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WINSLOW J. HOWARD: PIONEER NEW MEXICO NATURALIST

STEVEN J. CARY

202 Solana Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501, USA

ABSTRACT. Winslow J. Howard arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1858. He helped found the original New Mexico Historical Society in 1859. Over the next 30 years Howard moved between mining towns, operating jewelry, watch-making and assay businesses in several states throughout the West. His longest stay in any one place may have been in Silver City, New Mexico, from 1880 to 1887. Howard's natural history interests included minerals, fossils, plants and insects. He collected some of the oldest documented butterfly specimens from Colorado and New Mexico. Howard was an important early amateur naturalist in the western United States and the first resident butterfly collector in New Mexico.

Additional key words: assayer, jeweler, history, naturalist, genealogy, patronym, natural history.

To modern New Mexico lepidopterists, W. J. Howard has been little more than a footnote associated with a few late 19th century butterfly records from southwestern New Mexico (e.g., Toliver et al. 1994:401). His role was preserved by Cockerell (1899), who discussed several New Mexico butterflies including "14 species collected by Mr. W. J. Howard in Grant County, N. M." Howard's modest lot consisted of *Adelpha bredowii* Geyer, *Eurema nicippe* (Cramer), *Colias eurytheme* Boisduval, *Zerene cesonia* (Stoll), *Chlosyne lacinia* (Geyer), *Euptoieta claudia* (Cramer), *Vanessa virginiensis* (Drury), *Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus), *Nymphalis antiopa* (Linnaeus), *Thessalia theona* (Ménétriés), *Thessalia fulvia* (W. H. Edwards), *Danaus plexippus* (Linnaeus), and *Cercyonis pegala* (Fabricius). His specimen of *T. theona* is in the collection of the Biology Department at New Mexico State University. Most of these taxa are routine in southwestern New Mexico. Cockerell (1899) offered no clues about Howard's whereabouts, when Howard's specimens were collected, or how they came into Cockerell's possession. This author remained curious about Howard's identity and collecting activities in frontier New Mexico.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Howard provoked mild curiosity among historians and scientists over the years. Rocky Mountain biologists (i.e., Brown 1957, 1966) were curious about Howard's role as an early collector of specimens, some

of which became types. New Mexico historians (e.g., Bloom 1943, Torrez 1997) were curious because he helped to found the original New Mexico Historical Society. Though neither group benefited from the efforts of the other, their publications represent a collection of secondary sources that, when taken together, opened doors to valuable primary resources.

Old newspapers, originally noted by Brown as a key resource about Howard's activities, also proved vital in this present study. Microfiche copies of old newspapers were examined at the Museum of New Mexico's History Library (MNMHL) in Santa Fe, the New Mexico Records and Archives Center (NMRAC) in Santa Fe, and the Silver City Museum (SCM) in Silver City. Minutes of the New Mexico Historical Society were an important primary resource cited in Bloom (1943) and Torrez (1997). A third major primary source was the Special Territorial Census, conducted by the U.S. government in 1885 in preparation for eventual New Mexico statehood. This was reviewed on microfiche at the NMRAC. Information about Howard's early professional years in New York could not be located because Tiffany & Co. did not retain employee records of that vintage (L. Bann pers. com. 1999).

Information about Howard from the Special Census provided an entry point to genealogical records. Genealogical inquiries first were made through various internet sites. These led the author to the Reference and Genealogy Section of the New Hampshire State Library, which led to that state's Bureau of Vital Statis-

tics. Detailed research into New Hampshire files was not practical from the author's home in New Mexico, but that resource warrants future attention.

RESULTS

Winslow J. Howard first came to the West in 1858 (Table 1). His arrival in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is documented by the following advertisement, which he submitted on 18 December 1858, and which was published in the Santa Fe Weekly Gazette of 5 February 1859. "Mr. W. J. Howard begs leave most respectfully to inform the citizens of Santa Fe and the public in general that he has taken a room in the placita of the Exchange Hotel for the purpose of repairing fine Watches of every description, also Clocks, Music Boxes, Jewelry, and other mechanical contrivances. By the practical experience of thirteen years in the business, and with the recommendation of the largest Jewelry Establishment in this country—the house of Tiffany & Co., New York city—he hopes to merit a share of public patronage in his line."

