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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE  
WINTHROP, IOWA



#### A CLIFF SWALLOW COLONY

Hundreds of nests are fastened to the rock wall on the west bank of the Missouri River, Thurston County, Nebraska. Dr. T. C. Stephens is shown taking pictures, while W. W. Trussell steadies the boat with a boat hook. The view is looking south along the river. Photograph by Bruce F. Stiles, June 13, 1937.

THE NORTHERN CLIFF SWALLOW IN  
WESTERN IOWA

By BRUCE F. STILES  
STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

During the past ten years the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon albifrons albifrons*) has been mentioned in 'Iowa Bird Life' 20 times. Except for a brief description of the colony at Bluffton by DuMont, it got into print only on field trip lists, migration records and banding records. In the Bluffton colony DuMont found 275 to 300 nests on July 11, 1934. In observations of summer birds in 1939, Robert B. Wallace in reference to swallows says, "The Cliff Swallow was even less common, being found only in Palo Alto, Sioux and Tama Counties." However he did not visit Missouri River counties.

In the 'Wilson Bulletin' there are 11 references to this swallow in the past six years. Most writers agree that its numbers were greatly reduced in the middle-west, but that it is now staging a comeback. It is interesting to speculate on how the nucleus that perpetuates any species is able to maintain itself in the face of factors that decimate large populations near the point of extinction. In the case of the Cliff Swallow it may have been the inaccessibility of certain breeding areas to man.

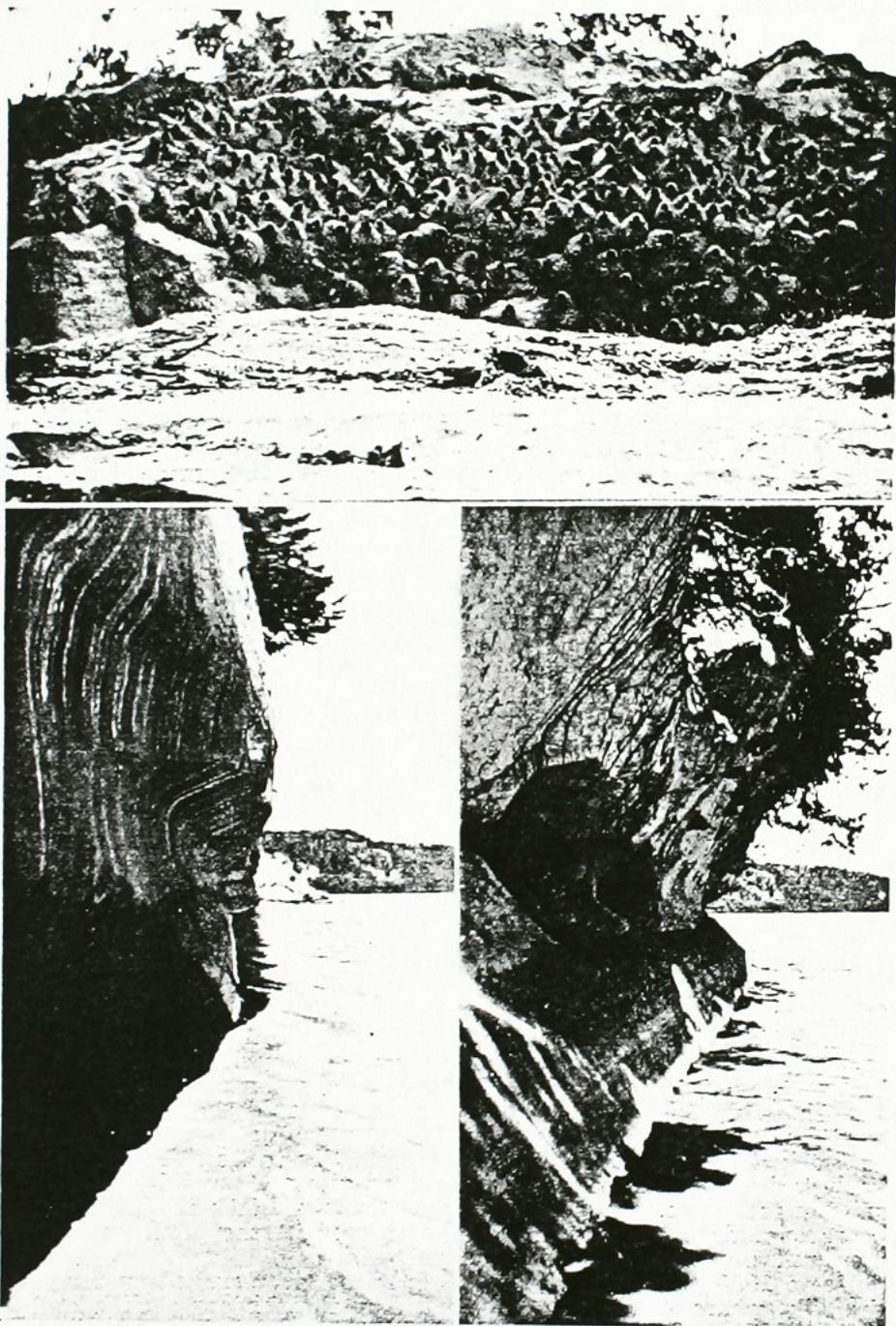
Such an area lies a few miles southwest of Sloan, Iowa, and below Flower's Island, along the Missouri River in a wild and rugged country. The region is characterized by heavily wooded hills and deep gullies. Sandstone cliffs overhang the river. Although not more than 25 or 30 miles from Sioux City, it is comparatively little known. Indians of the Winnebago reservation still camp in its ravines. Fresh beaver cuttings may be seen along the river bank and Turkey Vultures wheel and soar above its rocky escarpments. Bird life is abundant. Here is the ancestral home of the Cliff Swallow. The vast colony found here may have been a factor in maintaining its population on the prairies.

On May 14, 1804, Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark, accompanied by 43 men, set out from St. Louis to explore the vast territory just acquired by the United States through the Louisiana Purchase.

