

LATER OOLOGISTS IN SOUTHERN MANITOBA: FORGE, NORMAN, LAWRENCE and OTHERS*

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The first avid oologist in Manitoba after settlement appears to have been Chris P. Forge. Forge arrived from Lincolnshire, England, 15 June 1887, two years before the Canadian Pacific Railway reached Carman. For some years he had a taxidermy shop on the east side of Villiard Avenue in Carman, just south of the bridge. Mary Fisher (nee McQueen), born in Carman in 1892, remembers blond "Ole Chris George", always in need of a haircut and a shave, leaning forward and loping along, as if in a hurry, in a handknit sweater (June M. Watson, pers. comm.).

Forge's first article in *Museum*, told how very abundant Snowy Owls were in 1889, arriving during a cold snap about 5 October and staying until May.⁷ Again in 1893 they appeared in large numbers from mid-October to 10 May and in 1897 sixty were shot near Carman. Forge trapped two pairs alive and kept them in a cage, hoping in this way to get a set of eggs of this Arctic species. However, the female died and the remaining three were males.

Forge published a four-part article about



Snowy Owl

R.E. Gehlert

*Seventh in a series on oologists of the Northern Great Plains

raptor nests in *The Oologist* in 1901⁸ In it, he described his first nest of the Great Horned Owl, with three young, found in 1892. He found another on 15 April 1893 in a former Broad-winged Hawk's nest with two young and two eggs far incubated, which he left to hatch. At a third nest in a giant basswood over the Boyne River in 1894 the female struck him and punctured his vest and two shirts with her talons. In 1895, 1898, 1900, and 1901, he found additional owl nests with 2, 2, 2, 2, and 4 eggs. The adult owls showed quite variable coloration so he considered them to represent three different subspecies.

A good climber, he took substantial risks, as in May 1900 when he climbed to a Red-tailed Hawk nest 30 feet up in a dead poplar that was half burned through at the bottom. That spring he collected 19 sets of Red-tailed Hawk eggs, several sets of which were laid by very pale birds he called Krider's Hawks. In

two other instances he flushed a female hawk off her nest before the eggs were laid; in both cases and in four similar instances with Swainson's Hawks, all deserted.

In 1900 and 1901, Forge went 25 miles west to the farm of a "Mr. A." who shared his interest in oology. The two went another five miles to two lakes, "Loon Lake" and "Bosey's Lake," somewhere near Rathwell.⁹ Here Forge obtained eggs of the Common Loon and Red-necked Grebe and saw fledged Saw-whet Owls and flightless young Sandhill Cranes.

In 1902, Forge's best find was a nest of the Common Yellowthroat northeast of Carman in a remnant of the Big Boyne Marsh, which had begun to be drained in 1898.²² On 30 May 1906, with still enough water for cranes, he took two Whooping Crane eggs, the last set to be taken in Manitoba. This set, now in the Western Foundation of Vertebrate



Common Loon

Fred Lahrman

Zoology (WFVZ), carries a locality label of "Duff Co.," an abbreviation for Dufferin County (now a municipality), a source of confusion to later ornithologists.¹

Because nest records from early settlement days are scarce, and hence valuable, we offer the following record of Forge sets in four major museums: In the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Forge sets are well represented, including two Common Loon eggs from Rathwell on 21 June 1900; single Red-necked Grebe sets taken at Rathwell in 1901 and Belmont in 1903; seven clutches of Northern Harrier between 1901 and 1907; three sets of Sharp-Shinned Hawk, one in 1901 and two in 1907; five of Broad-winged Hawk near Hyde Park and one at Ravenswood between 1903 and 1908; one Swainson's Hawk in 1903 and two in 1905; a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk at Salterville on 3 May 1901; a set of three Ferruginous Hawk eggs collected 25 feet in an elm at Hyde Park on 10 June 1907;³ one Sharp-tailed Grouse nest at Carman in 1901 and one at Barnsley in 1902; eight Greater Prairie Chicken sets from Salterville, Myrtle, Roland and Elm Point, 1900-1903; three sets of Sandhill Crane, each of two eggs, from the Boyne Marsh 16 miles east of Carman, on 26 May 1905, 25 May 1907 and 30 May 1909. Also in the WFVZ are Forge sets of Marbled Godwit; Common Tern; Sora (2 sets); Black Tern (8 sets, from Boyne Marsh, Grant's Marsh and a lake near St. Claude); three Long-eared Owl nests in 1900 and 1901 from Campbellville and Barnsley; Short-eared Owl (2); and one to three sets each of Eastern Kingbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Blue Jay, and American Crow. The ten sets attributed to the Rusty Blackbird, seven from Ravenswood, and one each from Barnsley, Carman and Elm Creek, were almost certainly those of the Brewer's Blackbird.