Howard's broad interests revealed themselves soon thereafter. On 15 December 1859, he was one of 25 people who met in Santa Fe, the territorial capitol, to found the New Mexico Historical Society. Commenting on the minutes of that meeting, Bloom (1943:242) remarked that Howard "was one of the prime movers in organizing the Society . . . he himself was made secretary of the meeting—and it was he who stated the object for which they had gathered . . . He was the first one named in the charter of incorporation." On 26 December Howard was elected Curator and Librarian and was asked to "take charge of and classify all Indian antiquities and curiosities; geological and mineralogical specimens; geographical maps, and objects of natural history" (Torrez 1997). Society records indicate that Howard resigned his office on 17 April 1860, and left Santa Fe to pursue business interests elsewhere (Torrez 1997).

His destination and activities for the next six years were illuminated by Brown (1957:45–47). While researching pioneer entomologists in Colorado, Brown found scattered references to specimens collected by Howard. Piecing clues together, Brown deduced that Howard was associated with mining camps. By reading old newspapers, Brown found an announcement in *The Western Mountaineer* of 19 July 1860, promoting Howard's new business in Denver. By 1862 Howard was in Central City, Colorado, where he and a partner manufactured jewelry under the name of Howard and Colony, whose newspaper advertisements continued until January 1865. Brown reported that Howard moved back East in late 1865, married, and took up

residence in Brooklyn, New York. He returned west in October 1866, traveling by stagecoach to Montana via Denver. After that, Brown found the trail of his "jeweler-naturalist" more difficult to trace. He reported evidence of Howard in Prescott, Arizona, in the 1870's and in Leadville, Colorado, in 1879 (Brown 1966:127), but he never found Howard's trail again.

Howard's life after 1866 remained a mystery until Torrez (1997) placed him in the mining town of Silver City, New Mexico, in 1880. Further research by SCM staff showed that Howard advertised frequently in local newspapers to promote his assay, jewelry and watch-making services (S. Berry, SCM, pers. com. 1997). He was sufficiently newsworthy to be the subject of at least two feature stories. One appeared on 10 June 1882, in *The New Southwest*, one of several newspapers then operating in Silver City: "[A] collection to which we would call special attention is that of W. J. Howard, assayer and jeweler, who has spent twenty-three years in the Rocky Mountains, and has devoted his leisure time to the study of metallurgy and natural history and who is a member of several scientific institutions." This article detailed his "rare and choice selections of crystallizations of metals and minerals." His was "the largest and finest collection of fossil shells ever collected in New Mexico from various localities, cemented on cards with their generic species named, besides butterflies and other insects, pressed flowers, leaves, etc."

The year 1883 witnessed the arrival in Silver City of telephones, electric streetlights and a branch railroad from the main line at Deming (Berry & Russell 1995:24–25). One newspaper article that year featured Howard as a prominent collector and dealer of ancient coins, which he occasionally sold in New York. Other details of Howard's life in Silver City were documented in the Special Territorial Census of 1885 (NMARC archives). A Silver City census-taker recorded "Howard, W.J.," as a married, literate, white male whose profession was assayer. The Census found Howard living in a boarding house with predominantly younger, unmarried men including a miner, a tinsmith, a laborer, a merchant, a butcher and three saloonkeepers. This arrangement was routine in frontier mining towns and was consistent with having a permanent home and wife in the East.

The Census listed Howard's birthplace as New Hampshire and the birthplaces of his father and mother as Massachusetts and New York, respectively. Howard's age was stated as 57 years, indicating he was born ca. 1828. This information provided a starting point for researching genealogical records. Searches for a Winslow J. Howard born in New Hampshire ca.

1828 were conducted on the internet in October 2001, but hours of automated searching through these considerable genealogical resources and databases produced no match. The Reference and Genealogy Section of New Hampshire State Library (NMSL) searched some of their files at the author's request. Library staff found no reference to Winslow Howard in the New Hampshire federal census for 1850, in Stearns' "Genealogy of New Hampshire," or in published Howard genealogies in the Library's collection (Z. Moore pers. com. 23 October 2001). Similarly, the New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Statistics (NHBVS) found no birth record for Winslow J. Howard (NHBVS pers. com. 8 November 2001).

Failure to locate Winslow J. Howard in New Hampshire genealogical records reflects two basic obstacles. First, genealogical records are incomplete. The NHBVS reported that many vital events of that era were never recorded (W. R. Bolton pers. com. 8 November 2001). Second, "Howard" and "Winslow" were popular family names in New England. Internet searches revealed one intermarriage between the two families, and there likely were others. The NHSL reported Howard surnames in 34 different New Hampshire towns in the early 19th century (Z. Moore pers. com. 23 October 2001).

