

*tocottus armatus*) in large numbers. These semi-transparent fry, less than an inch long, were eaten by several species of waders. Other parts of the riverside, comprising stretches of clay, sand or gravel and producing less animal life, were not used to any extent except by Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*) and the scarce Wandering Tattler (*Heteroscelus incanus*). The most abundant species were Red-backed Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*) and Western Sandpiper. This area, more than any other, was frequented by Western Dowitchers, and these were the tamest of all the waders so that it was usually possible to walk within a few yards of where they stood before an alarm was given. One or more Greater Yellow-legs were seen here frequently, and at least two of these remained after the migration was over.

*Food.*—Analyses of the stomach contents of waders taken at Tlell showed that Black Turnstones had fed exclusively on barnacles and gastropods, which also were the chief food of Aleutian Sandpipers plus a small number of limpets, blue mussels, amphipods and a small nereid. The food of Sanderlings was entirely crustacean, comprising amphipods, isopods and mysids. Sculpin fry had been eaten by a Greater Yellow-legs, a Wandering Tattler and two Western Dowitchers. The food of Red-backed Sandpipers was the amphipod *Corophium spinicorne* exclusively, except in one instance where a small polychaete had been eaten. A Hudsonian Curlew had fed upon amphipods and a shore crab (*Hemigrapsus* sp.); a Semipalmated upon ground beetles and an amphipod, and a Least Sandpiper on larvae of Diptera and Coleoptera. The material found in Western Dowitchers comprised gastropods, polychaetes, sculpin fry and larvae of Diptera and Coleoptera. A Black-bellied Plover had taken 8 small clams (*Macoma* sp.), gastropods, amphipods, 1 mysid, 2 isopods and a small fish.

Thanks are extended to Dr. W. A. Clemens, Director, Pacific Biological Station, Nanaimo, B. C., for co-operation in the stomach analyses summarized above.

*Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, March 6, 1936.*

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## CHARLES EDWARD HOWARD AIKEN

WITH PORTRAIT

By EDWARD R. WARREN

Charles Edward Howard Aiken, who may well be termed Colorado's pioneer ornithologist, was born at Benson, Vermont, September 7, 1850, the son of James E. and Harriet Ann (Howard) Aiken, and died at Colorado Springs, Colorado, January 15, 1936. There were seven children in the family; two died in infancy. Charles was the oldest of the surviving children, and had four sisters, three of whom are now living. The boyhood years were spent in Chicago, to which place the family had moved. Here Charles began, in 1868, the study and collection of birds, which he continued to the end. He once told me that he used to shoot warblers and other small birds which he sold in the flesh to a Chicago taxidermist. Perhaps he gained his first knowledge of taxidermy from that man.

The following note was found among Aiken's papers. It is interesting as showing that he was acquainted with the now extinct Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*). It was probably written within the last few years. Ross is in Indiana, southeasterly from Chicago, and is still a small place, 125 being the population as given in the Century Atlas. There are seven skins of the Passenger Pigeon in the

Colorado College collection, bought alive in the Chicago market, spring of 1886, and probably trapped in Wisconsin or Michigan.

"In the summer of 1868, I went to the little town of Ross with my friend Foss to shoot pigeons. We found a flock of about 60 birds in a patch of timber bordering a stubble field and shot several. These birds were still plentiful at that time. The last passenger pigeon I saw at large was in 1886, near Hammond, Indiana. It was a single bird, rather wild. I shot at it, but failed to kill."

Aiken came to Colorado Springs, October 25, 1871, after his father's business was destroyed in the Chicago fire. He spent the winter of 1871-1872 on a ranch on Turkey Creek, some eighteen miles southwest from Colorado Springs, which his father had purchased, and at once began the collecting of birds here. Very many, if not most, of the birds were new to him, and we can imagine with what enthusiasm he roamed those piñon-covered hills, looking for birds. After the spring of 1872, his residence at the ranch was intermittent, varied by excursions to different places. The localities given on the labels of the skins give us a clue to some of his wanderings.

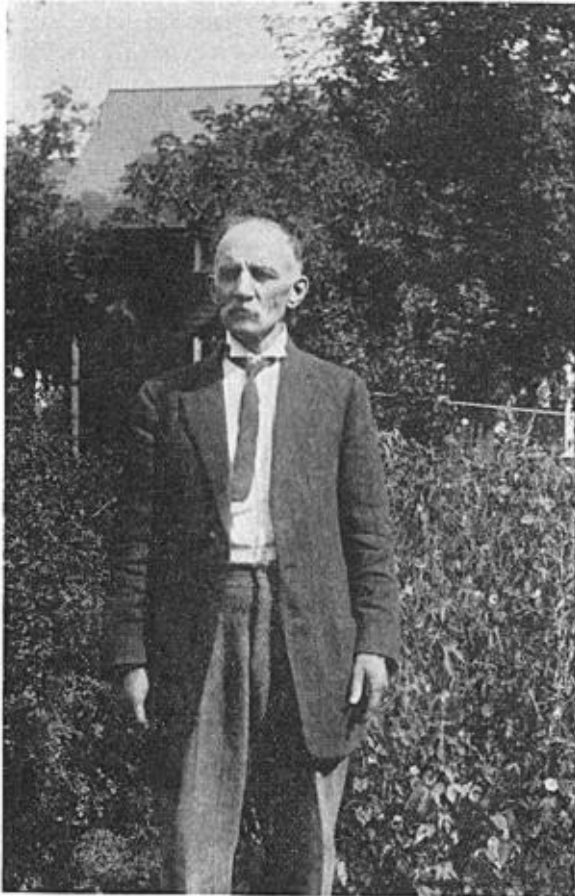


Fig. 47. Charles Edward Howard Aiken in the garden of his home at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Photographed in the summer of 1915, by Dr. W. W. Arnold.

