

## NECROLOGY

ROBERT RIDGWAY—ORNITHOLOGIST, BOTANIST, GENTLEMAN  
1850-1929

Within a few months three of the older group of widely known ornithologists have crossed the bar—Jonathan Dwight, Edward Howe Forbush, and Robert Ridgway. Each of these great scientists filled a special niche in the advancement of ornithology, and their passing entails an irreparable loss which may not easily be repaired. Robert Ridgway, more than anyone else known to the writer, exemplified the ability of the individual to go far into a chosen field of knowledge without the advantages of college preparation. From his earliest childhood he was intensely interested in animal and plant life, and his thirst for knowledge was never quenched.

Robert Ridgway was born at Mt. Carmel, Illinois, July 2, 1850. He died at Olney, Illinois, March 25, 1929, in his 79th year. The region in which he grew up was one of the richest fields in the eastern United States for the study of out-of-door life—the meeting place for the northern and southern fauna and flora of Illinois and Indiana.

Possessing a marvelous and orderly memory, having from childhood an almost uncanny sense of proportion and color, Robert Ridgway before he was thirty years of age became a proficient artist and writer. In addition to the voluminous writings of Mr. Ridgway on ornithology he prepared a book of color standards and nomenclature, published in 1912, which proves again the wonderful versatility of this modest, retiring, and altogether lovable man. This color key is now the standard among scientists.

His writings cover a period of over sixty years, and at his death he was actively engaged in the completion of tenth volume of "The Birds of North and Middle America." The ninth volume of this work had been completed by Mr. Ridgway and sent to Washington for publication. It is expected that the tenth volume will be finished by competent hands, thus completing the entire work. Mr. Ridgway's name will be perpetuated, not only in the 540 papers and books which he has written, but also in the names of twenty-three species of birds, and nine subspecies.

His objection to publicity amounted almost to eccentricity, except when his chosen avocations were concerned. He said more than once that the fifty years spent away from his loved southern Illinois were fifty years or homesickness. His devotion to Mrs. Ridgway, during the period before her death in 1927, laid a heavy burden upon him; but there was no shirking or complaining.

While the proverb "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country" does not quite apply to Mr. Ridgway, it is nevertheless true that his fame as an ornithologist and scientist was greater throughout the scientific world than at home. He was an inimitable story teller, with a delightfully keen sense of humor. Anyone who made his acquaintance, if interested in birds or plants, was treated as an equal in scientific knowledge, for Mr. Ridgway never paraded his own knowledge. It was always a source of pleasure to him to find anyone who was interested in the things he was, and no effort was too great when he could pilot his friends through Bird Haven and the Wabash bottoms near



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Mount Carmel. He was ever willing to answer questions, and his letters were models of diction and clarity of expression.

In 1927 he visited Chicago for the first time in twenty-seven years, not traveling by train, however, but in a Ford sedan; for he refused to come if the train was the only way to travel. His delight in the Morton Arboretum in Dupage County, and in Wychwood, the Mrs. Charles Hutchinson Estate at Lake Geneva, of which he was a trustee, gave much pleasure and zest to the friends who had his itinerary in charge. Nothing escaped his keen eyes, and he was greatly interested in the larger number of shocks of grain in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin as compared with southern Illinois.

At the service marking Mr. Ridgway's passing the Ridgway home was filled with friends and neighbors, and through the open doors could be heard the songs of the Cardinal, the Carolina Wren, and other singing birds—an ideal accompaniment to the service, in which the clergyman said, "While Mr. Ridgway was not known as a religious man, yet never have I known a man more spiritually minded." Mr. Ridgway's resting place is an open knoll in Bird Haven, surrounded by the beautiful trees that he loved so much, and only a few steps from the site of the cottage where he and Mrs. Ridgway lived before they moved to Olney.

To have known Robert Ridgway was an honor, and to have enjoyed his friendship was a rare privilege. A great scientist, a staunch friend, and a worthy descendent of early Quaker pioneers in Pennsylvania, his ornithological work will live long after those who have enjoyed the charm of his personality will have become forgotten memories.—ORPHEUS MOYER SCHANTZ.



Frank C. Pellett (left) and Robert Ridgway  
Photograph made at Olney, February 13, 1929



THOMAS HAYES WHITNEY--1877-1929

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1877-1929

Thomas Hayes Whitney was born in Atlantic, Iowa, on July 9, 1877, and died in Atlantic on September 10, 1929, having lived in the same home throughout the 52 years of his life. He was the son of Franklin H. and Ella Graham Whitney, the former being the founder of the city of Atlantic. The subject of our sketch grew up in his home town as "Tom" Whitney, and was honored and revered by his townspeople. In 1907 he was married to Miss Mabel Taylor who, with a daughter and a son, survives him.