Howard's financial fortunes waxed and waned with Silver City's mining-based economy. In 1886, he was tax delinquent on property worth \$400 (SCM archives 1998). Economic troubles worsened in 1887, causing one of Silver City's three banks to fail (Berry & Russell 1995:35). That year, Howard's regular newspaper notices assumed a different tone, stating in July 1887 that he sold his Silver City business and, in August, that he began a professional association with George Williams & Co. in Deming. There, Howard's newspaper trail ended. The author tried to trace Howard through the Deming Headlight, a newspaper that began publishing in 1882, but issues from 1883 to August 1888 could not be located in archives. Review of issues from September 1888 to April 1889 (MNMHL archives) disclosed no ads by Howard or by George Williams & Co.

DISCUSSION

Despite living on the western frontier, far from most professional scientists, Howard did not conduct his natural history work in a vacuum. He was a member of the Entomological Society of Philadelphia (Brown 1957) which later became the American Entomological Society. He collected the Colorado specimen used to describe a new species of bee (Cresson 1863) and he supplied Montana plant specimens to Asa Gray at Harvard (Brown 1957). Butterflies collected by

Howard were among the oldest documented Colorado specimens used by Tryon Reakirt to compile the first list of Colorado butterflies in 1866 (Brown 1957).

During Howard's time in New Mexico, he was linked to University of Kansas entomologist Francis H. Snow. In August 1884, Prof. Snow and his students visited Silver City to collect insects (S. J. Cary & R. Holland in prep.). Reporting on this expedition, Snow (1885:65) acknowledged "Mr. W. J. Howard of Silver City for many favors." Snow reported 13 butterflies and long lists of moths and beetles, remarking that the "electric lights at Silver City were very attractive to insects" (Snow 1885:69). One particular moth was listed as "*Daritis* sp. a superb species obtained from Mr. W. J. Howard, Silver City" (Snow 1885:66). For identification of unfamiliar Lepidoptera collected on this expedition, Snow (1885:65) relied on Henry Edwards. In describing the new moth as "*Daritis thetis*, Klug, var. *Howardi*" (Arctiidae: Pericopinae), Edwards (1886[1887]:165) noted that "About 2 years ago, I received from Mr. Wilson [sic] Howard, two specimens of this magnificent moth, which had been taken by him in New Mexico." Linkage of the type specimens from their collection by Howard, through Snow, to Edwards' description of *D. howardi* now warrants restriction of its type locality to Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico. No other patronyms were traced to Winslow J. Howard.

It has been suggested that Howard may have collected other specimens that survive today as anecdotal frontier New Mexico butterfly reports, for example from the Sacramento Mountains. While the timing of Howard's presence in New Mexico makes this connection theoretically possible, the author is unaware of any specific information to support it. Mining was not a big part of the frontier economy in the Sacramentos, making it difficult to imagine what would have attracted Howard to the area or how he could have supported himself as an assayer. Similarly, the author is not aware of any insect specimens collected by Howard during his 1859 sojourn in Santa Fe. Nevertheless, it is clear that more remains to be learned about Howard; additional research may disclose specimens and relationships that are not apparent today.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition to being a professional jeweler and assayer, Howard was an active naturalist who collected specimens that helped scientists describe the flora and fauna of the West. Howard appreciated the scientific value of his specimens, researched their identities and recorded generally where they were collected. Specimens collected by Howard ca. 1884 are among the

earliest reliable butterfly reports from southwestern New Mexico (Cockerell 1899). He helped University of Kansas Prof. F. H. Snow collect insects in Silver City in 1884 (Snow 1885). Although genealogical inquiries bore no fruit in this study and no evidence was found that he fathered any children, Howard's name lives on in the beautiful arctiid moth, *Daritis howardi* (Edwards 1886 [1887]).

The activities, contributions and lives of professional scientists of the historical period are documented in their publications and through records at their academic institutions. In comparison, the lives of most amateur naturalists and collectors usually were not systematically recorded, even though they supplied much of the raw material with which their professional contemporaries worked. It has been challenging to assemble the story of Winslow J. Howard because his faint footprints are scattered across several states, several decades and several scientific disciplines. Though his origins remain obscure, it is hoped that the above information contributes to the record of this important naturalist in New Mexico and the West.

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in the Museum of New Mexico's History Library. Jane Ruffin looked for evidence of Howard at the Library of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Greg Forbes found one extant Howard butterfly specimen in the collections of New Mexico State University. Richard Holland flagged *Daritis howardi* as a potential W. J. Howard patronym and Ron Hodges helped track down its original description. Ray Stanford shared his library. Tim Cary and Susan Berry critiqued early versions of the manuscript. The author is grateful to Richard Holland and an anonymous reviewer for constructive comments.

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