



EARL L. POOLE  
1891—1972

## EARL L. POOLE

MAURICE BROWN

Those of us who were privileged to know Earl Poole will remember him as a quiet, reserved, modest yet highly gifted personality. A field trip with Earl was an experience to be treasured. An all-around naturalist, he was extraordinarily keen and outgoing with information. And when he could drop his reserve, he was a raconteur of unusual ability. One word describes Earl Poole, and that word is versatility.

Earl attained a high degree of competence in a number of disciplines. Preeminently an ornithologist, he was also a mammalogist of distinction. He had a profound knowledge of geology and paleontology. His competence and scientific zeal were reflected in his writings, which were characterized by strict accuracy as well as a fine literary style. He was a first-rate administrator. In short, he excelled in anything he put his mind to. But it was as an artist that Poole was supreme.

Earl Poole's superb paintings of birds and landscapes—he was indeed prolific—hang in many art galleries and in private collections. He was also an illustrator of many books. His charming illustrations and meticulous line drawings feature in such important landmark works as Witmer Stone's *Bird Studies at Old Cape May*, both editions of James Bond's *Birds of the West Indies*, and in R. Meyer de Schauensee's *Birds of Colombia*.

Born in Haddonfield, New Jersey, Earl Lincoln Poole was the son of John H. and Ida Dungan Poole. He was a graduate of Central High School in Philadelphia and of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He taught for two years at the Roman Catholic High in Philadelphia and then one year in that city's Public Industrial Art School. His training included two years as a Jessup student at the Academy of Natural Sciences. Earl became a member of the D. V. O. C. in 1910, in step with his early association with the Academy with which he maintained a life-long connection. Honorary Membership was conferred upon him by the D. V. O. C. in 1946.

Earl moved to Reading in 1915 to teach drawing and design at the Reading Boys' School. The move was to prove a turning point in his life. For he soon became a protégé of Levi W. Mengel, internationally known lepidopterist, distinguished naturalist, founder and first director of the Reading Museum and Art Gallery.

In 1917 the Academy of Natural Sciences organized a collecting expedition to Central America and Earl, one of the members of the expedition, was enormously benefited by the experience—a milestone in his career.

Earl's talents, his warm friendship with Dr. Mengel, made him a logical candidate for the post of assistant director of the Reading Museum in 1925. Upon Dr. Mengel's retirement Earl was appointed Director in 1938, a post he served with distinction for 18 years until his own retirement in 1957. It was during this period, in 1948, that Earl was given an honorary degree of Doctor of Science by Franklin and Marshall College.

During his years at the Museum Earl made a number of important contributions to scientific literature. His *Survey of the Mammals of Berks*