

Edward R. Manners

Edward R. Manners of Wenonah, N.J., a fellow and life member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, died June 20, 2000. Ed, who was born in 1915, had been a member of DVOC since 1941.

From conversations with Ed, I received the impression that he was always interested in nature. He related how the woods and fields around Wenonah cost him his Christian education. With the best intentions, he would start his walk to Sunday school, but somehow he never arrived, as he invariably became engrossed in another curriculum.

It was his studious and inquiring nature that finally brought him into the company of other birders. He had noted some strange black birds hanging around the library in Wenonah for which he could not find a description or picture in any of the current field guides. He heard that Julian Potter was the big bird man in the area, and he just happened to work in Wenonah. Potter, of course, knew the answer: European Starlings, newly arrived in South Jersey.

Ed was a complicated person, with varied relationships and interests. He was the keeper of the collective memory of several generations, and his stories were endless. I spent years listening to him, and the stories kept coming. Mostly, I think they were tales of the affection he had for us all. He really respected the birders, botanists, and gardeners among us. His stories were praise of work well done.

Probably first and foremost, Ed was a gardener. His greatest accomplishment was keeping alive a rare heirloom lima bean native to South Jersey. I now have that bean — and the responsibility of its continuance. He was also involved

in the propagation of trees and shrubs. For years, he advised the town of Wenonah of the planting of street trees and spent many a day planting them. The last I saw him, he took me by his old home, where he had planted what may have been the first dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in South Jersey, now a 70-foot-high tree. He had spirited a cutting from the first one ever planted in North America after its discovery in China. That's right — Ed working outside the law. He could also be forward thinking.

Ed, who was a lab technician at Texaco Refinery, was an early conservationist who put his money where his mouth was. Around 1950, an area of ravine wildflowers was in danger of development, so Ed bought the property. It turned out he couldn't save the flowers. First, it was kids trampling them as they played in the woods. He just couldn't bring himself to yell at them or kick them out. Finally, the electric company put in a power-line cut.

A few bird projects he was a part of stand out. His work along the lower Delaware River led to the discovery in the 1960s of one of the largest Northern Saw-whet Owl roosts in the country. (His original study area, where he tracked the birds by banding them or dabbing a spot of paint on their foreheads, extended from Bridgeport to Westville.) Many of us saw our first saw-whet at Thorofare to the soundtrack of Manner's wisecracks: that querulous voice of his, inquiring as to the state of our eyesight.

Ed, along with Augie Sexauer and I think Joe Jacobs, also monitored the decline of nesting Bald Eagles in southwest New Jersey during the 1950s. While Rachel Carson showed the cause, it was the documentation of the effect that helped lead to the banning of DDT. Their work was an outstanding example of how our avocation can be a weapon for conservation.

Another project was his documentation of shorebird use in the dredge spoils along the Delaware River in the 1940s. The work stands up well to time, and my own studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s showed nearly the same patterns.

Ed wrote two items for *Cassinia*: "Shorebirds Along the Delaware," based on the aforementioned

research, in 1945, and a general note, "An Occurrence of Botulism Among Waterfowl and Shorebirds Along the Delaware River" in 1965.

But there was very little that Ed wrote down. Being rather modest by nature, he was not comfortable with putting himself forward. But if you ask the opinions of those we respect the most in the club, I think all would sing his praises. He was the best companion one could want on a field trip or over dinner.

Ed is survived by his wife, Helen; two daughters, Susan Telagae and Ann Burdsell; and grandchildren. — *Ward Dasey*

DVOC also remembers the following deceased members:

Sidney Lipschutz
Edward (Ned) Altemus
Harold Jackson
Al Zaid
Fred Mears
Stephen Wing