On August 10 they stopped near a high bluff overlooking the Nebraska shore. They were told by Indians that near here there had formerly been a large Indian village of over 300 wigwams; that here were buried 1000 members of the tribe, together with their chief, Black Bird, all having died from a scourge of smallpox which had threatened to wipe out the entire settlement. Chief Black Bird, himself deathly sick, and sensing the danger, ordered all the sick killed and the wigwams burned. Then he killed his wife and daughter and ordered that the remaining warriors bury him alive astride his horse on top of what is now known as Black Bird Hill. That the Indians told this to Lewis and Clark we know to be true, and that they visited his grave, a mound 12 feet long and six feet wide. Indians there now, believe Black Bird's ghost appears one night every year, and on that night they still congregate from miles around to witness the spectacle.

Up to 1938 at a point above this spot the river surged over against the hills, where it was turned on edge by the sandstone cliffs and its entire width confined to a deep channel little more than 200 yards wide. Through this it flowed with a strong and swift current that has always been referred to by the river men as "hot water".

This spot was easily identified by Audubon on his trip up the Missouri just 39 years after Lewis and Clark. On the night of May 12, 1843, accompanied by four men, Audubon tied up his boat and made



### NESTS OF THE CLIFF SWALLOW

In the top picture there are about 300 nests; it was taken with the camera pointing directly overhead, up the face of the overhanging cliff.

Lower left: Looking north along the west bank of the Missouri River, Thurston County, Nebraska, and showing the effects of erosion on the sandstone cliffs.

Lower right: The same scene, with a few nests in view.

Photographs by Bruce F. Stiles, June 13, 1937.

camp opposite Black Bird Hill. The next morning, he relates, he passed under cedar-covered bluffs containing clusters of nests which, he believed, belonged to Cliff Swallows. Fred J. Pierce refers to this in his article entitled 'When Audubon Visited Iowa', in Vol. VI of 'Iowa Bird Life', pp. 46-48.

Audubon's records almost definitely establish the age of this colony of cliff dwellers at not less than 98 years. Quite likely it existed before Lewis and Clark; before Marquette and Joliet; before white men had crossed the Alleghenies, and when the vast territory to the west was little more than a myth. It serves as a connecting link between the past and the present.

Early on the morning of June 13, 1937, we started out to make a survey of the colony. Our party included Dr. T. C. Stephens of Morningside College, State Conservation Officer W. W. Trusell, and myself. Going down the Iowa side, we launched our motor boat opposite the bluffs and cruised for several miles up and down the west bank of the river.

The colony of Cliff Swallows is scattered out along the cliff for about a mile. We counted the nests as well as we could and concluded there were 2,600 nests in the colony. At one point of concentration there were over 1,500 nests in little more than 100 yards. The air was filled with the birds, which were at the peak of their nesting activities. Both eggs and young were in the nests. Across the face the light-colored bands gave them the appearance of wearing goggles. The retort-shaped nest is made of mud with the spout pointed downward to protect the inside from the weather. The eggs are white, finely speckled with brown.

The beauty of this historic spot is now being ruined by the U. S. Army engineers who have erected huge pile-dikes against the base of the cliff in an effort to slow down the current and move it out away from its rock channel. This is a part of the work to make the river navigable for boats that will never use it.

I visited the place on April 23, 1941, and found the colony to be greatly reduced, probably disturbed by the construction work. It is not likely that the spot will be entirely abandoned by the swallows, but I doubt if it will ever again regain its former size. Will they scatter out and find other suitable nesting sites? That they may do this is possible.

In 1939 I first noticed 20 or 30 Cliff Swallow nests on the stone abutments of the Illinois Central railway bridge crossing the Missouri River at Council Bluffs. In 1940 there were about 100 and in 1941 the colony increased to more than 200 nests. State Conservation Officer John F. Holst has informed me that recently a colony of Cliff Swallows has established itself on the stone abutments under the Blair Bridge on the Missouri River west of Missouri Valley, Iowa. It may be that some of this increase came from the area above Black Bird Hill.

As late as 1937 there was a small colony nesting in the bluffs on the west side of the Missouri River about 10 miles above Sioux City.

L. Nelson Nichols, writing about the Cliff Swallow in Pearson's 'Birds of America', says: "One very conspicuous place where there was an immense colony was on the face of the high bluffs near the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers." This spot is about 100 miles above Sioux City. As I have not seen it in a number of years, I am unable to make a report on its present status, but in my memory it was never as large as the colony above Black Bird Hill.

In conclusion I will say that the Northern Cliff Swallow has increased in numbers in western Iowa during the past decade, but it will be interesting to note what effect the loss of the great colony above Black Bird Hill will have on the future population here.

WALTER MELVIN ROSENE—NATURALIST  
1880-1941By WALTER W. BENNETT  
541 SOUTH SPRING ST.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The romantic history of the state of Iowa as portrayed in the biographies of its citizens not only has interested many a reader, but the life story of one of its leaders who was eminently successful in home, in business, in ornithology, in civic affairs, has proved a great inspiration to others.

Little did Charles Rosene of Ogden, Iowa, realize on December 17, 1880, that his new-born son was destined to be such a leader. For Iowa was then rural, and Ogden only a small community serving its farm territory. His business was that of harness-maker. When the son was born to his good wife, Augusta, he was proud and hoped the lad would become a good harness-maker, too. But he became much more. He grew up with his "home town" and then reached out to grow with his state of Iowa.

Many men have said they owed much of their success to the farm and rural life of their early years. It gave them basic knowledge of life, valuable ideals and a good physique for exercise of their ambitions. And so it was that young Walter M. Rosene grew up and graduated from the Ogden high school in 1896. Until 1901 he worked with his father in the harness business. Then he was employed in a wholesale saddlery house in Chicago in 1901 and 1902, but longed for his friends back in Iowa. So he returned in that latter year, and became bookkeeper for the City State Bank of Ogden.

It was an important step in his life. He wanted to "work up" and his reward was the presidency of the institution, held until he retired in 1935. He was acknowledged a good bank president and took an active part in meetings of the Iowa Bankers' Association. His excellent management was praised by the State Banking Department. So sound was his institution that he chafed much over the "bank holiday" proclaimed by Franklin D. Roosevelt for the whole United States, and reopened it promptly. After retiring he continued serving his community in business by purchasing and operating an insurance agency which rapidly grew, to which was added the collecting of light and water bills for the Ogden municipal plant.