In the Royal Ontario Museum of

Zoology (ROMZ) are Forge's sets of the following species: Western Grebe, Lake Rathwell, 1909; Burrowing Owl, Myrtle, 1902; Long-eared Owl, Carman, 1901; Short-eared Owl, Boyne Marsh and Salterville, 1907. There is also a set of 13 Greater Prairie Chicken eggs taken by J.W. Preston at Carman on 30 May 1899. In the National Museum of Canada (NMC) is a set of three Broad-winged Hawk eggs taken by Forge at Hyde Park, Dufferin County, on 30 May 1906.

The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) holds a Forge set of five Northern Hawk-Owl eggs taken on the Assiniboine River on 20 June 1907, plus sets of the Red-tailed Hawk, Greater Prairie Chicken, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Spotted Sandpiper, Black Tern (2 sets), Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Veery, Gray Catbird, Clay-colored Sparrow and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Eggs donated to the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) by discriminating collectors A.C. Bent and T.W. Richards contain some Forge sets of special interest: a Greater Prairie Chicken from Salterville on 24 May 1904; Broad-winged Hawk from Hyde Park on 10 June 1905 and 5 June 1906; Chestnut-collared Longspur from Salterville on 10 June 1903; and five sets of Clay-colored Sparrow in 1900 and one in 1905. Additional Forge sets from near Carman include those of Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Sharp-tailed Grouse (2 sets), Black Tern (2 sets), Long-eared Owl, and Short-eared Owl (2 sets).

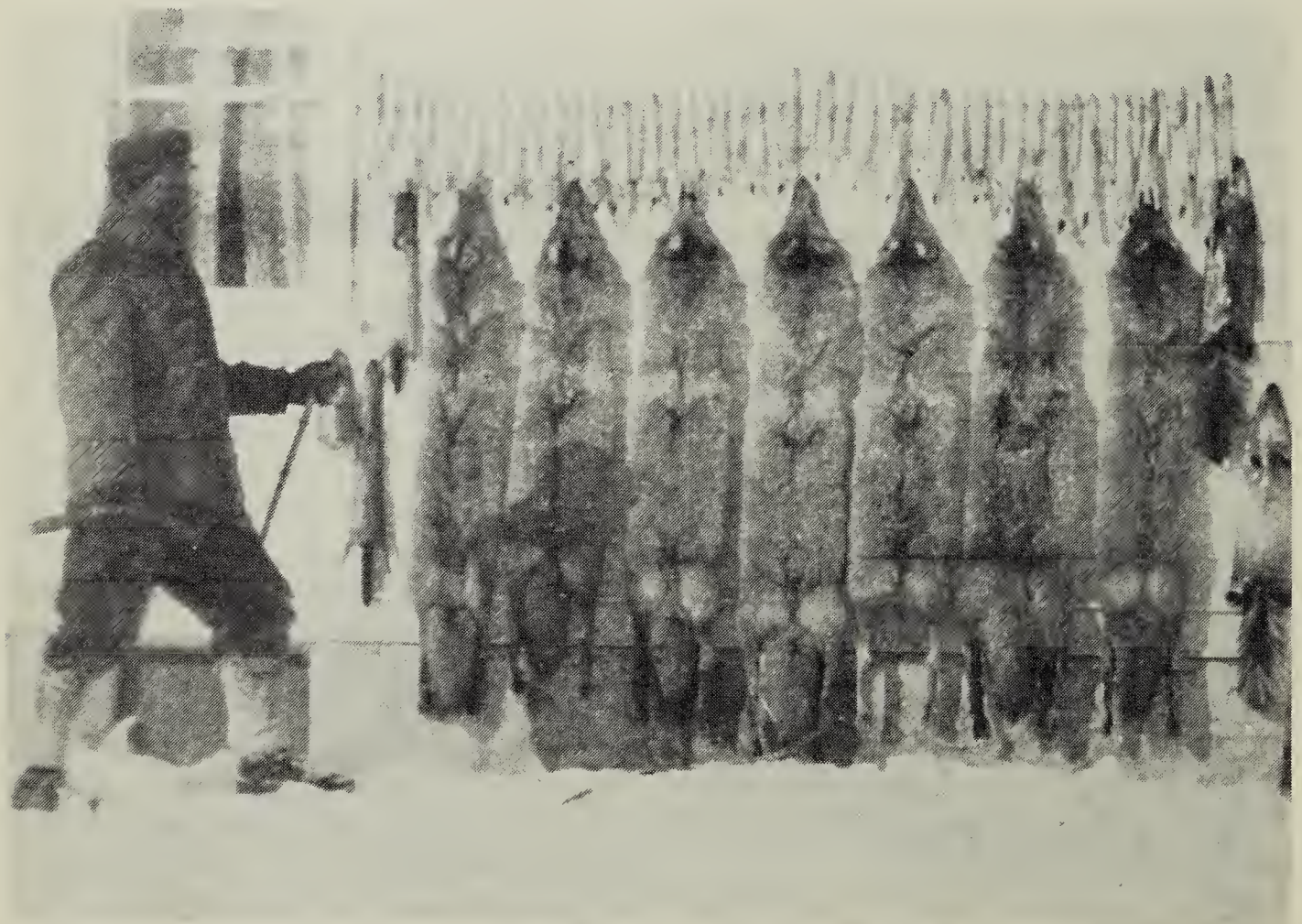
In 1904 and 1909 Forge made trips to the Pembina Mountains west of Morden, where he collected a Red-tailed Hawk set and a bluebird set, identified as those of the Western Bluebird, but probably of the Mountain Bluebird (NMNH). In 1910 he made a trip to Dog Lake, southwest of Ashern, where he took three sets of the Common Tern (WFVZ). By this time he had moved to the southwest quarter of