The last of June, 1872, he seems to have made a short trip to southern Colorado, to Las Animas County. Returning, he appears to have been at the ranch a short time, and then off once more, about July 26, to Cañon City, up Currant Creek into the South Park. I think he traveled on horseback, and perhaps had a pack animal. About August 8, he crossed to Lake County, which then covered a much larger area than it does today. During August he was at various places in the upper part of the Arkansas Valley, collecting. Early in September he turned his steps homeward and was home before the 11th. In a letter written to his family soon after his return he speaks of traveling over 100 miles in seven weeks and collecting 160 birds, also seeing much big game. I suppose that by 100 miles he meant that distance from home, for it is more than that distance to the extreme end of his journey; as a matter of fact, I think his total mileage must have been close to 300.

Specimen labels indicate that he was in the home region part, at least, of the season of 1873. The summer of 1874 he was naturalist with the Wheeler Survey in the southern Colorado mountains, where he did good work and collected some 400 specimens, which presumably went to Washington, as the Survey was headed by Lieut. G. M. Wheeler of the U. S. Army Engineer Corps. The following summer, 1875, he went to the San Luis Lakes, in the San Luis Valley, Colorado, collecting water birds and other birds, many of which are still in the collection.

In 1876 Aiken made his longest expedition, that to Arizona. This was made with a wagon, which carried his outfit, and a saddle pony led behind the wagon. Mules furnished the motive power of the wagon. Aiken had a dog which was stolen by an Indian somewhere in Arizona. I once asked him if the Apaches troubled him, and he said they were quiet that summer and stayed on the reservation.

Aiken started on this Arizona trip May 8, 1876, going south along the foothills of Colorado and crossing the Raton Pass into New Mexico. Apparently he did little collecting in New Mexico, and was in Arizona June 26, remaining there until at least October 10; he probably started for home then or very soon after, for he was at Santa Fe on November 3, collected a Cañon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus mesoleucus*) at Apishapa, Las Animas County, Colorado, November 22, and doubtless was home for Thanksgiving. Most of his collecting in Arizona appears to have been done near Fort Apache and in the White Mountains.

The following is quoted from a letter from H. W. Henshaw to Ruthven Deane, dated June 24, 1876, and is in E. W. Nelson's account of Henshaw, printed in the Auk, vol. 49, 1932, p. 413.

"Aiken writes me from way down in New Mexico. He had had up to that time but little success and something like a hard time. His mules had but two drinks in three days. Was accompanied by only a small boy as assistant. Had joined an emigrant company, the one which started from Boston for Arizona. Fear he will not meet with the haul I anticipated. He may, however, strike it rich down in Arizona if he don't meet with hostile Apaches. Then Allah preserve him. He is a plucky chap. Knowing that country as I do I wish I were with him."

The catalogue shows that he collected more or less during 1877 and 1878, though engaged in business those years. In May, 1878, he made a trip to Horse Creek, some 75 miles east of Colorado Springs. I copied the account he wrote in his notebook; this does not say who were his companions. The party left the afternoon of May 11 and reached its destination on the 15th. He says bird life was scarce, I presume as to number of species, for there seem to have been plenty of individuals. He mentions Skylarks (Horned Larks), Grass Finches (Vesper Sparrows), Meadowlarks, White-winged Blackbirds (Lark Buntings), these in large flocks. Mountain Plover were not seen the first 15 miles but became common as

they proceeded eastward. Small flocks of Brewer Blackbirds haunted all the ranches. Pond Creek and Horse Creek were each the home of two or three pairs of White-necked Ravens. Other species were observed wherever there were trees or bushes. Along Horse Creek were water holes and marshy places, where shore birds of several species were seen.

In 1874 he opened a workshop close to his residence, and was busy mounting deer and other game heads brought in by eastern hunters. I think he always conducted a taxidermist shop as well as other business, and he often had two or more assistants. In 1893 he went to Salt Lake and engaged in the real estate business. This venture not being as successful as it might have been, he returned to Colorado Springs. For several years afterward he conducted a taxidermist and curio business, also doing fur work. Later he abandoned the curio business. From 1897 to 1899, he did much collecting in the region about Colorado Springs.

