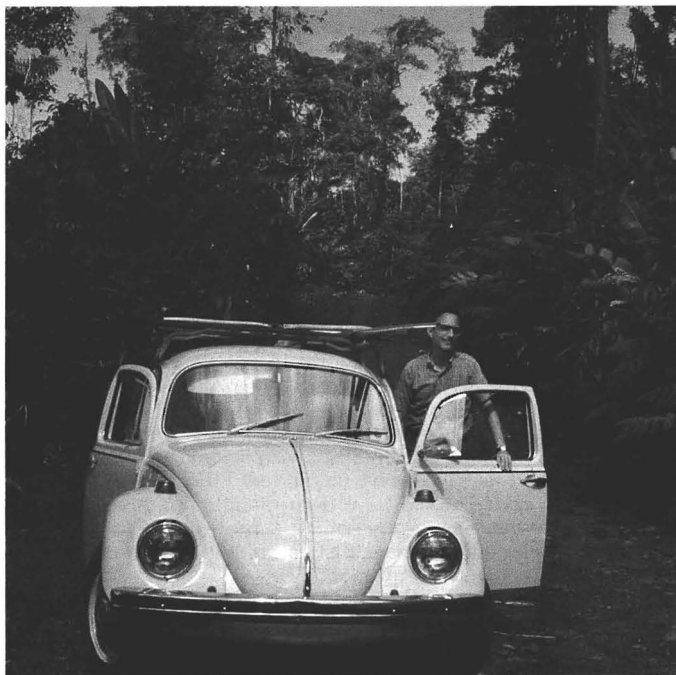


OBITUARY

GORDON BURGESS SMALL, JR. (1934-1989)

Sometime during the evening of 22-23 January 1989, Gordon Small, a Life Member of the Lepidopterists' Society, passed away in his sleep in his apartment in San Francisco where he had been residing for the past two years. His sudden death at a relatively young age has left many of us in a state of shock. Indeed, the Society has lost one of its most ardent collectors and accomplished lepidopterists.



Gordon Small in Panama, 1970

Gordon was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 19 April 1934. He is survived by two younger brothers, Chip and Peter. After graduation from Glenridge High School in Cambridge in 1951, he entered Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, graduating with his B.A. in Mathematics in 1955. He obtained his Masters Degree in Mathematics at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1956 and began work toward a Ph.D. He had completed most of the requirements for his doctorate except the dissertation when he accepted a position with the Panama Canal Company as an instructor in their Department of Education in the Panama Canal Zone in 1962.

Gordon's interest in insects and natural history in general began at the age of 10. His brother recalls an early photograph in which Gordon is chasing a bird in order to put salt on its tail. His oldest spread butterfly specimen is a Compton Tortoiseshell taken in Glen Ridge in 1950. Like many of us, he dreamed for years of collecting in the tropics.

And suddenly, as if in answer to his prayers, the offer from the Panama Canal Company provided an opportunity not only to collect in the tropics, but to live there and get paid for it! It is not surprising then, that when the opportunity arose, Gordon took advantage of it.

Gordon and I first corresponded in 1960. He wanted to know the exact whereabouts of *Problema bulenta* (Hesperiidae), reported to be in or near Wilmington, North Carolina, and knew through correspondence with others that I had collected it there. We eventually met, collected a few times together prior to his departure for Panamá, and began a correspondence that continued for 28 years. We briefly discussed getting together for some tropical collecting after he became settled in the Canal Zone. Both of us were very interested in the Lycaenidae, particularly the genus *Thecla*, so it was exciting to think of my getting some military leave to join him in Panamá. Thus, after Gordon had spent some 6 months in Panamá, our day-dream became reality when we made our first collecting trip together in February of 1963—a memorable event indeed, and one that was to be repeated time and time again for the next 20 years.

Collecting with Gordon was an excursion fortified with the highest expectation, punctuated with surprises at every turn and with the never-to-be-forgotten exhilaration of a new "find." In those early years, when much of the territory was still unexplored, each trip produced a number of species not taken previously. Gordon would spend weekends searching out new places to collect, write long letters detailing his catch, and plan strategy for our next joint venture. Our trips were taken in his beloved tomato-red VW Beetle. In retrospect it proved to be one of the best vehicles for the purpose; few of the roads we traveled in those early years were impassable, and the car's light weight and maneuverability proved invaluable. In the tropics, passable roads do not necessarily mean good roads; the Pan-American Highway between the Canal Zone and Chiriquí Province was incredibly rough—passable, but just barely. But, bad road or not, we made the trip many, many times.