section 3, township 11, range 7, 5 miles south and 3 miles west of Portage la Prairie (June M. Watson, pers.comm.). Here he took a set of Great Horned Owl eggs in 1911 and a set of Long-eared Owl eggs in 1912 (ROMZ). These are the last of his extant sets, though he was still on the voter's list there in 1923.

The next keen oologist in Manitoba was Ernest S. Norman, who was born in Finland, where he began his egg collection about 1880. We do not know when he came to North America, but after residing for at least six years at Doe Lake, Ontario, he moved in 1914 to a farm on the north shore of Birch Lake, east of Mulvihill in the interlake district.¹³ For some years the rural post office of Kalevala, Manitoba, was in Norman's farm home.² Between 1914 and 1921, Norman published excellent notes in *The Oologist* concerning the nesting habits of the Common Loon, Great Horned Owl, Northern Hawk-Owl and Greater Yellowlegs at Kalevala as well as a supplement to

Taverner's list of birds at Shoal Lake, 25 miles to the southeast, in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*.^{13 14 15 17 16 21} Thomas Randall has credited Norman's 1915 nest of Greater Yellowlegs at Kalevala as the second ever found.¹⁹ In 1926, owing to illness, Norman was forced to advertise his valuable raptor egg collection for sale. Through trades, it had grown to include eggs of almost every species and subspecies of North American raptors, including all five species of kites. (He did not acquire sets of the Condor, Snowy Owl or Northern Saw-whet Owl.) He considered his five sets of Golden Eagle eggs particularly valuable, asking \$15, \$12 and \$10 per egg, depending on the markings; he asked \$7.50 each per egg of the Boreal Owl and Richardson's Merlin and \$3 each for Sharp-shinned Hawk eggs.¹⁸

Norman's egg sets, well represented in WFVZ (31 species), NMC (6 species), AMNH (5 species), and ROMZ (4 species), include the following: Common Loon, Horned, Red-necked and Eared grebes,



Ernest S. Norman, Kalevala, Manitoba about 1920 Photo courtesy Ray Quigley

Canada Goose, Green-winged and Blue-winged teal, Mallard, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Upland Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern, Great Horned Owl, Northern Hawk-Owl, Common Nighthawk, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, House Wren, and Savannah Sparrow. Also in the ROMZ are a set of 13 eggs of the Common Goldeneye taken by Norman's neighbor, G. Mattson, on 1 June 1930.

Sets in the Provincial Museum of Alberta (PMA) show that Norman's Manitoba collecting continued at least through 1935, including sets of Common Loon (3), Red-necked Grebe, Mallard (2), Broad-winged Hawk (2), Red-tailed Hawk (2), Sharp-tailed Grouse, American Coot, Killdeer (6), Upland Sandpiper (2), Lesser Yellowlegs (3), Common Snipe (3), Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern, Common Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will (3), Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay and American Robin.

