

HERITAGE

The Delaware Valley Ornithological Club has been in existence since 1890; 1960 is its seventieth anniversary. For three score years and ten, or roughly for two generations of men, the Club has met regularly for deliberation, edification and entertainment. Through the austerity of four wars, under eleven administrations in the White House, and through economic disturbances and sociological changes, we have continued our organized interest in birds. We have been a contemporary of the advent of the automobile, airplane, radio, television, motion pictures, space vehicles, and other mechanical and electronic marvels. And always we have looked to the birds for recreation and avocation. As Louis Untermeyer has rhymed it in his "Return to Birds":

"When cities prod me with demands
Of many minds and many hands, . . .
And men bewilder men with words, . . .
Gratefully I return to birds."

It is important in dwelling on the Club's history, not only to consider the founders and the guiding spirits of the organization itself, but also to recall this area's great heritage through those men who set the pattern for Philadelphia ornithology, beginning long before the inception of the Club. This was a favorite topic of Dr. Stone who wrote of these men over forty years ago. These are the names that come to mind:

JOHN CASSIN (1813-1869) of Delaware County, Curator of Birds at the Academy, and the Club's adopted patron, who named the Philadelphia Vireo, and for whom is named an auklet, a kingbird, a purple finch, and a short-eared owl.

DR. BENJAMIN BARTON (1766-1815), who wrote his inimitable "Fragments" in 1799, and who kept the first known published list of migrants and their arrival dates.

CHARLES L. BONAPARTE (1803-1857), for five years a resident here, and in whose name we have the Bonaparte's Gull.

JOHN BARTRAM, and son WILLIAM (1739-1823) whose name is memorialized in the Upland Plover.

EDWARD HARRIS (1759-1863) of Moorestown, N. J., patron of contemporary bird students and particular friend of Audubon who named a hawk and a woodpecker for him.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON (1785-1851), whom we cannot claim alone as our own, but who spent much time and first became really interested in American birds at Mill Grove on the Perkiomen.

GEORGE ORD, the great and good friend of Wilson, and namer of many birds, including *Larus philadelphia*.

ALEXANDER WILSON (1766-1813), who died here at 47 years of age and who, among many other species christenings, gave the Mourning Warbler its specific name of "*philadelphia*".

JOHN K. TOWNSEND, for whom was named a warbler, a fox sparrow, a snow bunting, a solitaire, a ptarmigan, a junco, and a hypothetical bunting.

SAMUEL L. WOODHOUSE (1821-1904), friend of Townsend, and whom we can remember through the Woodhouse Jay, courtesy of Baird.

ADOLPHUS L. HEERMAN (1818 ? - 1865), long a Philadelphian, and for whom Cassin called the Heerman's Gull, Spencer Baird called a song sparrow, and who himself coined the word "oology".

THOMAS B. WILSON, the Philadelphia patron and collector.

DR. WILLIAM GAMBEL (1819-1849), who died of fever on an expedition in California and is buried there on Feather River. For him, Ridgway, Nuttall and others named the Mountain Chickadee, Gambel's Quail, a goose, a shrike, and a sparrow.

CONSTANTIN RAFINESQUE (1784-1842), native of Constantinople but a Philadelphian for many years, dying here at the age of 58.

MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE ARCHIBALD MCCALL, honored by Cassin in the McCall Screech Owl of Texas.

TITIAN RAMSEY PEALE (1799-1885) of museum fame, who is honored by Ridgway in Peale's Falcon.

WILLIAM P. TURNBULL, who came from Scotland, wrote the first book definitive of eastern Pennsylvania birds, and who died here.

SAMUEL WRIGHT of Conshohocken, for whom Baird named the Gray or Wright's Flycatcher.

WILLIAM LOYD BAILY, SR.; STEWARDSON BROWN; WHARTON HUBER; GEORGE SPENCER MORRIS; SPENCER TROTTER; DR. WITMER STONE; SAMUEL SCOVILLE; CORNELIUS WEYGANDT; FLETCHER STREET; and many others.

These men of note of the Delaware Valley were not all pure scientists, but in scientific and recreational ornithology they have left a heritage of high standards which bird students of today might well find stimulating and profitable.