As a citizen Walter Rosene took a very prominent part in church activities in Ogden, where he was one of the most loyal supporters of the Methodist church. He sang in its choir, taught in its Sunday School, and worked on its many committees. He was also very active in civic affairs. As a hobby he gathered a valuable collection of United States coins and postage stamps and frequently used them to illustrate talks on the history of his country.

Most important in his life was his fine judgment in selecting a good wife, for Miss Freda Karlen, whom he married December 24, 1903, proved until her death, September 22, 1939, most devoted and a splendid manager for his home and family. Except for one daughter, Theodora, who died in infancy, their children were given a college education and have since attained success. The daughter, Thyra, became the wife of Reginald A. Cook, electrical engineer with General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, where she is active in social welfare work. The son, "Junior" (Walter Rosene, Jr.), graduated from Iowa State College at Ames, engaged in ornithological research, married Miss Kathryn Giles August 26, 1937, and is now in governmental service at Gadsden, Alabama. They have one son of whom the grandfather was very proud.



WALTER MELVIN ROSENE  
(From a photograph taken about 1930)

To this family and its welfare Walter M. Rosene was very devoted. He was a father to be emulated. It is well remembered how faithfully he tried to obtain a cure for Thyra when she almost lost her life from poison ivy, how much attention he gave to both son and daughter during the growing period of their lives, and of the kindness and gentleness with which he cared for his faithful wife during her several years of entire helplessness following an automobile accident. His place as a father is shown in one of his last letters written in May 1941, in which he wrote:

"Since Mrs. Rosene died in September, 1939, I have maintained my old home and have had housekeepers. That is an expensive way of living but I hate to leave the old home which I built when I was married 37 years ago. I am expecting my children home in September for our annual reunion. We all met in Schenectady in 1939 and in Alabama in 1940 and now this will be the year we meet in good old Iowa. That is the way we rotate and that gives us all a chance to see each other once a year. I have a grandson down in Alabama who is almost a year old now and he is the best in the world. I was down and saw him at Christmas time and can hardly wait until I can see him again."

The reunion, though, was different. He died September 14, 1941, at the Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa, from complications following an operation. Although his letters of two months before indicated he may have thought something wrong, the end was a sudden shock to his many Iowa friends.

But it was in another sphere of activity in which he attained greatest renown, that of Rosene, the Naturalist. His untiring ambition and perseverance achieved for him a place among Iowa's best ornithologists of all time. His was not that of the office chair and laboratory but that of hard labor in the field. His ornithology was not taxonomy, not distribution, not compilation, but bird behavior, and his accomplishments in that placed him among the best in the Middle West.

Some men trace the beginning of their ornithological work to an environment of early years; others, to inspiration of some person. With Rosene it undoubtedly was both. The bird life of his own farming community, ever present and ever active, must have provided an interest as it does with most of those in such a region. He himself has often said, with his usual humor, that the business of banking gave him an interest in birds for he "was always chasing lame ducks," i.e., those debtors who were behind in payments! But undoubtedly another ornithologist, the late Carl Fritz Henning, was first to thoroughly arouse his interest in bird life. Later, while attending meetings of the old Iowa Conservation Society, he met other ornithologists and, with them and others, took an active part in organizing the present Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1923. He was not only a Charter Member but became its first President and was reelected for a second two-year term. The others he met through this association no doubt gave him much inspiration for his work.

At the convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1924, Rosene and Walter W. Bennett planned a scientific trip into the Stump Lake and Devil's Lake region of North Dakota. It was this expedition that gave him a start in the photography of bird life and lecturing, as well as much added information and new methods in the study of bird behavior. (See 'Wilson Bulletin', June, 1926, pp. 65-79).

The trip, in June 1924, was a three-weeks' battle with mud roads, camping in adverse weather, and with other discomforts, all of which Rosene took with hearty enjoyment and with a consistent sense of humor. He wanted to take a better kind of photographs, having only his postcard-size kodak. It was suggested he obtain a portrait lens by which (with help in composition, exposure and bird behavior) he obtained a creditable set of negatives of water birds and nests. Upon returning home Bennett made from them and colored by hand Rosene's first set of slides to use in lecturing to his friends. This opened up a new field, for now he could share with others his great enjoyment over the things his research revealed of bird life.

Through the next 17 years Rosene did much in ornithology. He consistently studied behavior, migration, nesting and the economic status of birds not only in his own Ogden territory, but made many expeditions to other parts of Iowa. He kept accurate and detailed records and gathered an excellent library of still and motion pictures to illustrate his findings. He published frequent articles in various scientific periodicals but preferred the more modern and more effective visual way of explanation. He was greatly in demand as a lecturer and contributed much to ornithology by that method. He planned also to write a book on the birds of central Iowa, using his own observations and photographs, and would have probably begun work on the manuscript within a year if he had been spared.

Rosene's favorite organization was the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. After serving as its first President he continued most faithful and was "always one of the moving spirits in anything that promoted its wel-

fare." He had the distinction of being the only member to attend every one of its 19 annual conventions. He was frequently a leader of its field trips and served as Secretary-Treasurer from May, 1940, until his death.

To the Iowa Ornithologists' Union went part credit for obtaining the change from the old, unsatisfactory game warden system to that of the Iowa Fish and Game Commission, and Rosene, as a member of the Executive Council of the Union at the time, voted in favor of the change. Later, in 1934, he became a member of that same Commission, when he was appointed by the Governor to fill the unexpired term of J. N. ("Ding") Darling when the latter resigned to become Chief of the Federal Bureau of Biological Survey. Rosene served for 15 months and his influence did much for Iowa bird life.

Walter Rosene also served as Treasurer of the Wilson Ornithological Club from 1930 to 1935. He taught for many summers in the American School of Wildlife Protection at McGregor, Iowa. He was a member of the Boone County Conservation Association, the Iowa Authors' Club and the Numismatist Society. One of his last activities was to accept an invitation of Mrs. Toni Wendelburg of the Des Moines city schools to act as judge of their Junior Exhibit of bird feeding trays at the Iowa State Fair in August, 1941.

