

## JOHN D. CARTER

1874-1947

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John Darlington Carter, Fellow of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, was born December 30, 1874 on a farm near Lenape, Chester County, Pa. He died May 14, 1947 at Lansdowne, Delaware County, Pa., at the age of 73 years. The early years of his life were spent on the farm where he came into almost daily contact with those things which excited his curiosity and interest and thus helped to develop those keen powers of accurate observation for which he was noted in his mature life.

Under the influence and instruction of his father, Charles S. Carter, who was also a nature lover, he became an enthusiastic student of natural objects around him, especially botanical specimens and bird life. Letters written at this time to his cousin, William B. Evans of Moorestown, N. J., also a member of the D. V. O. C., give ample evidence of his ornithological activities and of the interest in the plants that he had observed. These letters are numerous enough to be convincing that even at that early age his knowledge of plants and birds was accurate and broad. It was during this early period of his life that he learned the art of taxidermy from George Forsythe, of West Chester, Pa.

In 1885 he entered Westtown School, where he continued his bird and plant studies with unabated zeal. The influence of his work at the school during this period carried over into after life, where the chief work of his ornithological activities is now to be found as a source of information and inspiration to younger ornithologists. He graduated from Westtown School in 1893, but returned to the school as an assistant teacher for the following three years. In this way he became more intimately connected with the welfare of the school and later became a member of various committees of the school and a lecturer on Natural History subjects.

He gave up teaching to enter Haverford College as a sophomore, from which he graduated in 1899 with a major in chemistry. He earned an M.A. degree from Haverford, which also awarded him a Graduate Fellowship, and he spent the next year in studying at Johns Hopkins University. He returned the following year to his Alma Mater as an instructor in chemistry. He did not continue his work as a teacher but took a position as research chemist with the firm of Carter and Scattergood. Later he became research chemist for the Philadelphia Quartz Company, with which he was connected until his retirement a short time before his death.

In 1903 he was married to Rachel Griscom Alsop and there were three children, David A., John H., and Esther A., all of whom are still living.

John Carter was a thorough believer in his religion and gave much of his life to the interests of his meeting. Something of the importance of this is seen in the numerous positions of responsibility he held in the meeting. He

was clerk, to be translated by most readers as chairman, of his Monthly Meeting at Lansdowne, clerk of the Quarterly Meeting of Media, clerk of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's committee for Ministers and Elders, and lastly clerk of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting itself. This wide range of trust within the meeting itself speaks clearly of his faithfulness to the concerns of his meeting. He carried these responsibilities of his meeting with a dignity and calmness well known to all his associates in other phases of his life.

His chief interests in life outside his meeting and business affairs were in botany but more especially in ornithology. He became a member of the D. V. O. C. in 1900 and was always an active and interested member. For various reasons he missed many of the meetings in the last few years, but his interest was always assured.

Almost any planned trip by the Club found John Carter among those willing to risk the weather for the sake of his favorite pastime. Besides these he made many trips to the Poconos, Eastern Shore Maryland, and other haunts and breeding places of our birds. He was always within his legal right, as he had licenses to collect in many of the states and Canada. The results of his ornithological researches are to be found in the John D. Carter Museum at Westtown School. His collection of nests with full sets of eggs and the mounted birds cover most of those found to breed in the Middle Atlantic States and number approximately two hundred. These are carefully mounted and preserved in specially made cases, some with backgrounds painted with lifelike vistas by his wife, who shared his interests. The cases in which they are preserved were provided for by gifts from the alumni of the school.

The collection now serves as a rallying point for the younger ornithologists of the school who meet regularly and continue the work already begun by their enthusiastic promoter.

It has been generally understood that John Carter was opposed to shooting birds even for his collection, and that he sought in many ways to secure those accidentally killed. In spite of this, we find in one of his letters an admission of having bought cartridges for the shooting of "Englishers," of which he and his brother apparently destroyed many. His publications are to be found chiefly as articles in the *Westonian*, mostly concerning interesting incidents in his collecting trips.

The time and trouble involved and the expense incurred in the production of Carter Museum at Westtown has been very great, and only the completeness of the exhibit and the pleasing and natural settings of the pieces could warrant such an outlay of time, patience, and money. It has been completed with extreme care and with a view to artistic display. Nothing could have been done with more care and thoughtfulness. The final words are well expressed in a sentence written by James F. Walker, Principal of Westtown School, in a short memorial paper: "He was unusually careful never to make a statement until he felt very sure of its truth." This might readily be the epitaph of John D. Carter.