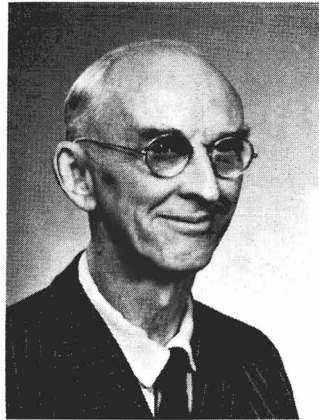


## OBITUARY

ALEX K. WYATT (1878-1971)



An entomological career of three-quarters of a century was brought to a close with the death of Alex K. Wyatt in Chicago, Illinois on May 14, 1971. At first known to the entomological world as Alexander Kwiat, he changed his name to its present form in 1918. He was born in Chicago, December 28, 1878, the son of German immigrant parents. He married Eva Stuhlfaut in September, 1908 and to them were born three children: Elva A. (Mrs. J. T. Mauer) of Chicago, Lillian M. (Mrs. Leslie Skutle) of Kent, Ohio, and Harold, who died in April, 1930 at the age of ten.

Mr. Wyatt was educated in the public schools of Chicago. He graduated from Newberry grammar school in 1892 and for two years attended North Division High School, whose principal was Oliver S. Westcott, himself an entomologist. Following eight months' attendance at business college he secured a position as office boy with a real estate firm in 1895. Except for two years in the office of a fire insurance company, the rest of his business career was spent in the real estate field. He operated his own industrial real estate brokerage business, from which he retired in 1956.

His interest in Lepidoptera arose at an early age, and developed during his second year in high school, when he learned collecting and preserving techniques under the tutelage of Westcott. Beginning with a general

insect collection, he soon found this to be too great an undertaking, and disposed of all his specimens except Lepidoptera by giving them to C. T. Brues and A. L. Melander, who were also pupils of Westcott and who later became prominent professional entomologists. His earliest collecting was done in Chicago's Lincoln Park before butterfly nets were prohibited there. He soon became acquainted with John L. Healy, Arthur J. Snyder, W. E. Longley, James Tough and others who were associated with the Chicago Academy of Sciences. This group organized itself in 1897 as the Chicago Entomological Society, which Wyatt served as secretary during most of its existence. He was also a charter member of the Lepidopterists' Society and of the Entomological Society of America.

Wyatt was the last survivor of Chicago's fraternity of Bohemian collectors, which included Paul Vollbrecht, Berthold Neubarth, Charles Krueger, Arthur Herz and others, most of whom belonged to a German social club with headquarters near Lincoln Avenue and Belmont Street. Its members made regular collecting trips to such favorite Chicago area localities as Palos Park and Schiller Park, Illinois and Hessville (now part of Hammond), Indiana. Also among his close friends were Murray O. Glenn, John G. Franclemont, and the late Otto Buchholz, Emil Beer and Henry Ramstadt. Most of Wyatt's collecting was done near Chicago, but he made collecting trips at various times to Oregon and Washington, Kentucky and Tennessee, and several to Florida.

Following his retirement from business, Wyatt in 1957 donated his collection to the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. It consisted of 24,644 specimens including about 5000 species and varieties, as well as holotypes of taxa he described and an undetermined number of paratypes. 2295 specimens representing some 500 species were butterflies. At the same time he joined the Museum staff as a research associate in the Division of Insects. He personally incorporated his collection into that of the Museum, while supervising a general rearrangement of the latter.

In 1959 he became afflicted with heart disease and cataracts on both eyes. He and his wife spent the winter of 1959-60 in St. Petersburg, Florida. There he collected at store fronts almost every evening, securing a total of more than 2500 specimens during six months, all of which were deposited in the Museum. In the summer of 1960 he underwent surgery for the cataracts, and although the operation itself was successful, retinal complications followed and his vision deteriorated to the extent that he could no longer drive a car nor determine specimens, which brought to an end his collecting activities. Following the death of his wife in November, 1962 he made his home with his daughter, Mrs. Mauer. De-

spite his advanced age and physical handicaps he continued to visit the Museum fairly regularly for several more years.

Wyatt was particularly interested in *Holomelina* and *Papaipema*, Heliothinae, and in life history research and the collecting and rearing of larvae. His many contributions to the knowledge of the life history of moths are found in the literature under his own authorship as well as that of others. He was adept at fashioning his own equipment, much of which continues in use today. One of his outstanding characteristics was an unfailing willingness to aid and encourage younger lepidopterists, among them this author.

Lepidopterous taxa named in Wyatt's honor include *Lycaena thoe* ab. **wyatti** Gunder, *Lasionycta wyatti* Barnes and Benjamin, *Papaipema inquaestia* form **wyatti** Barnes and Benjamin, and *Eteobalea wyattella* (Barnes and Busck).

