
IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM: REV. RONALD R. HOOPER, 1931–2010

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Ronald Hooper. Photograph courtesy of Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Ronald R. Hooper and his twin brother Donald were born on 28 April 1931 to Eli and Clara Belle Hooper in the Carragana Red Cross Outpost Hospital in Carragana, SK. They attended Souchez rural school, but only Ron continued his high school education, which entailed a six-mile walk twice daily from the farm to Weekes and back.

During 1951 to 1953, within a 24-km radius of their farm, the Hooper twins had identified 198 species of birds, found nests of 80 bird species, and flightless young of another 8. In 1954, when their list had grown to 206 species, it was compiled into “A preliminary list of the

birds of the Somme area” by Donald F. and Ronald R. Hooper (Contribution 3, Yorkton Natural History Society, 13 pages).

In June 1953, Stuart and Mary Houston visited the Hooper farm, 3 km east and 5 km north of Somme. Don was helping on an adjacent farm, but twin brother Ronald and sister Edna showed us their impressive museum, the result of 3 years of collecting and taxidermy, in a made-over granary. Two photographs of that museum appeared in *Blue Jay* 12(2):27 (1954). Ron and Don aimed to study “all of God’s creatures”; they had been encouraged by Wallace Black, a neighbouring farmer with an interest in ornithology, but were otherwise self-taught.

Both Ron and Don attended the Eston Full Gospel Bible Institute (Eston, SK), graduating in 1958. Ron became an ordained minister in June 1959. Living in Punnichy and then Fort Qu’Appelle, SK, Ron served the Apostolic Church until his death, conducting services, bible studies, and tent meetings for First Nations people. He married Barbara Clements on 8 June 1963; she served as his lifelong helper and chauffeur. Living in a trailer pulled behind their van, setting up their tent and chairs, the Hoopers went to First Nations north of Punnichy and along the Qu’Appelle Valley area, north to Red

Earth and Shoal Lake First Nations and east into Manitoba.

In 1973, Ron's intense interest in butterflies led to his 216-page publication, *Butterflies of Saskatchewan: A Field Guide*, with photographs by Ron Long and drawings by Fred Lahrman and Jack Pickering (Regina: Museum of Natural History). Ron produced an 18-part series in the *Blue Jay* entitled "A check-list of the moths of Saskatchewan" and wrote the second supplement to Callin's *Birds of the Qu'Appelle Valley* (*Blue Jay* 60:64-74, June 2002). Meanwhile, his brother Donald, who took over management of the family farm, compiled *Birds of East-Central Saskatchewan: Kelvington to Kelsey Trail* (Saskatchewan Natural History Society Special Publication 18) in 1992.

Ron was a lifetime all-round naturalist and long-term president of the new Fort Qu'Appelle Natural History Society, founded in 1984 by Lorne Rowell. The next year, Ron Hooper began his 21 years of presidency, interrupted only for four years, 1995–1998, when Phyllis Bordass served as president. Ron convened the Fort Qu'Appelle Christmas Bird Count each year, and made important bird observations. His greatest contributions to science, however, were his studies of the butterflies, moths, and beetles of Saskatchewan. He collected the first Mexican sulphur (*Erema mexicana*) for Saskatchewan and a new ground beetle, *Bembidion lanciphotoides*. Having established the Royal Saskatchewan Museum's entomological collection, Ron remained its curator for 46 years; after reaching mandatory retirement age in 1996, he continued working, sometimes on contract and sometimes as a volunteer. The Entomological Society of Canada awarded him the Norman J. Criddle award for contributions to entomology made by an amateur in 1983. In 1992, Ron was

made a Fellow of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society.

Ron's love for insects began at an early age. On one occasion, both Ron and Don were in trouble with their father, because he had found his tractor battery dead, and had to pull the tractor with horses to get it started. Ron and Don had been "sugaring for moths" all night, attracting the insects to a white sheet baited with syrup, in front of their father's tractor headlights. The normally patient and proud father was less than enthusiastic about such use of his tractor.

Keith Roney accompanied Ron Hooper on many entomology field trips, sleeping either in tents or in the back of a van. Keith always cooked for three people, because the slim and active Ron ate enough for two, yet never gained a pound. After breakfast, a can of Tiny Teddy's green peas would sustain Ron until a late supper. His energy expenditure was best exemplified when his two companions struggled through a barbed-wire fence near Avonlea. Ron took a running jump and cleared the fence – impressive, since he was wearing heavy rubber boots at the time!

Once, while attracting and collecting insects by smearing a mixture of very ripe bananas, brown sugar and yeast on tree trunks, the moths were only part of what was collected. A black bear was equally attracted and tried to enter the tent. The remainder of the night they slept less deeply, even with a rifle at their side. Another time, when the tent zipper was broken and mosquitoes kept the other occupants awake, Ron slept peacefully with a butterfly net over his head.

Ron gave collecting specimens high priority, even on his honeymoon. Following their wedding, Ron and Barbara honeymooned in the Cypress Hills,

where Ron collected at least four new butterfly species for Saskatchewan and two for Alberta. Once, on a flight to Lake Athabasca, refueling at La Ronge, Ron sneaked quickly along the runway, collecting with his foldable butterfly net.

Ron died in Tijuana, Mexico, on 2 December 2010 while seeking alternative cancer treatment. His wake and funeral were both held in the Standing Buffalo First Nation school gymnasium on the reserve near Fort Qu'Appelle. Twenty-five members of his aboriginal congregation followed the hearse on the long trip

north to interment and graveside service at St. Andrew's Cemetery, north of Carragana, where he was interred near his twin brother, Don, who had died on 19 June 1993. Ron is survived by his wife, Barbara, son John and daughter Esther, all at Fort Qu'Appelle, and his son David (Vicki) Hooper and their family Alicia and Jesse in the United Arab Emirates.

Rev. Ron Hooper was Saskatchewan's last self-taught, all-round naturalist, a special and unique individual. His immense knowledge will be greatly missed.

IN MEMORIAM: JAMES A. SLIMMON, 1916–2010

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Jim Slimmon was born at Oak Lake, Manitoba, on 5 April 1916, the third of five children born to Gladstone and Maude Slimmon. At Neepawa High School, he was president of the student body. Jim enrolled in the Royal Canadian Air Force at the onset of World War II, was shot

down over occupied Europe, and spent a year as a prisoner of war. After discharge, he was employed by Manitoba Co-op Wholesale in Winnipeg and married Vivian Fenson on 22 December 1945. When Federated Co-operatives Limited was formed in 1955, Jim was transferred to Saskatoon. He chose not to accept offered promotions in order to continue community service, and retired from Federated in 1981.

In the Saskatoon Natural History Society (now the Saskatoon Nature Society), Jim was a Director in 1963, Vice-President in 1964, President in 1965 and 1966, and Past-President in 1967. He returned to the board and served from 1986 to 1990.

At the provincial level, Jim was recording secretary of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society (SNHS) from 1964 to 1965; chair of the constitution committee (1966–1968); *Newsletter* editor (1965–