

The Condor

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IN MEMORIAM:

Dr. James G. Cooper.

OUR beloved honorary member and distinguished naturalist, Dr. James G. Cooper has passed away, and with him we lose a man of sterling worth and lofty character, a man who has gained an enviable reputation in his chosen subject of Natural History, and who has left many and valuable works in the field of Ornithology.

It seems but a few years since I first met this slender gentleman in the small country postoffice which he held in connection with the only drug store in Haywards. That was in 1877. Three years ago last March he sat among us, for the last time in public, for the study of his favorite work, ornithology.

Tho not of a strong constitution, he has been the last to answer the final call of the Creator, of that original group of naturalists gathered around the side of Prof.

Baird in the early days of the Smithsonian Institution.

Dr. Cooper's life was one of strong work, earnestly done, as one who clearly

saw the facts of natural science, and who fully appreciated the bearing of one branch of zoology upon another, and upon allied subjects. This will be noted in his early study of forests and distribution, and many are the younger zoologists who will think of him in future years when they consult his work on the coast faunal ranges. He was a man who could lead you in paths of Nature to the haunts of birds, to the lurking places of shells, or to hidden fossils, and could



DR. JAMES G. COOPER.
Born June 19, 1830. Died July 19, 1902.
FROM A PHOTO TAKEN IN 1865.

name for you the rocks, trees and plants of the mountains, hills and plains.

Dr. Cooper is best known to us by his works on conchology and ornithology.

Of the former there are forty-three separate papers and of the latter twenty-six. His most important work was "Land Birds" in the Geological Survey of California, and usually known as "Ornithology of California." This book was edited by Prof. Baird and includes most of the land birds west of the Rocky Mts.

His was a quiet unassuming life, passed amid the simple surroundings of his home. He was a tall, spare man of

forests, and could never bear to see a tree cut down, or even have it used for fuel in his home. There stands beside his home today a tall California laurel, which was transplanted from a near ravine as a little sapling, and which now overtops his home. It was early in life that the naturalist's traits manifested themselves, as he says in his autobiographical summary. "I was noted for planting toothpicks to raise geese, and for hugging goslings to death, a bud-

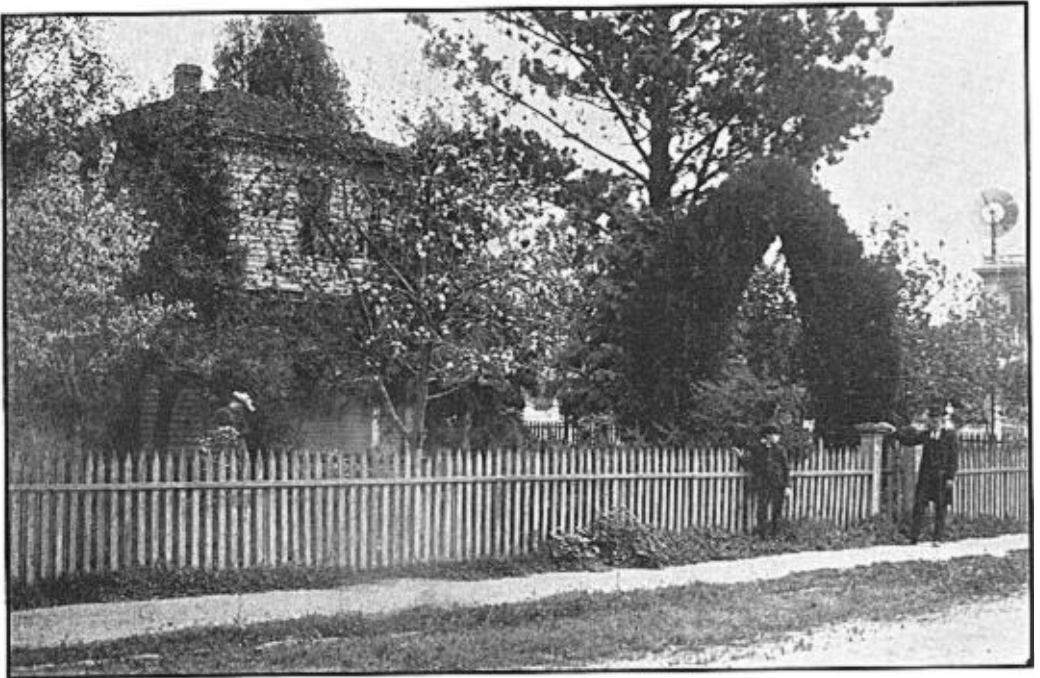


PHOTO BY W. O. EMERSON

HOME OF THE LATE DR. J. G. COOPER.

