

Obituary

William Delbert Funkhouser

1881-1948

William D. Funkhouser, whose death occurred at Lexington, Kentucky, on June 9, was born in Rockport, Indiana, March 13, 1881. He was educated in Indianapolis public schools and was graduated from Wabash College with honors in 1905. In college he was a star athlete and participated in most campus activities, yet had an almost perfect scholastic standing.

After teaching in high schools in Brazil, Indiana, and while teaching in Ithaca, New York, he attended Cornell University, where he earned the M.A. degree in 1912 and the Ph.D. in 1916.

His Master's thesis, "Homologies of the Wing-Veins of the Membracidae," was a contribution valuable not only for its biological implications, but also as a tool for taxonomy on that form. His doctoral dissertation, "Biology of the Membracidae of the Cayuga Lake Basin," followed in 1916, but not before the publication of a number of taxonomic papers.

In 1918 he was appointed professor of zoology and head of the Department at the University of Kentucky and retained this position until his death. During those years he was a prodigious worker in the field of his specialty, often writing from 15 to 20 papers per year in this alone. In a short time he had become the principal authority on the taxonomy of the Membracidae. Seldom a week passed when the mails or express failed to bring parcels of these insects for determination. As often as not they had been collected in the remotest nooks of the earth's surface. Often cited as his most thrilling experience was the discovery that a package from the British Museum in 1941 contained membracids collected in South America by Charles Darwin while on the famous voyage of the *Beagle*, over a hundred years ago. Aside from the number of species and genera named by him, the best-known single work in his specialty is the 573-page *Catalog of the Membracidae* (1927).

In Kentucky Dr. Funkhouser saw the wealth of opportunity in the opening and analysis of Indian mounds. With his friend and colleague, W. S. Webb, he spent his vacations in the field, exploring and excavating, often doing much of the pick-and-shovel work which remained after the mounds were sliced. His systematic training and nature were apparent here

just as they were in taxonomy. The excavations were usually works of art. This endeavor brought forth a new flow of literature in the University of Kentucky Reports in Anthropology and Archaeology, as well as his *Ancient life in Kentucky* (1926). The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University, in which he became and remained a professor, is also a direct outgrowth of the joint efforts of Funkhouser and Webb.

While archaeological exploration was his recreation, it also afforded him opportunity to observe the distribution of animal life. His own observations and verified records obtained from inhabitants provided him with the material for his *Wild life in Kentucky* (1924).

Increasing administrative duties pertaining to the Graduate School, of which he was dean from 1925, encroached on his field work and soon compelled him to forego that avocation.

On a trip around the world in 1932-33, during which he made the personal acquaintance of those with whom he had previously had only professional correspondence, side excursions were made into Malayan and African jungles to collect membracids and to observe the animal life with which the jungles are associated. Reels of motion pictures which he made showing human types provided illustrative material for ethnology courses after his return.

With all of Dr. Funkhouser's professional achievements, his 327 publications, numerous honors, memberships and offices in learned societies, a life sketch would be incomplete without mention of the qualities which endeared him to his colleagues, acquaintances, and thousands of students of two generations. These were his personal charm and his ability to portray vividly and lucidly his delightfully informal and intensely interesting lectures and conversations. He was indeed a teacher with few peers.

The last year of his life became increasingly difficult because of the subversive nature of his ailment, bronchogenic carcinoma, which resulted in his death. His last hours were gladdened in an unusual way in that this day had been chosen for a bedside preview of a Giesbert portrait under preparation for presentation to the University by a group of his friends.

ALFRED BRAUER

University of Kentucky