Many ornithologists knew Walter Rosene best in the field where he was always ready to do his share of a job to be performed and was most considerate. His perfect physique made it possible to study bird activities under trying conditions with the utmost perseverance. His ambition for research was dynamic. He would patiently sit cramped in a blind for hours to discover how a bird would act. He was exact in observation. Many an hour would pass with photographic failure but he was always optimistic about the future. He once said, "Hawks and owls seem to be my long suit"; and recently he wrote that "my



#### BREAKFAST AT CHASE LAKE, NORTH DAKOTA

Walter W. Bennett (left) and Walter M. Rosene, photographed on an ornithological trip, June 25, 1924. Camp was made here to study a colony of White Pelicans, Cormorants, California Gulls and Avocets on an island in the lake. Later, the two men made a trip to western Nebraska to study the Prairie Chicken. Rosene made another trip to northern Minnesota to visit colonies of Common Terns. Aside from these outside trips, Rosene's work was purely Iowan and he devoted his time to the birds of his home state.

wildest escapade was my trip to Lansing, Iowa, where I photographed nesting Duck Hawks while suspended on a rope on the face of a cliff just 400 feet over the Mississippi River. That was a dizzy job and one I never will forget but I got my pictures anyway and that is what I went after. I banded those four young Duck Hawks and think they are the first and only Duck Hawks ever banded in Iowa."

Those who have heard Walter Rosene in one of his lectures—and there are many thousands—will remember him as an excellent speaker with good voice and a high degree of personal magnetism. His sense of humor was most refreshing in its originality. His subject matter usually concerned the birds of his home state and his fine explanation of them raised his public educational work to the highest class. His photography, too, was superb and he stood as one of the very best wildlife photographers in the Middle West.

And so, when the little town of Ogden, Iowa, stopped on September 16, 1941, to pay tribute and to lay Walter M. Rosene to rest in its cemetery, his life-long friends said he had been "a citizen of unimpeachable integrity, of exemplary industry, and of unquestioned patriotism". They knew he was not only theirs but was claimed also by the State of Iowa. They knew he was one of the Midwest's best ornithologists. They knew he had contributed much to the public education of his state and had achieved vast results in conserving that wildlife of Iowa which every one of them enjoyed. And they paid fitting tribute!

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(Mr. Rosene was usually a member of the party taking Christmas bird censuses from Ogden, Iowa, and his name appears in the published reports in 'Bird-Lore' almost every year from 1923 to 1940. He also wrote considerable verse and some of his poems were published. We have no bibliographical data on these or on newspaper items.—F. J. P.)

## THE LAST CHICKEN HUNT\*

By WALTER M. ROSENE

ILLUSTRATION BY R. BRUCE HORSFALL

The first settlers to cross the Mississippi and come into Iowa found the flora and fauna of the great prairies so rich and abundant that they thought there would be no end of this great storehouse. Dotted the landscape were thousands of sloughs, marshes and "pot holes." Here in the dense growth of cat-tails, bulrushes and blue-flag were the ducks, and other dwellers of the marsh, filling the air with their lively chatter. The music that can come from an Iowa marsh was known only to those sturdy pioneers. Vast acres of blazing-star, prairie clover and purple cone flowers nodded gaily in the breeze. On the uplands the long prairie grasses bowed before the wind and waved like billows on a vast ocean. "Prairie Pigeons," Golden Plovers, were plentiful, and wafted on the summer breeze came the sweet soft call of the Upland Plover and the louder call of the Long-billed Curlew. There was life everywhere.

The bird of the upland prairie that filled the larder of many a hungry pioneer family was the Prairie Chicken. They were here in countless thousands. Their weird "booming" indicated that spring had come, and with it the mating time for the chickens. The males would then select an open spot on the prairie where they would go through their strutting and courtship antics while the coy females looked on from the nearby bunches of prairie grass. This booming, like the tolling of a deep-toned bell, resounded over the prairies everywhere.

With the coming of the railroad in Iowa, telegraph wires were strung like a web across the state, and many chickens were killed by flying against this new and strange obstruction. The section men working on the railroad could always find a plentiful supply of fresh meat by picking up the chickens along the tracks under the wires.

My father, being one of the early pioneers of Boone County, in central Iowa, used to enjoy telling me of the incidents that occurred then, and one of these stories concerned the last organized Prairie Chicken hunt in our county. My old friend, W. H. Crooks, of Boone, Iowa, is now the only survivor who took part in that great hunt, and recently I stood at his bedside in the Boone Hospital and listened to the same story that my father used to tell me. Far too many of the stories of those days have been lost and forgotten, but this one should live, for it deals with the Prairie Chicken, the greatest of all upland game birds. It also portrays what Iowa was, and what Iowa is today.

In those early pioneer days, there was a great deal of rivalry in every community as to who was the best marksman and the best hunter. Every man and boy aspired to be the best shot in the county, and they had plenty of practice as there was an abundance of all kinds of game. It was a custom each fall to have an organized chicken hunt. The two best hunters would "choose up sides" and the losing side would have to give a banquet at the leading hotel for the winners. This was a great event of the year and one always anticipated with much enthusiasm.

Boonesboro was then the county seat. The small village of Montana, near by, was later destined to become Boone and the present county seat. My father worked in a harness shop in Boonesboro from 1870 to 1874. When he later told me these fascinating stories during my boyhood days in Ogden, Iowa, he did not tell me the exact date of the last hunt but said that it was sometime during those four years. I asked Mr. Crooks at the hospital and he said, "The date on the gravestone

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This paper was read by the author at the convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Fairfield, Iowa, May 8, 1936.

of Gene Soule out in the cemetery will settle that." I drove to the cemetery, and after searching for some time finally found an old, weather-beaten marker on which the dates were barely legible. Dimly I read—"Born June 2 1849—Died Aug 15 1872."

This 23-year-old Eugene Soule, commonly called "Gene," was the local gunsmith in Boonesboro, and was also considered one of the best shots in the county. He was accordingly chosen as captain of one side. Each side had an equal number of hunters and the hunt was to last three days. They assembled near the old court house and scores of people were out to see them start and to wish them success. Father watched them from the front door of the Goetzman harness shop as they started, four or five loads in each party. They used spring wagons, three-seated buggies and single buggies.

