

RICHARD C. HARLOW

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Richard Cresson Harlow was born in Philadelphia on October 19, 1889, and died at the Bethesda Naval Hospital on February 19, 1962, at the age of 72. He is survived by a devoted wife, Naivette Gilpin, and a daughter, Mrs. George S. Bare.

Dick was elected an associate member of the D.V.O.C. on October 20, 1904, a day after celebrating his fifteenth birthday. This big, strapping young man, who later rose to fame in football, oology, and botany, gave immediate evidence of his ornithological talents by his contributions both at the meetings and in print. The *Cassinias* for 1905 and beyond are full of his observations.

There is a beautifully written major article in the 1906 issue by this seventeen-year old on "Summer Birds of Western Pike County, Pennsylvania." His first *Auk* paper appeared in 1907 on the "Unusual Occurrence of the Short-eared Owl in Pennsylvania." There are many notes in the *Oologist*.

In 1908 Harlow read a paper on "The Fall Warblers," reported on securing a set of Duck Hawk's eggs from the Nockamixon Cliffs, and published four notes in the *Auk* and two in the *Oologist*. *Cassinia* reports his "attending college at the State Institution at Bellefonte."

In 1910 Witmer Stone, writing the twenty-year history of the Club, commented: "Harlow stands forth as our most notable accession of recent years. When not engaged in breaking his limbs in pursuit of foot ball fame, he is risking his neck in the pursuit of eggs. The depths of the morass where Gallinules lurk, the precipice where nests the Duck Hawk, or the majesty of the law in the shape of the game warden have no terrors for him. On one occasion, during a personal interview, he calmly suggested to the latter gentleman, so report has it, that he 'beat it,' and he did."

The feature article in *Cassinia* that year was Harlow's "Breeding of the Raven in Pennsylvania." The following year it was "The Center Furnace Swamp," both written while at college. The 1912 *Auk* included a major paper on "The Breeding Birds of Southern Center County, Pennsylvania." Scarcely an issue of the *Auk* or *Oologist* appeared during this period without some report of this young man's observations.

Dick graduated from Penn State in 1912 and received his master's degree in zoology the following year, while serving as line coach of the football team on which he starred four years as an undergraduate. He became head coach in 1915. There are three notes in the *Oologist* in 1917 by Lieutenant Harlow, serving in the Army, and a major article in the 1918 *Auk*, "Notes on the Breeding Birds of Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

In 1922 Harlow was coaching at Colgate but with still time to write another important paper for the *Auk*, "Breeding Habits of the Northern Raven in Pennsylvania." The following summer he, with George Stuart and Fletcher Street, was in Alberta collecting the eggs of such interesting boreal species as the Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Hawk-Owl, Boreal Owl, Spruce Grouse, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Harlow moved to Western Maryland College in Westminster, Maryland, in 1926, and this became his permanent winter residence. His summers, when not spent in travel for the pursuit of his hobbies, were at a summer home at La Anna, in the Pocono Mountains. His amazing teams at Western Maryland in nine seasons won sixty-one games (twenty-seven in a row), lost only thirteen, tied seven, and won him the position as head coach at Harvard in 1935. Such was the stature of the man that, in 1936, with a poor team, he was elected "Coach of the Year." He joined the Navy in 1942 as a welfare officer and was sent to the Pacific. Here it was that the hypertension and circulatory trouble which plagued his remaining years commenced. He returned to Harvard after the war but soon was forced, in 1947, to retire and mend his health, faithfully adhering to a strict diet of little else but rice and fruit juices, a diet he credited with prolonging his life by many years. In 1954 Harlow was elected to the Football Hall of Fame. He suffered a stroke

during the summer of 1960 and never made a substantial recovery, although he was able to spend the following summer, his last, in his beloved Poconos.

While football brought Harlow his fame, he would have found it anyway in either oology or botany. His egg collection, valued at forty thousand dollars, was outstanding. Its accumulation, set by set, was accomplished through daring, perserverance, and the labor of love. He served as Curator of Oology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, where the collection now is housed, and it is noteworthy that the university gave full recognition to his academic responsibilities when announcing his departure for military service. The notice stated: "Richard Cresson Harlow, curator of oology and coach of football, has left to join the Navy."

Dick's botanical specialties were principally ferns and gentians. His remarkable garden at La Anna contains an amazing collection of both. There is a series of fern mutations perhaps unequalled in any other one collection. One summer he hired a team of men to walk the Great Smokies in search of mutations, and many of his specimens resulted from that endeavor. There are gentians from Tibet and Mount Everest and azaleas and other shrubs from other distant lands. The stories of some of the acquisitions made fascinating listening.

Dick's reassociation with the D.V.O.C. after his retirement resulted in visits to several meetings and a paper in the 1950 *Cassinia* entitled "Tribal Nesting of the Pine Siskin in Pennsylvania," a description of the great nesting of April, 1925, in the Poconos, an event which has not since been duplicated. He presented the late James Gillin's notes to the Club library in 1955. On January 5, 1956, he was elected an Honorary Member. He told me, as we were driving back to my house that evening, where he was to spend the night, that to be so honored by the D.V.O.C., his first love in ornithology, was one of the greatest experiences of his life. To have known Dick as well as I have was one of mine.

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