Meanwhile, a few nonresident oologists visited southern Manitoba after the turn of the century. In 1901, Frank M. Chapman, editor of *Bird-Lore* and newly-appointed as Associate Curator of Birds and Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, came with his wife to Shoal Lake north of Marquette.⁶ While collecting specimens for habitat groups in June and early July, he was joined for at least three days by Ernest Thompson Seton, who helped collect sets of the Common Tern and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

In 1905, Ray Densmore came from Painesville, Ohio, to Westbourne,

Manitoba, where he collected sets of Northern Shoveler, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Cliff Swallow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Yellow Warbler and Yellow-headed Blackbird (WFVZ). In the 1920s, oologists George Davy and David Ogg from nearby Antler, North Dakota, and J.D. Currie from South Dakota, occasionally crossed the 49th parallel to take one set of Loggerhead Shrike and sets of Swainson's and Ferruginous hawks.^{3 4} George Davy took a set of four Screech Owl eggs inside the Manitoba boundary, 3.5 miles northeast of Antler on 8 April 1928 (WFVZ).

A.C. Bent not only wrote 20 volumes of his famous Life Histories, but was an enthusiastic oologist with an unusually large egg collection. Bent made one collecting trip to Manitoba, accompanied by F. Seymour Hersey, in 1913. At Meadow Portage, apparently their main base, Hersey collected five eggs of a new immigrant to the area, the House Sparrow. They visited Waterhen Lake north of Skowman and travelled north the length of giant Lake Winnipegosis to Birch Island and Whiskey Jack Island, and west to Salt Point in Dawson Bay. They took egg sets, now in NMNH, of the Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe (3), American White Pelican (6), Double-crested Cormorant (3), Common Merganser (2), American Coot, Killdeer (2), Common Tern (11), Black Tern (2), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Sedge Wren, Savannah Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Song Sparrow (3), White-throated Sparrow, and Common Grackle.

Egg collections were a relatively minor by-product of National Museum of Canada collecting trips to Manitoba made by P.A. Taverner, C.H. Young and W. Ward. During a brief visit to Douglas in 1916, single sets of Wilson's Phalarope and Loggerhead Shrike were taken, 26 May and 1 June. Longer visits to West Shoal Lake between 28 May and 11 June 1917 and 7-18 June 1918, resulted in sets of Red-tailed Hawk, Upland Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern, Common

Nighthawk, and Western Meadowlark.²¹

A.G. Lawrence, editor of the weekly column, "Chickadee Notes" in the Winnipeg Free Press from 1921-1955, was also a keen oologist.^{10 11} His extensive collection, donated to NMC, usually contains only one set for each species, but he made an exception for species he considered "harmful," such as six sets of the American Crow and Cooper's Hawk sets of 4, 5, 5 and 5 eggs from three different trees on the University campus at Fort Garry in 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1931. Lawrence had a further set of five Cooper's Hawk eggs from Hillside Beach in 1929. He also took three sets of Broad-winged Hawk eggs in 1927, 1931 and 1932. In 1931 he took one Osprey egg from a nest 40 feet above ground in a poplar at Hillside Beach and 14 days later climbed it again to obtain another four eggs.

Lawrence's most exciting experience, both as an ornithologist and oologist, was his involvement with what he believed to be North America's first fully documented Evening Grosbeak nests with eggs. On 17 June 1930 L.E. McCall showed Lawrence two nests in the residential area of Selkirk. The first with five eggs was in the crotch of a Manitoba maple, 28 feet above the ground. The second with four eggs was 19 feet above ground on an overhanging branch of an elm. Lawrence submitted quality photographs to A.C. Bent, who enthusiastically promised to use them in his Life Histories — but neither Bent nor Lawrence lived to see publication of the volumes dealing with the Fringillidae in 1968 — and by then, Oliver L. Austin, Jr., Bent's successor, had even better photographs of grosbeak nests to use. The photo was, however, used in the Manitoba Natural History Society's 21-year anniversary bulletin.¹²



A.G. Lawrence



Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest

A.G. Lawrence

[This photo was made into a very attractive greeting card sent Xmas 1947.]

Lawrence sets from Manitoba in NMC include Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Greater Prairie Chicken, Virginia Rail, Sora, Piping Plover (single sets from Hillside Beach in 1932, 1933 and 1934), Spotted Sandpiper, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern, Mourning Dove, Burrowing Owl (St. Charles 18 May 1919), Boreal Owl (near Whitemouth on 15 May 1932), Whippoorwill (taken by J. Smith at Teulon on 28 May 1928), Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, Olive-sided

Flycatcher (taken by Rogers at Hillside Beach, 20 June 1934), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (at Vivian, 15 July 1928), Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Sedge Wren (at Hillside Beach 12 July 1930), Marsh Wren, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Yellow-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-

and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting (at Hillside Beach 2 July 1927), Rufous-sided Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow (near Whitemouth, 5 June 1932), Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Oriole, and American Goldfinch.