soldiery bearing, with a dark beard well silvered, clear blue eyes, delicate hands, a voice slow and not given to a ready flow of language. But when touched on his favorite topic, the man was forgotten, and he impressed you as one of the true worshippers at Nature's shrine—a noble man of lasting worth. At times he was humorous, when stirred by the reminder of some early days of exploring among the mountains and fields. Dr. Cooper was a great lover of

ding of ornithological tastes. This occurred in 1837 and continued, say, to 1840. I went to a country school in summer, walked a mile over hills and bad roads, taking side paths thru the fields to hunt bird nests, shells and reptiles, which I preserved till some naturalist captured the specimens for little or nothing. The most noted of these captures was a living copper-head snake which my sister Mary and I found while crossing a newly cleared field, and

which finally went alive to England. I had many hunts for quadrupeds and preserved some up to the size of gray and fox squirrels, besides keeping red and flying squirrels, a racoon, opossum, and other animals as pets, which attracted much interest among visitors. I had a boy's mania for hunting, and altho I could only get small animals and birds, I spent many a day in shooting, no doubt with impoverishment to physical health. I would wade thru snow knee-deep for miles with poor results as to game, but thought if I ever went into a wild country the hunter's life would be my choice. Why man could not live happy on the natural products of the forests and streams was a problem I expected to solve in the future. About this time Tanner's 'Thirty Years Among the Indians of Canada' showed me much of the difficulties in the way of such a mode of existence."

In this we have a little retrospect into the early life of Dr. Cooper from his own pen. The tendencies thus early manifested were fostered by his father, to whom Dr. Cooper owed his preparation for his later work in life, and it was at the home of William Cooper that such men as Samuel L. Mitchell, M. D., Nathaniel Paulding, poet, Dr. John Torrey, the botanist, Prof. Eaton, and Lucien Bonaparte were wont to meet. It is not difficult to see how these men

may all have exerted a profound influence on the mind of the young naturalist. At the age of twenty-eight, Dr. Cooper became a member of the New York Lyceum, now the New York Academy of Sciences, his father, at the age of nineteen, having been one of the founders. Dr. Cooper was one of the early members of the California Academy of Sciences, holding for several years the office of vice-president and for some years being curator of the section of palæontology, which he had given much time to build up. His last actual work was the compiling of a Catalog of California Fossils, issued as Bulletin No. 4 by the California State Mining Bureau, Sept. 1894, Parts II, III, IV and V.

Dr. Cooper is the last of that circle of distinguished naturalists, who had been the foremost zoologists and botanists in his early days. Such men as Asa Gray, Baird, LeConte, Hayden, Meek, George Gibbs, Torrey, Warren and Dr. Suckley were his colaborers. To the memory of Dr. Cooper we can have no better monument than the valuable researches which he carried on for over forty years of his life, consisting of some seventy-five papers on the birds, shells, fossils, geology, forests and flora of the Pacific Coast.

W. OTTO EMERSON,
Haywards, California.

The Ornithological Writings of Dr. J. G. Cooper.

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL.

IN the present paper I have listed all the ornithological writings of the late Dr. Cooper known to me. These number twenty-six. It will be noted that the majority were printed between 1860 and 1880. While the number of Cooper's titles was not great, his articles thus appeared at a time when much less was written on birds than now, and when much of the subject-matter we might now regard as commonplace

was new information altogether. As all but two of his publications pertained at least in part to the birds of California we of the Cooper Ornithological Club owe much to Dr. Cooper as being a pioneer in our line of study. Perhaps his best known work is his "Ornithology of California" which is a desideratum of every working bird-student. Aside from his signed articles, Cooper furnished material, in the way of speci-