The 1960's were probably the most productive for Gordon because there was a seemingly endless array of new localities to collect, each producing species that had not been taken on previous trips or in other localities. It was during this period that he decided to concentrate only on the butterfly fauna of Panamá and to abandon the study of species from other localities in the Neotropics. His original intent had been to concentrate on the Lycaenidae and Riodinidae of the entire Neotropics, trading material with collectors in other countries. But as he became more familiar and fascinated with all the Panamanian fauna, it became clear that a choice between the two goals had to be made. His decision resulted in the finest collection of butterflies from a single Neotropical country that has ever been made. It is doubtful that such a feat will be duplicated.

Gordon's initial assignment in the Canal Zone was as a mathematics teacher in the Balboa High School. Eventually, he moved to the Balboa Junior College. With the exception of his teaching position, which, over time, he was able to arrange to better accommodate a good field collecting schedule, there were no other responsibilities or demands on his time. Gordon was not married. It is safe to say that, in reality, he devoted most of his free time (and there was lots of it) to his collection. He was a wonderfully meticulous technician, which is apparent to anyone who views his collection of superbly spread and curated specimens. He often voiced regret over the lack of opportunity to attend concerts or similar artistic endeavors. Panamá is not a part of the world where the arts flourish. To fill this void he purchased a beautiful baby grand piano that took up a large section of his living room. He was an excellent pianist with a passion for the music of J. S. Bach and he followed a rigorous practice schedule.

Gordon's address in the Canal Zone became the focus of attention for collectors from both North and South America. His unique location provided an ideal stopover for visitors going north or south and he received a great many written requests for butterflies from the Canal Zone. For more than 20 years he provided logistical support, transportation, and a place to stay for a steady stream of visitors. Both professional and casual lepidopterists sought information, help in collecting, or just a visit with this kind, knowledgeable young man who lived where he could collect tropical butterflies virtually at his back door.

The decade of the 1970's brought continuing challenges and new interest in families

other than his beloved Riodinids and Lycaenids. He became fascinated with the Ithomiinae and other Nymphalidae. By the end of the decade, his collection of Panamanian butterflies was unsurpassed. After it became increasingly difficult for him to find species new to his collection, he purchased a four-wheel-drive vehicle to reach areas that were inaccessible to his VW, which by this time was showing signs of distress and hard use. The new vehicle provided Gordon with the opportunity to venture into remote areas recently penetrated by new roads, as yet uncompleted and not yet open to normal traffic, the road into the Darién being the most desirable. His summer vacations were now being spent in Costa Rica and the areas adjacent to it in Chiriquí Province, collecting in the very high country of the Volcan de Chiriquí.

By early 1980, Gordon was already beginning to see the end of life in Panamá as he had known it for nearly 20 years; he began to make plans to collect the final "unreachable" collecting area in Panamá—the Darién. In the first week of July 1981, Gordon hired a small plane at considerable expense to take him, with some necessary supplies (rice, sugar, salt, etc.) plus collecting equipment, to a small mining camp at the foot of a mountain range far into the Darién Peninsula. Using a small building at the mine as a base of operations, Gordon climbed some 1200 meters to the summit of a small mountain, where, over a period of time, he cleared the top with a machete, creating his own "hilltop."

His original intent was to stay only a few weeks, but collecting was so good he extended his stay, spending 7 weeks in virtual isolation, climbing the 1200 meters to his mountain top each day that weather conditions permitted. Due to the confusion following President Torrijo's death in August, the airplane that Gordon expected to take him back to civilization never arrived. Accompanied by his young Indian guide, he had to carry out all his gear and specimens on foot, walking over 40 kilometers through hilly jungle terrain and swamp just to reach the bare edges of human habitation. In spite of the difficulties, hardship, and personal expense, Gordon made four more collecting trips to his abandoned mining camp during the next two years. The fourth trip was to be his last serious collecting effort in Panamá.

It is difficult to point out a single event that could be called more memorable than many others, for so much of his collecting was into new and remote areas and each could be called a memorable event. But the one incident that stays in my mind above all others was Gordon's encounter with a very large bushmaster snake in July 1969. The snake struck him just above the knee; luckily he was near his car and, after identifying the snake and making a brief effort to kill it, he drove as rapidly as possible to Gorgas Hospital, which, fortunately, was only 30 minutes away. After intensive treatment, he was released within a week. The experience never quelled his enthusiastic and determined efforts to collect every remote area that he could reach. The Darién experience provides ample testimony to his indomitable courage and dedication, for an encounter with a bushmaster there would probably have been fatal.

