

BRODIE CLUB  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto  
650th Meeting  
March 21, 1967.

This club was formed in 1921 and the attached account by L. L. Snyder was published in the Canadian Field-Naturalist in 1922. You will note that it was the Toronto Naturalists' Club. It was the only nature club in existence in the Toronto district in 1921. Meetings were held in the lab. of the old wing of the Museum. In 1923 the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club was formed. To avoid confusion, our club changed its name to the Brodie Club.

The attached, by J. L. Baillie tells about Dr. Brodie for whom the club was renamed.

We are limited to 35 active members. Those reaching 65 years of age become honorary members. Those leaving the Toronto region become corresponding members.

An attempt has always been made to have serious members, whether professional or amateur and to have varied interests represented.

The fact that this is the 650th meeting does not indicate the length of time the club has been in existence as for many years meetings were held on two Tuesdays of a month. Every 100th meeting is celebrated and is the only one held outside of the R.O.M. The season has generally ended with a field trip, some having been overnight, camp-out affairs.

Our only officers are a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each year we appoint a representative to the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Fees are collected when necessary, generally a dollar or two, every year or two.

- Members are expected to
- a. attend with reasonable regularity
  - b. act on committees
  - c. act as chairman
  - d. give papers.

Often two club members have each given short papers at one meeting.

Observations are important so that we may share each other's interests. They consist of

- a. early or late nature records
- b. abundance or scarcity
- c. unusual behaviour
- d. comment on book or other publication
- e. etc.

All members have been guests at least three times. All members are notified in writing of proposed members. One dissenting vote bars admission.

  
A. A. Outram

March 1922

**WHITE GYRFALCON IN ALBERTA:**—A fine specimen of the White Gyrfalcon was shot by Mr. Waghorn on his farm at Blackfalds, Alberta, in the act of attacking one of his turkeys in December, 1920. It had been noticed for a fortnight previous to being shot. I saw this rare falcon in Mr. J. H. Grant's taxidermist store in Red Deer in the spring of 1921, and am indebted to him for the above data. The bird is now in the possession of Mr. Waghorn. I believe this is a record for Alberta.

ELSIE CASSELS.

#### REMARKS ON THE POISON IVY.

When reading Dr. H. T. Gussow's interesting and instructive article on "The Treatment of Skin Irritations due to Poison Ivy"\* I was struck by his remark that "Nobody, of course, ever comes knowingly into contact with poison ivy", because it is not in agreement with my personal experience. I have never avoided poison ivy, have often come knowingly into contact with it, and have never been poisoned by it. Most of my boyhood was spent on Long Island, in the State of New York, where the poison ivy often grows as a large creeping plant, climbing to the tops of trees of moderate size, and where persons are frequently poisoned by it. I distinctly remember that, on one occasion, my brother and I cut a branchless "rope" of poison ivy stem, about an inch in diameter, and perhaps ten or twelve feet long, which we at once used in a "tug-of-war", thus smearing our hands freely with the sap which exuded from the freshly cut ends of the piece of stem, but that neither of us suffered any ill effects as a result. I was not in the range of the poison ivy during the unusually hot weather of the summer of 1921, and I have, of course, no means of knowing whether or not I shall be immune to poison ivy poisoning all my life. I may add that my mother, although she has often come into contact with poison ivy, has never been poisoned by it, but that my father was readily poisoned by contact with it on Long Island.

Poison ivy is widely distributed in Nova Scotia, although it does not grow to a large size in that area. Most Nova Scotians do not realize that poison ivy grows in their vicinity, because it seldom or never causes poisoning in their province. Although I resided in Nova Scotia for more than seven years, I cannot recall that a case of poison ivy poisoning came to my attention during that time. Whether this is due to the northern climate and the dwarfed growth of poison ivy in Nova Scotia, or to the comparatively

\*The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXV., No. 6, pp. 116-118, September, 1921.

isolated position of the fauna of the province, or to some other cause, I do not know.

HARRISON F. LEWIS.

#### FOUNDING OF A NEW CLUB.

On November 22nd, 1921, a number of Toronto naturalists met at the Royal Ontario Museum where they organized the Toronto Naturalists' Club. Their purpose was to found an organization which would bring together the men interested in Natural History, and, in so doing, make co-operation possible along various lines of study. Another important purpose was to create a circle of congenial men with mutual interests so that they might enjoy the pleasures resultant from such an association.

The Club is, so far, unique in that it has no officers, the object being to set aside all formality and to place on each man a share of the responsibility for the Club's activities and success. The meetings are led by members, voluntarily and by rotation. The Museum's collections are being used for study, and the resulting discussions bring out many interesting observations and reviews. (It will be here noted that the Museum is rendering a valuable service as well as giving naturalists an incentive to augment its collections.)

It is necessary to restrict the membership of the Club to a small number because an open organization would necessarily lose the original idea of informality and close acquaintance. The following are the founding members:—

J. L. Baillie  
N. K. Biglow  
J. R. Dymond  
T. B. Kurata  
Wm. LaRay  
Shelly Logier  
Chas. Richards  
L. L. Snyder  
L. Sternberg  
Stuart Thompson  
Victor Thomson

The Toronto Naturalists' Club solicits the friendship and acquaintance of naturalists and will be pleased to co-operate with them in any way possible. Address any correspondence to the Toronto Naturalists' Club, The Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Toronto, Ont.