Mr. Whitney, with his brother James G. Whitney, owned and operated the Whitney Loan and Trust Company Bank, Mr. T. H. Whitney being the Vice-President. In one of the obituaries we find this statement: "No finer story was ever written into the annals of any community than the story of how these two brothers discharged all of the obligations of their deceased father and paid every creditor in full. There is not much in life, in the last analysis, but to so live that things are just a little better for one's having been here, but there is much in holding high the torch of honor. And this the Whitney brothers did with fidelity and undying credit to themselves."

The writer first met Mr. Whitney at the meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union on May 7, 1915, at Omaha, although we had been in correspondence for several years before this. Mr. Whitney became a member of the Wilson Ornithological Club in 1916, and took an active part in the organization of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1923. He served as Vice-President of the W. O. C. from 1925 to 1928. During this time he took the initiative in formulating plans for an endowment fund, and in securing the society's incorporation.

He frequently contributed brief notes to the bird magazines, and his longest paper was a report on his long-continued study of the Purple Martin, which was published in the June number of the WILSON BULLETIN, in 1925.

Mr. Whitney was a dignified and somewhat reserved gentleman, not aloof, but cordial and friendly. His enthusiasms were contagious, and attracted to himself many friends who came to enjoy the same pursuits that he enjoyed. It was probably largely through his leadership that his community maintains a flourishing local bird study club. Among other diversions he was fond of music, and was a leading spirit in his local Congregational Church. Only his friends and acquaintances will fully realize the loss in his premature demise; while his native modesty kept him in the background, his own sterling qualities made friends at every point of contact. With the words of John G. Neihart we close this obituary, as another begins:

"Let me go quickly, like a candle light  
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.  
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!  
Thus would I go."

—T. C. S.



IN MEMORIAM: WALTHER FREDERICK HENNINGER  
1873-1929

Rev. W. F. Henninger, former Treasurer and President of the Wilson Ornithological Club, died after a long illness on February 2, 1929, in Manchester, Michigan. He was an indefatigable, painstaking, and observing ornithologist, as well as mammalogist and entomologist.

Henninger was born on December 2, 1873, at Herman, Missouri. His parents were Rev. Frederick Henninger and his wife, Mary, nee Lenz. The interesting

natural surroundings of his early boyhood home laid the foundation for the intense love of nature that characterized the man throughout his life. When the boy was eleven years old, his mother took him to Europe to have him trained at the schools maintained by the Moravian Brethren at Niesky, Saxony. After seven years of study here, he returned to his native country and finished his theological training in the Seminary of the Evangelical Church at St. Louis, Mo.

In 1894 he was ordained and took his first charge in Ohio, first at Jackson-South Webster, later at Waverly; still later, in 1903, he went to Tiffin. In 1907 he was called to New Bremen, Ohio, where he remained until 1921. In this year his church asked him to go to South America, to assist in the organization of a school in southern Brazil. He accepted this commission, and from 1922 to 1927 threw himself into this new and arduous work with his customary energy. He gave instruction in Latin, Greek, and literature. But in spite of this routine grind, he managed to collect about 800 birds, many large and small mammals, and thousands of insects—all well prepared.

Due either to overwork or to climatic conditions Henninger contracted a disease of the heart and kidneys, which brought him almost to the point of death. But with excellent care and remarkable will-power he recovered sufficiently to make a trip to Europe, to Bad Nauheim in Germany, where the waters have a peculiar regulating effect on the heart. After being pronounced cured he returned to America in 1927. While sojourning with relatives at Tiffin, Ohio, he received a call to the pastorate at Manchester, Michigan, which he accepted. Shortly before his death he contracted influenza, an especially dangerous infection for a person with a weak heart; but when apparently about to recover he suffered two apoplectic strokes, which were fatal.

Henninger was Treasurer of the Wilson Ornithological Club from 1909 to 1914, and President in 1917. We have record of seventy-seven scientific papers published by Henninger, of which forty-four appeared in the *WILSON BULLETIN*, twelve in the *Auk*, five in the *Osprey*, six in the *Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club*, one in the *Ohio Naturalist*, and nine in foreign journals. Of these forty-eight were brief notes, while the others were longer articles.

In the death of Rev. Henninger American natural history has lost a capable, untiring, and gifted worker; his family, a kind and loving father; his church, a sincere and eloquent servant; his friends, a true and lovable friend, a personality so stimulating and invigorating that there will always be a void in their lives because of his going.—C. W. G. EIFRIG.

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PROFESSOR HARRIS MILLER BENEDICT was born at Buda, Illinois, on December 8, 1873, and died at Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 8, 1928, as a result of an automobile accident. He attended Doane College and the University of Nebraska, receiving at the latter institution the degree of B. S. in 1896, and M. S. in 1897. He was given the degree of Ph. D. in 1914 by Cornell University. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and of Sigma Xi, of the American Association, the Botanical Society of America, the Ohio Academy of Science, and the Wilson Ornithological Club. He is credited with having originated and developed the Emery Bird Reserve of Cincinnati, the first municipal refuge of the kind. At the time of his death he was professor of Botany in the University of Cincinnati.