

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

This letter is devoted to the memory of Dr. Lynds Jones, whose recent death may fairly be said to mark the end of an era in Wilson Club affairs. During the early and formative years of the organization, Lynds Jones, in a very real sense, *was* the Club. With his passing, we have with us only one remaining founding member, Dr. R. M. Strong, of Chicago.

When the Wilson Club was organized in 1888, Lynds Jones became its first Secretary and its first Editor. He served as President of the organization from 1890 to 1893, from 1902 to 1908, and from 1927 to 1929. As Editor of *The Wilson Bulletin*, his tenure included the years 1888-1900, and 1902-1924, a total of thirty-four years of the Club's existence.

Long associated with Oberlin College, an institution which dared depart from accepted academic traditions, Dr. Jones was himself a pioneer and an innovator in bird study. He saw the field of ornithology as embracing more than taxonomy and physiology. Early issues of the *Bulletin* carried at their masthead "A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Study of Living Birds." In its pages vernacular names were used, since the Editor wished to appeal to a wider audience than the small coterie of scientists who were at ease in scientific nomenclature. Almost every early issue carried life history studies, and there were constant editorial urgings that bird students apply some quantitative methods to their observations.

Scientific bird study, around the turn of the century, was, to a remarkable degree, restricted to the Eastern Seaboard and the Pacific Coast. Students from eastern centers visited and collected in the midlands of the United States, but resident observers in the Mississippi Valley were few and far between. Along with such pioneers as Thomas S. Roberts, Francis Hobart Herrick, and Norman A. Wood, Lynds Jones did much to make the Midwest *terra cognita* in ornithology. With these men and such others as S. Prentiss Baldwin and V. E. Shelford, Dr. Jones led students into the pathways of ecology. As a result of this wise guidance, the mid-continent region has become a center for sound and productive ecological work.

I shall not forget my first Wilson Club meeting. Like many another neophyte, I went to Cleveland not knowing a single person at the meeting. Through a process of mental agonizing, I had screwed up my courage to present a paper, a superficial (and generally worthless) study of Bachman's Sparrow. It set no rivers ablaze, but Lynds Jones was President, and, with innate courtesy, he spoke kindly to me. Had that word of encouragement not been given, I should probably not have attended another meeting. In this kindly attitude toward the beginner a pattern was established, and the Club is still striving to follow it.

When the Club's membership roll was published in 1902, fourteen years after organization, it contained the names of sixty active members, four honorary members, and fourteen associates. Nevertheless, the foundation was sound. The Club has grown through its devotion to accurate and painstaking study of living birds under natural conditions. May we as present members recall the debt we owe to Dr. Lynds Jones, who charted so wise a course for us!

MAURICE BROOKS