Mr. Crooks, being then but 12 years of age, was too young to be a member of the hunting party, but by consistent begging he was finally allowed to go as the driver of one of the rigs. Young "Willie" Crooks was much elated, for his father was one of the hunters and he wanted to "go with Dad" to see him shoot chickens. Their party drove southwest of Boonesboro, across the Des Moines River to Marcy and the surrounding townships just south of what is now Ogden. The other party went northwest from Boonesboro, also crossing the Des Moines River, and hunted up in the northwest part of the county.

It was a happy, jovial group of hunters and dogs that started on that morning of August 13, 1872, each bent on killing the greater number of chickens. If there happened to be a farm house on a section they would go in at that corner of the farm and would hunt right through that section. "Willie" Crooks would then drive the team around the section and meet the hunters after they had crossed the farm. The whirr of wings and the rapid shots were music to the ears of the men and boys. The dogs were all trained retrievers and few birds were lost. At night they would stay either at some farm house, or sleep in the hay loft of a barn.



"THE BIRD OF THE UPLAND PRAIRIE THAT FILLED THE LARDER OF MANY A HUNGRY PIONEER FAMILY WAS THE PRAIRIE CHICKEN"

For three days the hunt continued. There seemed to be no end of chickens. Gene Soule had a "brown hunting dog" that was a good one, and Gene, being a good shot, got plenty of birds.

Late in the afternoon of the third day the parties began to return to the old Occidental Hotel in Boonesboro where the banquet was to be held. One by one the wagons filled with men and dogs and chickens arrived. The chickens were counted and a careful record was kept of them all. The last load to arrive was the one containing Gene Soule and his "brown hunting dog." The awaiting crowd was tense with excitement for the kill of Gene Soule and his party decided the winners. With loaded gun in hand, he sprang from the light wagon, and placing his firearm against the wheel, he called to the nearest group asking how many chickens they had shot. After hearing their reply he loudly shouted, "That's nothing. I shot 55 myself."

As he did so, he slapped his hand on his thigh with a resounding smack. His dog, still in the wagon, thinking that he was being called, leaped toward his master and landed on the loaded gun against the side of the wheel. The gun was discharged into the side of Gene's ace and he fell, a victim of the two things that he loved the best—his own gun and his "brown hunting dog." He was carried to the Occidental Hotel where he died. Suffice it to say there was no banquet there that night.

My father, standing across the street in the doorway of the harness shop, was a witness of the scene, as was also Willie Crooks. A total of about 1,500 chickens were shot by both parties in this three-day hunt, and these were now given away to the citizens of Boonesboro. The men dispersed and there never was another organized chicken hunt in Boone County. In fact, even single individual hunters were scarce for some time after this tragic hunt.

During the 65 years that have passed since that day, great changes have taken place in central Iowa. The prairies of waving tall grass have been broken and now one sees little but endless miles of waving cornfields. With the passing of the prairie grass we have also witnessed the passing of the Prairie Chicken. No more do we hear the booming in the springtime or the whirr of wings in the autumn. The passing of this great upland bird from Iowa has been a tragedy. Where once 1,500 could be killed in a single hunt, now not a single nesting pair can be found.

As I knelt in the deep snow of the cemetery, trying to read the inscription on the gravestone of Gene Soule, I wondered whether some day there might not be others kneeling before a monument somewhere, reading the date of the death of the last Prairie Chicken. I am afraid that that date is not far off.

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## CARL FRITZ HENNING PASSES

In the death of Carl Fritz Henning, which occurred at Boone, Iowa, September 15, 1941, there was severed a definite link between the old school of ornithology and the new. Mr. Henning belonged to that group of old-time students who were actively pursuing their hobby of bird watching and egg collecting in Iowa a half century ago. The first bird society in this state, the Iowa Ornithological Association, was born in 1894 and flourished for four years. Mr. Henning and his colleagues of those days received their incentive and enjoyed many pleasurable days through the contacts that grew out of their pioneer organization. Carl Fritz Henning's interest in birds and nature was deep-rooted and lasted through life.

In June of 1922 Walter Rosene and Chas. J. Spiker camped for four days with Mr. Henning in the Ledges State Park. On that trip history was made, for Mr. Henning told them about the early Iowa bird so-

ciety, and the seeds for the present Iowa Ornithologists' Union were sowed and took root the following year. Mr. Henning it was who gave Walter Rosene his initial interest in birds. The two men were companions on many bird trips in or near the Ledges. It is perhaps a strange coincidence that Mr. Henning's death occurred one day after Mr. Rosene's.

Carl Fritz Henning was born in Germany, March 14, 1865, and came to this country when seven weeks old. His parents settled at Boone, Iowa, where he received his education and spent most of his life. The Ledges State Park was established in 1921 and Mr. Henning was appointed its custodian, a position which he held for two decades—until a few months before his death. As park custodian serving thousands of visitors yearly, he became widely known. In this capacity, and by virtue of his well-rounded knowledge and entertaining personality, he was able to interest and instruct the public in nature lore, and to spread the lessons of wildlife conservation far and wide. He was an artist, an author, and a true naturalist.

I well remember the last time I saw him—on October 6, 1939. With Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones, my wife and I spent an evening in his library. The walls of this room in his Ledges Park home were lined with heavily-laden book-shelves. He showed us the journals of his early bird studies, in the form of voluminous notes illustrated by his own pen drawings, each book kept with great care and neatness. How his face lighted up and his eyes sparkled as he recounted those experiences of the 1880's and '90's! Carl Fritz Henning is now of the past, but his name will be revered as long as there is active interest in the ornithology of Iowa.

—FRED. J. PIERCE.