In 1906, William Lutley Sclater, the English ornithologist, a brother-in-law of General Wm. J. Palmer, came to Colorado Springs as Director of the Museum of Colorado College. In February, 1907, he arranged for the purchase of Aiken's collection of birds for the College, General Palmer supplying the funds. Sclater arranged, labeled and catalogued the skins, which are now in safe cases at the College. When the collection was taken over, there were about 4700 specimens, and at the time of Aiken's death this number had been augmented by the addition of about another thousand specimens. Besides the skins there is also a mounted collection of Colorado birds, representing many of the species.

Immediately after the sale of the collection Aiken began another, and his serial numbers reach some 1300, but these include a good many mounted birds which went into the Colorado College Collection in final fulfillment of his contract. Since his death Colorado College has acquired these specimens and a considerable number of eggs and nests.

In 1908 he went to the White River with a hunting party but did no bird collecting. In June, 1909, I went in a wagon to the San Luis Valley on a collecting trip, and Aiken accompanied me for a few days, as far as Cañon City, where he took a train for home. It was a pleasant time, at least for me, and I think for him, for we went through the country he had known so well during his first years in Colorado.

As a taxidermist Aiken excelled in the mounting of birds, especially the smaller species, and his bird skins are models of that sort of work. The above-mentioned mounted collection is mostly his work, though some of the birds were done by a taxidermist in his employ and a few were obtained from other sources. He once showed me some drawings he had made of birds, I think when he lived in Chicago. I could not help thinking it was to be regretted he had not continued that work, for it showed promise.

His hearing was keen, and he could not only recognize the notes of birds when heard, but could imitate them closely by whistling. He was well acquainted with the habits of birds and various other animals. He had a sharp eye for the variations in plumage and other characteristics of birds. He firmly believed all recognizable variations should have a name. He was much interested in the juncos and acquired a large series, which includes most, if not all, the subspecies. Those locally collected are mostly our winter visitants. One of our winter birds was named for him, *Junco aikeni*, whose summer home is in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Of late years Great Horned Owls had greatly interested him. Many specimens were brought to him for mounting, all taken somewhere in the region about Colorado Springs, and these showed much variation in color and markings. Most of

them are winter birds, which may partly account for this variation, for some may have drifted here from other localities in a migratory movement.

Aiken knew many noted American ornithologists, by correspondence if not by personal meeting. With whom the list of these acquaintances begins I do not know, possibly with Henry W. Henshaw, who corresponded and exchanged with Aiken before the latter left Chicago and who visited him at the ranch in the fall of 1873. Robert Ridgway was a correspondent after the removal to Colorado, perhaps before. Letters were exchanged with Professor S. F. Baird.

Ridgway was born in 1850, a few months before Aiken; and Henry K. Coale, another ornithologist, was born that same year. Aiken was the last of the trio. I recall that one Sunday afternoon he telephoned me that Coale was in town, and he asked me to come to Palmer Hall, Colorado College, where the collections were, and to let them in and show the birds. We had an enjoyable time looking over the collections.

The spring of 1882, J. A. Allen and William Brewster were in Colorado Springs for the former's health, Brewster having come to keep him company. Aiken saw much of the two. I did not, for I went into the mountains shortly after their arrival. I had, however, been on a cruise to the Gulf of St. Lawrence when Brewster was a member of the party, and so I felt well acquainted with him.

E. W. Nelson visited Colorado Springs, and spent some little time here. Dr. Elliott Coues was here at least once. One day Aiken showed me a skin of Audubon Warbler collected by Coues at Fort Whipple, Arizona, in the eighteen-sixties, which had been obtained by exchange from the Smithsonian. When here, Coues wrote on the label "bad bird." Aiken exchanged with Major C. E. Bendire, some of whose skins are in the collection.

Some time, probably, in 1874, Frank Stephens and his wife reached Colorado Springs, traveling by wagon, and spent the winter of 1874-1875 here. Aiken taught Stephens to make bird skins, and offered to buy all he collected, which he did for several years. Many of these skins are in the collection. Stephens left Colorado Springs in March, 1875, and traveled down through the San Luis Valley into New Mexico, and to Arizona, finally reaching California.

Aiken was a charter member of the El Paso Club, the first social club to be organized in Colorado Springs, and was also a member of the volunteer fire department. He joined the A. O. U. in 1898, but after some years permitted his membership to lapse. In 1926, after his 76th birthday, he was made an Honorary Life Associate at the Annual Meeting of the A. O. U., an honor which pleased him very much and which he greatly appreciated.

In personal appearance Aiken was of a rather slight build, perhaps a little less than 5½ feet tall; wiry might perhaps describe him. As I knew him, he always had a mustache. His manner was always genial and courteous. I had more than one discussion with him on various matters, mostly about birds, but there was never any hard feeling; we respected each other's opinions, even if we did not always agree. While his real interest was always in birds, he was also interested in flowers, and took much pleasure in the garden at his home. At one time the breeding of pointer dogs took much of his attention; but he gave this up, as it was impossible to carry it on and look after his other business.

In conclusion I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Aiken's sisters, Miss Jessie M. Aiken and Mrs. Fanny Aiken Tucker, for notes and information which they have kindly furnished me. They also read a first draft of this paper and made certain suggestions.

*Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 15, 1936.*