

BARTON WARREN EVERMANN

ALBIA, IOWA
October 23, 1853

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
September 27, 1932

Barton Warren Evermann was born October 23, 1853, at Albia, Iowa, and died at his home in Berkeley, California, September 27, 1932. His parents moved to Carroll County, Indiana, when he was a small boy and he received his primary education in the schools of that county and in



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Howard College at Kokomo, Indiana. He taught for a number of years in the country schools of Carroll County and in time achieved the worthy ambition of country teachers of those days in becoming county superintendent of schools. In 1875 he married Meadie Hawkins, one of his fellow country teachers, and about 1880 he and Mrs. Evermann moved to Santa Barbara, California, where they taught for several years.

While teaching in the country schools of Indiana he and his wife became much interested in birds and he began to keep full notes of their migrations and habits. From these notes he prepared the first papers of his bibliography. Up to the time he graduated from Indiana University in 1886 his writings were almost wholly on birds, 24 papers on Ornithology having been published in the "Ornithologist and Oologist," "Auk," etc., between the years 1879 and 1887. Early in his bird studies he began to collect them in order to study more closely their variations and determine their scientific names. Mrs. Evermann soon learned to prepare the skins, and between them they built up a fine private collection of the birds of northern Indiana and southern California.

In those days there were few books on birds and they had at times difficulty in identifying their specimens. However, in 1878 Dr. David Starr Jordan, then Professor of Science in Northwestern (now Butler) University at Indianapolis, issued the first edition of his noted "Manual of Vertebrates," and the Evermanns procured a copy. This, he afterward told me, was the most highly prized book he ever owned. Through it as a medium he began to correspond with its author and soon afterward returned to Indiana and for a time was a student and assistant of Dr. Jordan at Butler. Thus began that long and close association of the two great naturalists which continued up to the last year of their lives.

About 1883 the Evermanns moved to Bloomington and both of them entered Indiana University. The writer at that time was just beginning his work under Dr. Jordan, who was then Professor of Zoology in the University. As fellow students and lovers of nature, Evermann and I began a friendship which lasted through the years.

In those days there existed about a mile west of Bloomington the remnants of a former nursery which, with a big orchard and many pine trees, surrounded an old farm house. This, the old Turner place, was a favorite resort for winter birds in and about the pines and a stopping place for migrants in spring and fall. Thither Evermann and I, armed with shotguns, made our way on many occasions, taking shore larks, cedar waxwings, red-bellied nuthatches, white- and red-winged crossbills and pine and purple finches in winter, and many rare warblers and sparrows in their migrating seasons. At Evermann's suggestion, I prepared in 1886 my first ornithological paper, "The Winter Birds of the Vicinity of Bloomington, Indiana," where I listed with notes 59 species. Evermann the next year prepared his "Birds of Monroe County, Indiana," in which he included 188 species, incorporating my notes on the winter forms. Both papers were published in the "Hoosier Naturalist," a small magazine devoted to local history and nature sketches and published at Valparaiso, Indiana.

In the field Evermann could sight or distinguish the note of a bird for a greater distance than anyone I ever knew. At this time both Mr. and Mrs. Evermann were also much interested in botany, and while collecting birds he also took many of the rarer plants about Bloomington, especially those Ericads, numerous species of which have in Monroe and Brown counties their southern limits in the state. He had also become much interested in Ichthyology, especially fresh water fishes, a natural consequence of his association and work with Dr. Jordan. In 1886 he

published his first fish paper, "A List of the Fishes Observed in Franklin County, Indiana."

Evermann graduated from Indiana University in 1886 with the degree of B. S. and from his Alma Mater he also received the degrees of A. M. in 1888; Ph. D. in 1891 and LL. D. in 1928. After graduating he went to Terre Haute as Professor of Biology in the State Normal School, which position he held until 1891, when he went to Washington as Ichthyologist for the U. S. Fish Commission.

In 1887, when Mrs. Evermann and I both graduated at Indiana University, he secured for me a position as head of the Department of Science in the Wiley (Terre Haute) High School. We were thus associated for four more years, during which we made many collecting trips together, especially to the large ponds in the Wabash River bottoms where we made especial study of the habits of many rare water birds and aquatic plants.

