

## W. H. Beck

by Norma Beck, Saskatoon



William Harvey Beck was born in 1927 in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. He evidenced no interest whatever in natural science until the age of two when he became passionately interested in investigating ant hills, bringing home caterpillars as pets, and keeping tadpoles in bottles. Our parents thought it best not to let him have a "killing bottle" to start his insect collection until he was almost five. Thereafter his bedroom was filled with mounted specimens. One of my cut-of-town boyfriends was once scared off by Harvey's invitation, "You may stay overnight and sleep in my bedroom if you don't mind bugs."

Mother once made Harvey a butterfly net by attaching a pillowslip to a broom handle, but as he weighed only forty pounds at the time, he found it a trifle unwieldy. On his next birthday, however, he received a real butterfly net, and from then on a familiar sight in Yorkton was a small boy pursuing moths with the rapt expression of Harpo Marx chasing a blonde across the tables.

Harvey was an original member of the Yorkton Natural History Society, and served on its first executive. He went on frequent field trips with the late Mrs. Isabel M. Priestly, and assisted at the birth of the first **Blue Jay** in 1942. It was mimeographed in those days, and we brightened its format by filling in the letters of

the stenciled title, "The Blue Jay" with a blue pencil. Harvey owns one of the few complete sets of the **Blue Jay**.

In 1945 Harvey left Yorkton for Saskatoon, where he majored in biology at the University of Saskatchewan. After two years at university he attended the Provincial Normal School at Moose Jaw, and his first school was at Pemmican Portage near Cumberland House. One of his recollections of that eventful year is being presented with a very dead bear by an Indian as a gift. (He and the bear lived amicably together until the spring thaw.)

Returning to the University of Saskatchewan, Harvey completed his bachelor of arts degree in 1951. After teaching for a year in a rural school near Spiritwood, Saskatchewan, he became an assistant in biology at the University of Saskatchewan. While cataloguing the University mammal collection, he became aware of the need for a guide to Saskatchewan mammals, and for the past two years has been working towards this end.

### MAMMALS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Harvey Beck's bulletin on the mammals of Saskatchewan will be number 1 in the series of special publications on the flora and fauna of Saskatchewan to be published by the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. The **Mammals of Saskatchewan** will be an illustrated booklet listing the species of Saskatchewan mammals, with keys, brief descriptions of characteristics and indications of range. Price of the bulletin will be 50 cents, but a special pre-publication price of 25 cents has been set for any one ordering before July 1, 1958. Order your copy from Elmer Fox, 1053 Gladmer Park, Regina.