



Nelson DeWitt Pumyea

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Since its founding in 1890 the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club has been fortunate in numbering among its members at all times one or more ornithologists of international renown. The backbone of the Club, however, has been a group of men from varied walks of life, not professional ornithologists, but banded together by a common interest in birds and a sincere devotion to the D.V.O.C. Outstanding in this group was Nelson Pumyea, a member of the club for more than fifty years, who died on September 5, 1967.

Nelson was a man of long and strong attachments. Born on January 29, 1887, at 20 Union Street, Mount Holly, New Jersey, he lived in the same house throughout his life. When he retired as cashier of the Union National Bank in Mount Holly, he had been employed there for fifty years. Extremely active in church and civic affairs, he was one of Mount Holly's best known citizens.

At the age of nineteen, Nelson and two other young men worked their way to Europe on a cattle boat, an experience he was fond of recounting in later years. His diary of that trip is both humorous and incisive. Nelson became an Associate Member of the D.V.O.C. in 1916 and he was successively elected an Active Member, a Fellow, and in 1963, an Honorary Member.

During Nelson's early days in the Club a major project was the development of a bird migration calendar for the Philadelphia region under the direction of Dr. Witmer Stone; Nelson was one of the most active contributors. In the days when D.V.O.C. field trips consisted of going to one place and taking an all day walk in that locality, instead of mad dashes by automobile from place to place, the D.V.O.C. was frequently invited to Mount Holly where Nelson led walking trips in that vicinity. Possibly the most memor-

able of these was on Washington's Birthday, 1934, which followed by a few days the coldest weather ever recorded in the Delaware Valley. At this time Nelson was able to show the Club a flock of about thirty Evening Grosbeaks, then virtually unknown in the Philadelphia area, together with about a dozen White-winged Crossbills. From that time on, Nelson was the recognized authority on the erratic comings and goings of Evening Grosbeaks in Burlington County. He was the author of a paper which appeared in *Cassinia* No. XXIX under the title, "The Evening Grosbeak Invasion in 1933-34."

For forty years Nelson conducted and compiled the Mount Holly Christmas Count, originally published in *Bird-Lore* and now a feature of *Audubon Field Notes*. He also participated in every Spring Round-up since the inception of these vernal rites of the Club in 1933.

An outstanding facet of Nelson's personality was his untiring encouragement of young people who manifested an interest in birds, and he was most generous in sharing his time and ornithological knowledge with them. Among present and past members who owe their introduction to the Club to him are Dr. Thomas L. Quay (now of North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina), Elmer E. Highley (now of Monterey, California), J. Russell Sprow of Mount Holly, New Jersey, and the writer.

In these swiftly changing and in many ways scarcely improving times, we can ill afford the loss of men such as rock-solid Nelson Pumyea.

Surviving are his wife, the former Elizabeth Paxson, and a daughter, Mrs. Edwin Siner of Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania.

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