In 1889 the Evermanns sustained a great loss in the burning of the main building of the State Normal School, in which their large collection of bird skins, herbarium and many of their most valuable scientific books were destroyed.

At Washington Dr. Evermann served from 1891 to 1910 as chief in charge of the Division of Scientific Inquiry of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries and from 1910 to 1914 as Administrator of the Alaska Fisheries Service. In the first named position he sent out each summer parties of three to six persons to collect fresh water fishes in various parts of the United States in order to ascertain the exact distribution of each species known to science. I had the pleasure of serving as assistant on these expeditions during two summers. He also, through Dr. J. T. Scovell, who had a summer cottage on Lake Maxinkuckee, became much interested in the natural history of that fine body of water. For several years he spent part of his vacation in the study of the lake and afterward, with his assistant, H. Walton Clark, published in two volumes a noted work entitled "Lake Maxinkuckee: A Physical and Biological Survey," which is the most complete natural history survey of any lake in North America.

During all these years and in fact until 1930, he was collaborating with Dr. D. S. Jordan. Together they traveled, studied and explored the waters adjacent to Hawaii, Alaska and the Pacific coast and together they wrote and published some of the most important works on Ichthyology which have appeared in this country. Among the most noteworthy of these were "The Fishes of North and Middle America," four volumes, 1896-1900; "American Food and Game Fishes," 1914, a noted popular work which has run through several editions; "The Genera of Fishes from Linnæus to Cuvier," 1917, and "Check List of the Fishes and Fish-like Vertebrates of North and Middle America," 1930.

In 1914 Dr. Evermann resigned from the U. S. Fish Commission and went to San Francisco as Director of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences. Here he developed many new features and made the museum and the Steinhart aquarium which, through the generosity of Ignatz Steinhart, he founded in 1921, the two largest institutions of their kind west of the Rocky Mountains.

During the last 40 years of his life Dr. Evermann became one of the greatest of the true naturalists of this country, an ilk whose ranks have become almost extinct. His bibliography of 387 titles shows that he published most extensively on fishes and birds, but it contains numerous papers on reptiles and mammals and a few on plants. He believed in studying in its entirety an object afield in its chosen or native haunts—not an infinitesimal part of it beneath a compound microscope. He believed and practiced that *work* is the greatest blessing vouchsafed to man during his few years on the surface of this earth of ours. He was very intolerant of any one, assistant or student, who was indifferent to the work in hand, or of anyone who considered that he had learned enough. He could, if occasion required, write or speak in simple language so that the most abstruse scientific facts were understood by his readers or audience. Originally a teacher, nothing gave him more pleasure than to speak before an audience of young people whose life's work was before them and, says G. Dallas Hanna: "It seemed to us who knew him intimately that his happiest moments were those spent telling of natural history to classes of school children which visited the halls of the California Academy of Sciences."¹

While living in his later years in a distant state, Dr. Evermann took great interest in Indiana, Indiana University, the State Audubon Society and the Indiana Academy of Science, of which latter he was one of the charter members, and whenever possible he timed his necessary eastern trips so that he could attend the annual meetings of the Audubon Society or of the Academy.

During his final illness, while confined to a hospital, he wrote me several times in regard to the distribution in Indiana of the big Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium spectabile* Schwartz, and the Leatherwood, *Dirca palustris* L. In one of these letters he said: "Along the west side of the cemetery at Burlington is a wild gorge, not very large, but large enough, where plants, trees, shrubs and flowers are found in great profusion and where birds are always abundant. I have started an inquiry looking toward the acquisition of the little gorge to set it aside as a wild flower and bird sanctuary. I hope to be able to carry it through; to acquire it and then turn it over to the cemetery association to look after it in the future, the expenses of the upkeep to be paid by myself. I expect there are hundreds of similar tracts in the State that might be utilized in the same way."

It is in this cemetery at Burlington that his ashes now rest. There the birds for unknown centuries to come will carol for him their sweetest songs—knowing not that they sing for one who was ever their friend and conservator.

Barton W. Evermann, friend and fellow naturalist of my better days, has solved, as we all must solve, the problem of the great unknown. He filled well the 78 years and 11 months which the God of Nature granted unto him from the eons of eternity. He added greatly to the store of human knowledge. The world is much the wiser and the better for his having been.

W. S. BLATCHLEY.

¹ Science, October 7, 1932.