has been retained in a cage subsequent to capture, examination for signs of previous captivity would be fruitless. Surely the Check-list Committee must reject this dubious record of accidental occurrence.

JOHN WILLIAM HARDY
Florida State Museum
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611