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## NOTES ON DISTINCTIVE BIRD RESIDENTS OF NORTHEASTERN IOWA

By OSCAR P. ALLERT

GLARD, via MCGREGOR, IOWA

Twenty-eight years ago, Miss Althea R. Sherman published notes on various birds in this area, which in the classification of life zones are termed Carolinian. As pointed out in the article, the northward projection of the Upper Austral Zone extends up the Mississippi River to latitude 44 degrees, its northern boundary approximately coinciding with that of the "driftless area", that territory of about 10,000 square miles which during the glacial epoch escaped the leveling caused by the great ice sheets. The portion of this area in Iowa is a narrow strip bordering on the Mississippi River, extending down from the Minnesota border through Jackson County. It embraces all of Allamakee County and about two-thirds of Clayton County. The land bordering the Mississippi River, and most of the tributary rivers and creeks, is rough and rugged, with steep hills, deep ravines and rock-faced bluffs. In these two counties, portions of the vast timber belt that formerly extended inland from five to ten miles remain. The steep rocky bluffs facing the Mississippi River, in most part, retain their original wildness.

It may be of interest to record my notes on certain birds, Carolinian in character, together with others, made during nearly 20 years in the field. The territory covered in my notes extends along the Mississippi River through both Clayton and Allamakee Counties, and approximately ten miles inland.

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, *Centurus carolinus*. This woodpecker is a common summer resident in the timber-covered bluffs facing the Mississippi River, on the river bottom-lands, and slightly less so to the

edge of the timber belt. I have for years noted an increase in numbers in late fall, and their notes are a familiar sound in the snow-bound timber during the winter. A slight migratory movement would be indicated. Over a period of years I have noted a fluctuation in summer residents.

**ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**, *Empidonax vireescens*. A tolerably common summer resident. A denizen of dark ravines and thick timber, this bird is a difficult one for sight identification. Happily, its peculiar notes are a diagnostic feature, especially its explosive sneeze, like "pee-yuk," seemingly given with great difficulty, with trembling wings and with the bill pointed straight up. Choosing two years when I was quite active in the field, during May, June, July and August in 1928, I found this flycatcher on 33 days. In 1929 for the same period I found it on 22 days. The area covered was heavy timber south of Giard, in Clayton County. For a considerable number of years, mostly in the month of August, Dr. Charles R. Keyes has observed nests of the year in the area bordering the Mississippi River in both Clayton and Allamakee Counties.

**TUFTED TITMOUSE**, *Bucolophus bicolor*. Seldom met with and remains uncommon in this area. I have but one summer record and only a few for winter. Though my records are not numerous, 80 percent are for the months of October, November and December.

**CAROLINA WREN**, *Thryothorus ludovicianus ludovicianus*. A summer resident in small numbers, there being one positive breeding record near Waukon Junction in Allamakee County, July 27, 1934. All recent records are restricted to the Mississippi shore line in Allamakee County. On May 11, 1938, I saw a pair at the same site of the 1934 nesting. On May 16, 1940, one was seen one-half mile south of Waukon Junction by F. J. Pierce, Rev. M. C. Melcher and me. On May 9, 1941, at the same place, two were heard singing by Rev. Melcher, Walter Pike and me. Spring and fall records in the interior are very uncommon. Miss Sherman had a few at National, and I had one at Giard, September 22, 1925, these both in Clayton County.

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**, *Poliophtila caerulea caerulea*. A regular summer resident, which I have found to be decidedly local. I have found it on the river bluffs, both north and south of McGregor, at Giard Station on Bloody Run Creek, in a dry hollow one-half mile south of Giard, and on the Turkey River near Elkader, all in Clayton County.

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER**, *Protonotaria citrea*. A common summer resident on the Mississippi bottoms. One of the most accessible nesting sites is in the low wet area at the mouth of the Yellow River in Allamakee County. Ellison Orr noted nestings here since the early years of the century. Three birds were seen here on May 11, 1939, by Rev. M. C. Melcher, F. J. Pierce and me.

**KENTUCKY WARBLER**, *Oporornis formosus*. The history of this warbler in this area begins in 1923, when, on August 8, three birds were observed on the river shore line one mile south of McGregor, in Clayton County, by Leroy Titus Weeks and Chas. J. Spiker. Eight days later a specimen was collected but not preserved. Sixteen years passed without any further records appearing. Recent observations indicate that the species is of regular occurrence along the river shore line in both counties. Together with F. J. Pierce and Rev. M. C. Melcher, I discovered a singing bird one-half mile south of Waukon Junction, in Allamakee County, on May 11, 1939. The song was loud and clear. In pitch and rapidity it resembled the Ovenbird's chant and in tone quality it was somewhat similar to certain notes of the Carolina Wren, which we heard at the same place. The locality is wild and heavily wooded. It lies at the foot of steep river bluffs, which are surmounted by sheer rocky precipices and broken only by the single

railway track which winds along the base of the bluffs beside the Mississippi River. At intervals the bluffs are divided by deep rocky ravines, at the foot of one of which we found our first bird. The same spot was visited by the same observers on May 16, 1940, and two singing Kentucky Warblers were observed. Again, on May 9, 1941, a singing bird was found in the same spot by Rev. M. C. Melcher, Walter Pike and me. Four days later, F. J. Pierce and I visited the place and the bird was heard in song as we arrived. This ravine entrance, heavily shaded and with thick undergrowth, from which the Kentucky Warbler always sang, seemed to be a distinctive habitat for this bird. We decided to explore other ravines, and, working down river, we found a singing Kentucky Warbler in each of the next four ravine entrances. After the fifth ravine, the character of the land formation changed; the ravines were broader and lightly wooded, and we found no birds. I paid a hurried visit to the first ravine on July 23, 1941, and waited long enough to hear the song several times from far back in the underbrush. While no nests have been discovered, indications are that the Kentucky Warbler is a summer resident in small numbers along the river-shore timber.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE**, *Icterus spurius*. An uncommon summer resident. I discovered my first nest here in the village of Giard on June 27, 1926. Each year since then a pair has nested in the village, several years high in pines, but mostly in plum trees. The 1941 nest was built in this tree, only nine feet from the ground. I have found it on only four occasions, nesting about farm yards in this general neighborhood.

**EASTERN CARDINAL**, *Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis*. The northward invasion of this Carolinian species was first noted in Clayton County in 1908, at the mouth of Sny Magill Creek and at McGregor. Thus the Mississippi shore appears to be the first line of invasion, which is also the route followed by the several other species of Carolinian classification. While a common permanent resident over the entire area, the hills and bluffs of the river shore-line harbor a denser Cardinal population than inland.