It was during his work in the Darién that Gordon became interested in the study of butterfly life histories. Encouraged by Annette Aiello of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Gordon devoted most of his time and effort during his last three years of residence in the Republic of Panamá to the rearing of butterflies, especially the genus *Anaea* (Nymphalidae). He reared about 150 species in all, mostly Nymphalidae, Pieridae, and Papilionidae, but also Hesperidae, Lycaenidae, and Riodinidae. His detailed rearing notes, preserved immatures, and reared adults were added to his superb collection of over 50,000 specimens, all of which were sent to the Smithsonian Institution (Robbins, R. K. & J. F. Gates Clarke 1986, J. Lepid. Soc. 40:106) just before he retired and moved his residence from the Canal Zone to Panamá City. Gordon moved from Panamá to the United States in 1986, spending most of that year on the east coast near his old home while working on the Smithsonian butterfly collection. In the fall of 1986 he moved to San Francisco, something he had dreamed about for many years. Here, surrounded by the artistic and music community he had missed so much in Panamá, and, enjoying the mild climate, he lived the few remaining years of his life.

Gordon Small has left a rich legacy—a unique butterfly collection of over 50,000 specimens, extensive notes accompanying his reared material, volumes of personal correspondence, and the meaningful way he touched the lives of all who knew him. These

will remain forever a tribute to this intelligent, generous, wonderfully kind, and gentle man.

Bibliography

Gordon was most reluctant to publish or become involved with it. He felt that he was not well enough trained technically and that he could contribute more by concentrating on his field work. A list of publications follows:

1. 1962. Notes on *Eurystrymon ontario ontario* and *Satyrium caryaevorus* (Lycaenidae). J. Lepid. Soc. 16:195-196.
2. 1969. A new subspecies of *Pyrrhopyge creon* (Hesperiidae) from Panama. J. Lepid. Soc. 23:127-130 (with S. S. Nicolay).
3. 1981. Illustrations and descriptions of some species of Pyrrhopyginae from Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia (Hesperiidae). J. Res. Lepid. 19:230-239 (with S. S. Nicolay).
4. 1981. Wind dispersal of Panamanian hairstreak butterflies (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) and its evolutionary significance. Biotropica 13:308-315 (with R. K. Robbins).
5. In press. Catalog of the Nymphalinae (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) of Panama. In Quintero D., and A. Aiello (eds.), Insects of Panama and Mesoamerica: Selected studies. Oxford Univ. Press, London (with Gerardo Lamas).

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I Remember Gordon

I remember a bus ride in 1976 bound from San Jose, Costa Rica, to Panamá to meet a man that several people had told me knew a lot about butterflies. Perhaps he could help me identify the Costa Rican butterflies I had been working on was how my thoughts ran at the time. Feeling as one can only feel after 28 hours on a bus, beyond weariness, I eventually found myself in front of one of the Canal Zone houses, rapped on a door, and found the face of Gordon B. Small smiling down the stairs at me.

I remember being filled with wonder when walking into his apartment for the first time. Picture, if you will, a room furnished on one end with two chairs, a sofa with a long, low table between, and two lamps. Only two other things were in that room, both of which were of great importance to Gordon: long rows of insect cabinets and boxes filled to capacity with what I have come to know as the finest collection of Central American butterflies ever made, and a baby grand piano. The chair, lamps, and table were obviously there to make looking at butterflies easier; the piano had its own seat and lamp.

I remember that within a matter of hours Gordon and his collection profoundly changed my life. Here was someone who knew, absolutely, the Central American butterfly fauna. Over the course of a week he taught me not only the names of the species, but where and how they flew, the problems with the revisions done by "experts," and gave me snippets of wisdom I still am puzzling over today. Gordon's initial gift to me was that he showed an unflagging interest in my meager observations on butterflies, and encouraged me to keep working on this lunatic idea I had of doing a treatment of the Costa Rican butterfly fauna. No matter that he was clearly the consummate master, and I the complete novice.

I remember Gordon playing the piano. His sense of ordering complex patterns found affinity within the music of J. S. Bach; for him, other composers apparently did not come up to snuff. After playing some of "The Inventions," Gordon made self-deprecating remarks about his ability. When pressed, he reluctantly admitted his one-time desire to