L. L. SNYDER.

#### AN INTERESTING FAMILY OF EIDERS

Some thirty years ago the late Mr. Simon F. Cheney lived on Cheney's Island, a small island of the Grandmanan Group in the Province of New Brunswick. He was a very remarkable

DR. WILLIAM BRODIE  
1831 - 1909

from  
*Richmond Hill Naturalist*  
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We are grateful to Mr. James L. Baillie for this biographical sketch of an outstanding early naturalist who grew up near Richmond Hill. The article appeared originally in the Toronto Telegram on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Dr. Brodie's birth.

Born at Peterhead, Aberdeen, Scotland in 1831, Dr. William Brodie came to Canada when a small boy, settling with his parents in the uncleared forest near Gormley, in Whitchurch Township, 14 miles north of Toronto. Here a farm clearing was hewed out of the bush and in time the Brodies became one of the best known and highly respected families of the community.

From his earliest years an ardent lover and keen observer of nature and appreciative of all her beauties, Dr. Brodie was able to watch the changing fauna and flora on his North York farm, during its transformation from a wilderness to a country of farmland and orchard. He became, in time, a specialist in every department of natural history. In the woods everything interested him, his keen ear and sharp eye were continually alert for new revelations and his philosophical mind sought an explanation of all he saw. "He saw both the beauty and grandeur of the landscape and the marvel and mystery of a blade of grass." At the time of his death, on August 6, 1909, he was generally regarded as the greatest all-round naturalist Canada had produced.

Dr. Brodie possessed the rare combination of having a wide knowledge and being able to impart it interestingly to others. His smiling disposition and his overflowing enthusiasm were infectious and particularly was he an inspiration to younger men taking up the study of natural history. About 1880 he founded the Natural History Society of Toronto (later associated with the Canadian Institute) which, as the Biological Society of Ontario, flourished at Toronto until 1894. Many of Canada's most prominent naturalists, including several of our well known University professors, credit Dr. Brodie with arousing or stimulating their interest in natural history during that period. Ernest Thompson-Seton was one of the early Toronto naturalists who owed much to tuition received from Dr. Brodie.

Dr. Brodie had only two weeks' public schooling, but from his mother and from his omnivorous reading he educated himself so that in his preparation for college he was able to reach school in a few years. He made a study of medicine and in 1909 was the oldest living graduate of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons and for over forty years he practised dentistry at Toronto. He was offered, in 1903, the position of Provincial biologist and director of the Biological Department of the Provincial Museum, which position he accepted and filled until his death in 1909.

A feature of Dr. Brodie's life was the regular Sunday afternoon gatherings at his home which attracted a large number of people from all walks of life. A variety of subjects was discussed and doctors, artists, naturalists, geologists, political men, literary men and students all participated. He was a friend to all genuine people but to the untrue and the faker he was a caustic critic. He was intolerant of sham.

Entomology held a peculiar fascination for Dr. Brodie and it was in that field of natural science that he excelled. No one possessed a greater or wider knowledge of insects in Canada than he. The discovery of over twenty species of insects is accredited to his zealous collecting, largely gall-producing insects, in the study of which he specialized. Among his few published works were his "Check List of the Insects of Canada" 1883, and his series of articles on Lepidopterous galls of the Toronto region 1909. His work on galls and their inmates, with which he was concerned as early as 1854, was a pioneer effort and he became an authority in this neglected branch of entomology. His collections and journals referring to the field of gall production found their way after his death to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, and the journal of the Bureau of Entomology of the United States contains valuable notes from these data. His large general collection of insects was deposited in the Provincial Museum here.

His collection of reptiles and amphibians was one of the best ever brought together in Ontario up to that time. Purchased by the Ontario Government in 1903, it contained among other specimens several rattlesnakes which the doctor had secured at the top of the Bruce peninsula in the summer of 1884 and which he kept alive, for purposes of study, for some time in barrels in his back yard on Parliament Street.

He was one of the first naturalists to appreciate the importance of the interglacial beds in the Don Valley from a scientific standpoint and he also made large collections of molluscan animals which were later presented to the Biological Museum of the University of Toronto. From as early as 1846 he took a keen interest in the Indian sites of York County and particularly the animal remains to be found thereon and the Ontario Archaeological report for 1901 contained the report of his findings there.

Dr. Brodie was an accomplished botanist. He loved to follow plants through their entire life-circle and his collection contained specimens of plants in their various stages. An article from his pen on ferns appeared in the Ontario Natural Science bulletin for 1906. Although by nature reticent, he occasionally, through the medium of the daily press, wrote deploring the practice of Toronto authorities of burning over High Park and in so doing destroying the beautiful trailing arbutus and other plants.

He encouraged the formation of several local collections of birds, one of the best of which, that of the Biological Society of Ontario, and comprising over a thousand specimens, is now in the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology. This collection is of considerable historical interest, representing as it does the avifauna of the Toronto region in the eighties and nineties. His researches on the food of the house sparrow, carried on in the eighties, added much to our knowledge of the economic status of this introduced bird.

The Brodie club, founded in 19<sup>2</sup>1, and comprising Toronto's most seriously-interested zoologists and naturalists, was named in his honour.