

OBITUARY

MURRAY OTTO GLENN (1893-1981)



Murray Glenn (1977)—photo by G. L. Godfrey

Microlepidopterology lost one of its most dedicated and productive, but also unsung, workers when Murray Glenn died in a hospital in Spring Valley, Illinois on 26 July 1981. He was not well known to many Lepidopterists, yet Dr. J. F. Gates Clarke (in litt.) characterized him as having "contributed more to our knowledge of midwestern microlepidoptera with particular reference to Illinois than any other person except, perhaps, the late Dr. Annette Braun."

Murray Otto Glenn was born in Magnolia, Illinois on 3 October 1893, the son of Isaac and Helen (Otto) Glenn. He married Lena F. Bell on 21 May 1925 in Normal, Illinois. She survives him together with three sons, Alan, Richard and Donald; a daughter, Marjorie (Mrs. George Haws); a sister, Mrs. Gladys Steer; 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A brother and a sister preceded him in death.

Glenn studied agriculture at the University of Illinois for three years after graduating from high school in 1911 but withdrew before taking a degree to join the Army during WWI. He left the service as a lieutenant. As a young man he was hired by a railroad to play semi-professional baseball in Montana to entertain the settlers there. Returning to his native state, he farmed over 600 acres with his brother near Magnolia. After retiring from farming he moved to Henry, Illinois where he spent the rest of his life.

He began to collect insects, particularly Coleoptera, as a high school student, but his serious study of Lepidoptera began in 1931 when his interest was attracted to their immatures. In rearing these he discovered many life histories and foodplant associations. He collected the holotypes of 18 new species of microlepidoptera and paratypes of 10 more, all described by other workers, and three of which were named in his honor. Several of these new taxa were described by Clarke, who said in further tribute to Glenn's work (in litt.) that "his specimens were beautifully prepared thereby facilitating study. It was always a pleasure to work with his material." Glenn published nothing on Lepidoptera during his long career; his only publication was as junior author with Dr. M. W. Sanderson of a note on Coleoptera (1963, *Coleopterists' Bulletin* 7:52).

Glenn occasionally collected in other parts of the United States, but by far the greater portion of his field work was done in the immediate vicinity of his home. His efforts produced a virtually complete record of the microlepidoptera of that portion of Illinois, especially useful in monitoring environmental changes over a 46-year period. Although microlepidoptera were his specialty, he did not neglect the larger Lepidoptera, including butterflies. He professed a humorous disdain for the latter, but nevertheless turned up a number of Illinois rarities.

Glenn continued his activities well into later life. He once told me that he had considered giving up moth work when he reached 80, but when he did he "couldn't see that 80 was any different than 79, so I am still doing what I enjoy most, and am collecting again this year." In 1969 he donated his macrolepidoptera to the Illinois Natural History Survey ("Survey") except for some common butterflies which he kept for show and eventual donation to a local school. In 1977 he turned over his identified micros to the Survey and his undetermined material to the United States National Museum of Natural History. The Survey regards the Glenn collection as the most important of the several Lepidoptera collections in its care.

I became acquainted with Murray as a young man early in 1947, at about the same time that the Lepidopterists' Society, which we both joined as charter members, was being formed. Before meeting him my outside contacts had been few, and through him I made new ones and broadened my horizons. We remained lifelong friends. He was generous, modest, humorous and always kind and helpful; a true "handmaiden of science," who will be missed by all who had the honor and pleasure of knowing him.

I am very grateful to Dr. George L. Godfrey of the Survey for his help in the writing of this article. He published additional information on Glenn's collection and activities, including a list of 17 of the taxa based on Glenn holotypes (1978, *J. Lepid. Soc.* 32:235) (the 18th name remains in manuscript at this writing). An article on Glenn's life and work, some of which is excerpted herein by permission, was published by Godfrey and W. E. LaBerge (1977, *Illinois Natural History Survey Reports* No. 168). Family data were derived from Glenn's obituary (replete with errors concerning his scientific work) in the *Henry, Illinois News-Republican* of 29 July 1981. The photograph was taken by Godfrey in 1977 at the time of the transfer of Glenn's collection to the Survey.

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