The author acknowledges with sincere appreciation the cooperation of Mrs. Elva Mauer, Mr. Murray O. Glenn, and especially Mr. Henry Dybas, Curator of Insects at the Field Museum, in the preparation of this article. The accompanying photograph, taken in 1961, was provided through the courtesy of that institution. Portions of the article were adapted from unpublished autobiographical material of Wyatt in the museum's archives.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ALEX K. WYATT

In addition to the papers listed below, Wyatt was the author of minutes of the Entomological Section of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, which were published from time to time in the Entomological News. His earliest papers appeared under the name of Alexander Kwiat.

- 1908. One day's collecting, with a description of a new noctuid. Entomol. News 19: 420-424
- 1916. Collecting Papaipemae (Lepidoptera). Entomol. News 27: 228-234.
- 1926. [John L. Healy]. Entomol. News 37: 128.
- 1927a. Collecting experiences (Lepid.: Noctuidae). Entomol. News 38: 214-215.
- 1927b. (With Emil Beer). A new form of *Papaipema speciosissima* (Lepid.: Noctuidae). Entomol. News 38: 215-216.
- 1938a. Notes on the larvae of Heliothinae. Bull. Brooklyn Entomol. Soc. 33: 90-94.
- 1938b. Further notes on *Chabuata notata*, Strecker and description of a new form. Bull. Brooklyn Entomol. Soc. 33: 131-133.
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- 1941a. Collecting Heliothinae in 1940. Bull. Brooklyn Entomol. Soc. 36: 203-205.
- 1941b. The Chicago Entomological Society. A brief history. Chicago Nat. 4: 50-51.
- 1953. *Schinia jaguarina*—its food plant (Lepidoptera, Phalaenidae). Bull. Brooklyn Entomol. Soc. 48: 70.

1963. A new subspecies of *Holomelina aurantiaca* from Virginia (Arctiidae). J. Lepid. Soc. 17: 100-102.
1964. *Holomelina aurantiaca buchholzi*, a correction. J. Lepid. Soc. 18: 118.
1967. A new *Bomolocha* from Florida (Noctuidae). J. Lepid. Soc. 21: 125-126.
- RODERICK R. IRWIN, *Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, Illinois 61801.*

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#### A NOTE ON THE PHENOLOGY OF *PLEBEIUS ACMON* (LYCAENIDAE)

Microgeographic differences in physiological responses to seasonality among conspecific populations are of potentially great evolutionary interest. In his review of host specificity in *Plebeius acmon* Westwood & Hewitson (Lycaenidae) and its relatives, Goodpasture (1974, J. Lepid. Soc. 28: 53-63) mentioned an apparent case of this sort. According to Goodpasture, *acmon* begins flying in March near Monticello Dam in the Vaca Mountains (central California Inner Coast Ranges), where it has a seasonal succession of hosts—but not until June at Putah Creek near Davis, on the floor of the Sacramento Valley 25 miles to the east. Goodpasture claims that *acmon* has only one host at Putah Creek, the summer leguminous annual *Lotus purshianus* Benth., and that its late appearance there (which he documents by reference to two years' field experience, years not specified, and the dates of museum specimens) is thus adaptive. Laboratory stocks from the two localities are stated not to differ in their responses to photoperiod in the induction of larval diapause. Without any experimental evidence, Goodpasture concludes that "seasonal flight data indicate that these populations differ markedly in response to conditions initiating breaking of diapause" (emphasis added). If real, this situation would deserve careful genetic study. However, it is not.

Monticello Dam controls the flow in Putah Creek. Below the dam the creek bed is virtually dry in mid- to late summer, when *Lotus purshianus* and *P. acmon* (and *Everes comyntas* Godart, which also feeds on this plant) are at their peak there. Winter flow is variable from year to year, depending on rainfall. In dry years there is little surplus water to be released downstream, and at Davis little disturbance of *acmon* breeding sites occurs. In wet years enormous volumes of water move through the bed of Putah Creek from levee to levee at high velocity, stripping the organic litter from some places and burying it in silt in others. Under such conditions successful overwintering of *acmon* larvae is very unlikely. This obvious influence on the apparent phenology of *P. acmon* is borne out for the 1972 through 1974 seasons.

Rainfall for the 1971/72 water year (July 1 through June 30) at Davis was 8.60 inches, *vs.* a 100-year mean of 16.80 inches. This was the lowest seasonal rainfall since 1938/39 and the third lowest of record. The bed of Putah Creek was nearly dry all winter. *P. acmon* was flying at Davis on 4 March 1972. Putah was not collected until 17 April, and on that date *acmon* was numerous. It was subsequently seen on every visit to Putah in spring, *i.e.* 19 and 25 April, and 1, 12, 23, and 28 May, the last two dates representing the beginning of the second generation.

The rainfall at Davis for 1972/73 was 27.65 inches, the heaviest since 1957/58 and the fourth heaviest of record. Putah Creek was in flood much of the winter, and the litter in *acmon* breeding areas—which had been left in place the preceding