Lawrence's friend and correspondent, Victor B. Latta, provided him with the following sets from the immediate area around Whitemouth: Common Loon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Kestrel, Wilson's Phalarope, Great Horned Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Three-toed Woodpecker (taken on 4 June 1934), Pileated Woodpecker, Gray Jay (6 March 1934), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo (10 July 1932), Connecticut Warbler (14 June 1933), Swamp Sparrow, and Bobolink. The only Latta sets that duplicated Lawrence's were Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (25 July 1932), Common Yellowthroat and Sharp-tailed Sparrow (9 June 1934). Latta's claim to have taken a Baird's Sparrow set in the parkland-mixed forest habitat near Whitemouth is questionable. Latta's sets of Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker and Black-backed Woodpecker are in the Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Bertram W. Cartwright provided Lawrence with sets of Double-crested Cormorant, Herring Gull, and Yellow-throated Vireo (the latter taken at St. James, 9 June 1929). Much of the remainder of Cartwright's collection is now in the PMA, including sets of Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Mallard, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Sora (2), Killdeer, Spotted and Upland Sandpipers,

Franklin's and Herring Gulls, Common and Black Terns, Mourning Dove, Burrowing Owl, Northern Flicker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Blue Jay, Veery, Gray Catbird, Chestnut-sided and Blackburnian warblers, Scarlet Tanager (taken near Winnipeg, 1933), Song, Savannah, Baird's, Chipping, Clay-colored and Vesper sparrows, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Brown-headed Cowbird (2 sets), and House Sparrow (2 sets). Additional sets, including those of Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Forster's Tern, and Great Crested Flycatcher were provided to Lawrence by Charles L. Broley, who also provided the PMA with sets of Eared Grebe and Black-crowned Night Heron. Burton Gresham donated a Bank Swallow set to Lawrence and A.M. Mackie gave him a Dickcissel set obtained at Charleswood on 25 June 1933. More distant from Winnipeg, the Criddle brothers, Norman and Stuart, from near Treesbank, contributed sets of Cooper's Hawk, Orange-crowned Warbler and Sprague's Pipit. At East Bay near Dauphin, Ed Robinson collected three Northern Goshawk eggs on the early date of 12 April 1942, and these, too, were transmitted to NMC with the Lawrence collection. Dr. H.M. Speechly, a good friend of Lawrence's, seems to have forwarded two Ruby-throated Hummingbird eggs from Pilot Mound directly to the NMC in 1910.

Also in the PMA are single sets of Pied-billed Grebe and Red-tailed Hawk taken at Franklin and Slate-colored Junco at Wasagaming by Eric Kiteley in 1921, and a set of Brown Thrasher taken by B. Lamb at Winnipeg in 1927. In 1929, Terence M. Shortt collected sets of the Broad-winged Hawk, Tree Swallow and Cedar Waxwing near Winnipeg, and in 1930, sets of the White-throated Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbird at Belair. Shortt and Charles L. Broley each collected two sets of Franklin's Gull eggs at Grant's Lake, near Rosser in 1934. Four Baird's Sparrow sets



Bertram W. Cartwright

Photo courtesy Ducks Unlimited

were collected by Shortt at Deer Lodge on the western outskirts of Winnipeg in 1931 through 1934 as part of a detailed study of this species, together with a set of the Chestnut-collared Longspur.⁵ In 1937, R. Fryer took a Western Grebe set at Gimli and T.E. Howard took a Bank Swallow set at Argyle.

The last major collector in southern Manitoba was Sam Waller. Although an amateur, Sam had been collecting for the ROMZ while working for Indian Affairs at Moose Factory in Ontario. When he was transferred to the Lake St. Martin Indian Reserve in 1930, he continued collecting specimens for them. The museum decided in 1934 to augment the collection from this interesting area by sending T.M.Shortt and his brother Angus for two weeks in June 1934 to help Waller collect further specimens, including some nests and eggs.²⁰ Sets collected through 1936 were listed in their 1937 publication.²⁰ Waller continued collecting for the museum, especially at Jackhead Island on Lake Winnipeg in 1938, and later at The Pas for his own Little Northern Museum.

Until about 1930, egg-collecting had been one of the commonest beginning activities for those who were to become serious birdwatchers. As evident in the above account, most Manitoba ornithologists had private egg collections. As better bird books and binoculars became available in the late 1930s, collecting of bird specimens and eggs rapidly diminished, and soon became a thing of the past.

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Bird watching

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