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## HOW TO MAKE A CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

By MYRLE L. JONES

**History.** Christmas bird censuses have proved popular with bird students in all parts of the United States, and recent numbers of 'Bird-Lore' (first to use the idea) even include lists from Hawaii and other countries.

Enviably records on Iowa birds have been compiled by Fred J. Pierce, who for more than 20 years has taken a Christmas bird census in northeast Iowa. During this time he observed 46 species. The greatest number of species for any census was 24 in 1929; the least, 7 species in 1921.\*

**Why.** To the regular readers of the 'Iowa Bird Life' it is superfluous to explain why anyone should compile a mid-winter bird list, but for the newer members it might be well to explain that such lists compiled in many localities year after year will provide much desirable scientific information.

Not only do many people attach scientific value to the census but it serves as a safety valve. What fishing or duck hunting is to some, the Christmas bird census is to others. Make it a game, but remember that even games are regulated by rules. If the rules are followed, the census will be scientific as well as providing the finest type of recreation.

**How.** Such a field trip should be well organized. If you are not familiar with the territory, invite a hunter friend or an older boy scout. They can help you and you can expose them to the hard-biting bird bug. It is much better if the territory can be carefully inspected at frequent intervals before the climax "bird hunt", for one will not wish to waste time on this trip. Many bird students are reasonably sure that they will find Cardinals in this thicket or an owl in that because they have gone over the field many times. Many of our bird friends whom we chose to call permanent and winter residents range over but a few acres throughout the winter season. Thus, it is but a matter of learning their "street and number", then calling on all your friends in that district on the census day.

You will, of course, want to include all sorts of habitat from prairie roadsides and hilltops to marshlands, rivers, and lakes, if possible.

Not infrequently someone thinks that with an early start in the morning the trip should end at noon. Hardly! If you can't hike as you could some years back, do part of your birding from an auto. Not until dark should the hike end, and even then owls will often be missed if one does not listen for them quite late in the evening.

**Personal comfort.** Such a trip need not involve great hardships and personal discomfort. On the contrary, it should be an event to look forward to from one season to the next. It often happens, however,

at someone does not dress warmly enough, and cold hands or feet draw all interest from the purpose of the hike. The inner man, too, must be satisfied, and the hour out for lunch will often be one of the most profitable hours of the day. It should not be difficult to find some sheltered nook, start a fire and warm up both internally and externally while both eye and ear remain alert to bird activity of the neighborhood.

The writer has many times enjoyed such a mid-winter "picnic"—not so much for what it does for the inner man or what it adds to the bird list, but because it brings closer together friends with a common interest.

**Technique.** Just as you can identify a dog by his bark or a train by its whistle, so you can depend upon the ear to help identify your birds. But here the matter is not quite so simple. Some of the woodpecker calls are easily confused by the amateur bird student, and even

\*See 'Winter Birds of Northeastern Iowa', by Fred J. Pierce, in Proc. Iowa Acad. Science, Vol. 47, 1940, pp. 371-385.

cause the old-timer trouble at times. One should, therefore, employ every reasonable means available for accurate identification if there seems to be any doubt. In this connection be prepared to take any desirable notes on the spot. A good field guide should also be used freely. Never forget that a mistaken identity will go on record as fact. In your enthusiasm to see a rare species which you would very much like to see, do not cease to maintain a scientific attitude.

**Records.** Many of the field notes will be taken under difficulty. It will, therefore, be an advantage to develop an efficient system of recording the birds as seen. The experts do not agree on which is the best method. Some prefer a pocket notebook in which each species is entered as seen and additional counts added so that the total for any species is always the last figure entered. Others use only a printed check list such as is prepared by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and is obtainable at one-half cent each. The *record* is the important thing, not the method.

If any unfamiliar species cannot be identified on the spot, brief notes about its size, color, markings, call notes and habitat should be made at the time, not left to the memory.

**Publication.** After your list has been compiled you will want to share it with others. Send it to the editor of 'Audubon Magazine,' first reading carefully the instructions and rules which they have set forth. The list as prepared for them will also be accepted by 'Iowa Bird Life.' You will enjoy comparing your census figures with others throughout the state. The editor of 'Iowa Bird Life' has made comparison easy for us by preparing a table which shows the tabulated results of all the reports.

**Reward.** If, by careful search and stealthy stalking, you overtake a flock of Pine Siskins, you need no further reward for that search. Or if, like the writer, you have gone many times in search of fertile bird fields and on the census hike flush 40 Cardinals from your favorite thicket, you have a picture which will never fade and you may go repeatedly to that same spot with the hope that some day you may see 45 Cardinals.

In case it has been possible for you to maintain one or more bird feeding-stations, you will surely want to check on these, although it is not likely that any rare species will be thus added unless quail or pheasants are uncommon in your area.

Should your list be small, you may have to be satisfied with knowing that at least you portrayed the bird population as you found it, and did not fall victim to blind competition for numbers by stuffing the records with what just might have been a rare specimen but which you honestly felt was doubtful.

It often happens that the records of many census-takers contain some errors and not a few species which just couldn't be found. So if you are not a recognized authority on Iowa birds, try to take it like a true sportsman if the editor (who must often perform his painful duty) decides to call it an "out" and leaves your pet rare species off the list.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**Records from McGregor.**—Duck Hawks were sighted frequently in the Pike's Peak region in 1941. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was observed on September 10, 1941, at Pike's Peak. Next day an adult male Bald Eagle was seen. Approximately 30 American Egrets were observed along the Mississippi on the morning of September 11, 1940, and a flight of about 40 Broad-winged Hawks was observed on September 20.—GLENN R. DOWNING and FRED HUEBSCH, JR., McGregor, Iowa.

