

IN MEMORIAM: DAVID SANTY (1888 - 1969)

by C. Stuart Houston, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon

David Santy was born August 12, 1888 on a croft toward the tip of the Mull of Kintyre—near Campbelltown, Argyll, Scotland. As the youngest of four, without neighboring children to play with, he roamed the fens and moors, the hills and green valleys. While climbing in the Grampian Highlands, he observed the Golden Eagles—the beginning of a life-long interest.

He emigrated with his parents to Bowmanville, Ontario in 1906 and then moved on to Moose Jaw in 1908. He worked four years for a building supply firm, one summer on his brother's homestead south of Demaine and five years with the International Harvester Company in Weyburn. In 1918 he opened a country store three miles south of the present site of Beechy, moving into the townsite when it opened in 1921. He retired in 1945.

He was very active in community activities, particularly the agriculture society, board of trade, curling club, rink association, B.P.O.E. (Elks) and the fish and game league. He was chairman of the school board, president of the church board and first superintendent of the Sunday School. He was a justice of the peace for many years, undertaker, substitute minister, and he nursed the sick in time of need. For 30 years he was the Beechy correspondent for the Lucky Lake weekly newspaper and his contributions often included notes on natural history and conservation messages.

In addition to his hobbies of gardening and cinephotography, he took a keen interest in wildlife. For about 50 years, he knew of one to three Golden Eagle nests each summer, but did not publicize this for fear they would be molested. I got to know and respect Mr. Santy through yearly visits to band the eagles in the nests he had found. In spite of his years, he was filled with youthful enthusiasm and I well remember on the first few

expeditions that even my teenage companions could not keep up with him as he bounded up and down the hills. Between 1960 and 1969, 35 young Golden Eagles were banded in their nests on the cliffs of the South Saskatchewan River.

In October, 1962, Dave Santy was elected a director of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society for a three-year term. His enthusiastic invitation to hold a campout in the hills southeast of Beechy on June 4 to 6, 1964 resulted in one of the most successful S.N.H.S. summer meetings ever held. He was ably assisted by Doug Redley, and these two men donated their full-time labours for at least two weeks to construct a magnificent campsite, complete with limestone barbecues and wooden footbridges, on the river hillside on land owned by rancher member Bill Peters. This was the first summer meeting held away from parks and resort facilities and, due to the inspiration—and perspiration—of Santy and Redley, was an unforgettable experience for all. Mr. Santy had enlisted the cooperation of the entire community to make this possible. (Readers may wish to review Rose McLaughlin's glowing account of this event in the *Blue Jay*, 22:127-129, September, 1964).

The following articles and notes by Dave Santy were published in the *Blue Jay*:

- Unusual animals of the Beechy district. 16:36-37, March, 1958.
- Experiences with orphan fawns. 16:131-32, September, 1958.
- Golden Eagle nesting at Beechy, Saskatchewan. 16:151-152, December, 1958.
- Further notes on the Golden Eagle in the Beechy area. 17:151. December, 1959.
- Apparent breeding record of Turkey Vulture along the South Saskatchewan River. 20:14, March, 1962.



Dave Santy country, southeast of Beechy



Dave Santy (with hammer) and Stuart Houston on eagle-banding trip.

Bear and Wolverine near Beechy, Saskatchewan. 21:119, September, 1963.

Some interesting Lynx observations. 22:35, March, 1964.

A plea for the protection of predators. 23:106, June, 1965.

A young antelope pet. 25:92-93, June, 1967.

His wife, the former Martha Kerr, predeceased him in 1964, the year following celebration of their golden wedding anniversary. He is survived by his three daughters, Mrs. Betty Peters of Beechy, Mrs. Peggy Conway of Burnaby, B.C. and Mrs. June

Wright of Kamloops, B.C. and seven grandchildren.

Following years of failing vision and eighteen months of recurrent heart attacks, Dave Santy passed away quietly in the Beechy hospital on August 30, 1969. The memorial service in the United Church was unique and memorable; it seemed entirely fitting that this remarkable pioneer should participate in his own service, by a pre-recorded personal recitation of two of his own poems—dealing with his philosophy of life and his love of the South Saskatchewan river hills.