**Birds in a Des Moines Garden.**—I had numerous interesting experiences with birds in 1941. My Cardinals raised six broods; there were 15 young Cardinals and 2 Cowbirds. I saw a great flock of warblers, over 200 birds, in my garden on September 18; I counted 8 species. On the afternoon of September 21 there was a flock of over 400 birds in my rear garden for about 25 minutes, then they were "gone with the wind." There were many warblers (4 or 5 species), Goldfinches, Chickadees, and others, and their warbling and twittering was very loud. On the morning of October 20, there was another visitation. This time I saw Myrtle Warblers, Goldfinches, White-throated Sparrows, Slate-colored Juncos, etc. They twittered for a half hour, then most of them disappeared.—MRS. TONI R. WENDELBURG, Des Moines, Iowa.

**Fall Shore Birds of the Conesville Marsh Area, Louisa County.**—On the 20th and 21st of September, 1941, many shore birds were observed on the shallow lakes of the Conesville Marsh in Louisa County, Iowa—perhaps the largest number that there has been in the fall for the last few years. The Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs were particularly abundant. Many Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers were seen. Of particular interest were a flock of 4 Golden Plovers, a flock of 6 Long-billed Dowitchers, and 2 Stilt Sandpipers. Due to the fall plumage, many species could not be identified because of the distance at which they were observed; but the above observations were made at close range and identifications were positive.

This is the first time I have noted the Stilt Sandpiper in this area, and the second occasion when we have had Long-billed Dowitchers in the fall. Many ducks, the most common being the Blue-winged Teal and the Pin-tail had arrived in this area in considerable by September 26, 1941. However, no specimens of Wood Ducks had been noted at that date; this was very out of the ordinary, as at that season of the year it is usual to have them in extremely large numbers. The year 1941 was especially good for the American Egret, and in this area flocks of 6 to 10 were common from the first part of August.—JACK WARREN MUSGROVE, Museum Director, State Historical Museum, Des Moines, Iowa.

#### RECENT BIRD BOOKS

**THE BIRDS OF AMERICA**, by John James Audubon; with a foreword and descriptive captions by Wm. Vogt (Macmillan Company, New York City, 1941; Imperial Ed., cloth, frontispiece & 435 colored plates + 26 pp.; price, \$4.95).

Four years ago the Macmillan Company published the set of 500 Audubon bird paintings in an edition which sold for \$12.50 (reviewed in 'Iowa Bird Life' for 1937, pp. 54-55). That printing was the first set of Audubon published since the last century, and it was a full hundred years after the publication of the original "Elephant Folio" of Audubon's bird paintings. The Macmillan Company states that they did not expect the book to have sufficient popular appeal ever to warrant another printing. Yet the demand has been insistent and continued, which bespeaks the never-dying popularity of the great bird artist as well as the universal interest in the subjects which he so deftly depicted with his brush. The new Imperial Edition of 50,000 copies of the 'Birds of America' plates was made available in October of this year. Due to the great cost of producing the color engravings, the 1937 printing was a publishing venture of the first magnitude. Since this expense has been absorbed, the present book can be sold for less than half of the price of the former edition. It thus should reach many persons who did not feel able to purchase the more expensive book.

Although printed from the same plates as the 1937 edition, it is

not a literal reprint, for 65 plates which appeared in the other book are omitted in this one. The Imperial Edition contains the 435 plates first published in the famous "Elephant Folio". The 65 paintings which Audubon made on his Missouri River expedition in 1843, and at subsequent times, are not included in the present book. Otherwise the 1937 and 1941 editions have the same contents. There is a noticeable difference in the printing of the plates in the two editions. This is apparent in the shading of colors in the majority of the plates. We believe that in this detail we prefer the 1937 printing. The shades of red stand out conspicuously. We suspect that this must be charged to the European conflict, which has taken imported inks off the market and forced publishers to rely on domestic dyes.

Considered from any angle, it is a beautiful book and a noteworthy printing achievement. With the 'Birds of America' now within reach of everyone, the circle of Audubon admirers will widen rapidly.—F. J. P.

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Ivan L. Boyd, formerly of Floris, Iowa, is now head of the biology department at Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas.

Myrle L. Jones, who for the past two years was Chief Naturalist for the State Conservation Commission, is now Custodian of Waubonsie State Park, in Fremont County, Iowa. Editor Pierce, wife and daughter visited Mr. and Mrs. Jones in October and much enjoyed the rugged scenery and wild life in that corner of the state.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Dix, of Cedar Falls, visited their son, Lieut. Dix, and family, at Fort Custer, Michigan, in August. While in Michigan they drove through the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary and saw many interesting species of shore birds and others. They had an interesting visit with Dr. Miles Pirnie.

At the 59th annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, held at Denver, Colorado, September 1-6, 1941, Philip A. DuMont, formerly of Des Moines and now of Washington, D. C., was elected to the class of "Members". This group is limited to 150 names. Mr. DuMont is author of 'A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa' (1933), our last state list. His trips to study Iowa birds covered most of the state during his residence here, and he is well known to Iowa bird students. In the class of "Members" there are but three on the A. O. U. roll who have residence in Iowa at present—Miss Althea R. Sherman, Dr. T. C. Stephens and Dr. Paul L. Errington. During the long history of the A. O. U., a number of Iowans have attained ratings above the "Associate" entrance membership. Dr. Lynds Jones, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson and Charles Aldrich were elected to the rank of "Fellows", which is the highest class, and these men were elected as "Members": Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson, Dr. Paul Bartsch, Frank Bond, Wm. Alan-son Bryan, Geo. K. Cherrie, Wm. Leon Dawson, Donald R. Dickey, Barton W. Evermann, Junius Henderson and J. Eugene Law.

The 1941 Christmas bird censuses taken in Iowa will be prepared for publication by the Editor of 'Iowa Bird Life' in the form which we have used for the past few years. We invite our members to send in their lists, and urge their careful study of those previously published so the lists will conform to the usual style. Birds should be listed in the A. O. U. Check-list order, and the exact number seen should be given. A description of weather and ground conditions should be included, with exact hours of the trip, and the names of all observers who participate.

**NOTICE TO MEMBERS:** Dues for 1942 are payable January 1st. If you will send your dollar promptly, it will save the Union postage and the Secretary's time in mailing notices. Dr. George Hendrickson, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, is acting in the capacity of Secretary-Treasurer, and dues should be sent to him. We shall very much appreciate your co-operation in this matter.