

EBBA's 52nd Annual Meeting: Oglebay Park, Wheeling, W. Va.
April 4 - 6, 1975

By Frederick S. Schaeffer

The 52nd Annual Meeting was one of the very best organized meetings I've ever attended. For some of us, it was also one of the most difficult to get to. A late-winter storm was raging in Central Pennsylvania; many of our members had to drive through this nightmare over windswept, icy roads.

Oglebay Park is really a unique tourist attraction. Here is a public park, with excellent accommodations, fine food, magnificent golf courses (in season, of course), swimming areas, tennis courts, bridle paths, all contained in a spaciouly designed setting with much greenery and trees.

Registration took place in the afternoon of April 4th, in the lobby of the Wilson Lodge, where most of us had rooms. One did not have to go outside to get from rooms to dining, meeting and auditorium facilities. The usual social hour preceded dinner at 5:30 PM. After dinner, some of us repaired to the Council Meeting, which lasted into the late evening. The others saw Patty Murray's "African Safari Featuring the Elephant's Little Cousin." Sorry to have missed this; friends reported it was a great show.

Saturday, April 5th started with an early breakfast in the spacious, well appointed dining hall. After all were strengthened for the upcoming festivities, we split up into several small groups to attend the Workshop Sessions. It was great to have a meeting where Workshop Sessions were so well prepared. I hope as much emphasis is given to these important teaching sessions in all future meetings too. I attended only a few because I ended up caucusing about EBBA NEWS with various Councillors and Officers, as usual, during this morning. Jay Sheppard of the Bird Banding Laboratory, reviewed updates of Merril Wood's Manual; these have, incidentally, been published in Workshop Manual, Volume 5 (see Marketplace).

The sessions I missed were: "Hints for Beginners" by Valerie Freer; "Record Keeping" by Paul and Joan Woodward; "Age Determination in Spring" by Dr. Mary Clench (who had many museum skins along, for good measure); assisted by Bob Leberman who now bands year-around at Powdermill. Then Kathy Klimkiewicz, our Secretary, spoke on "Aging birds by Skulking"; Dr. Bert Murray talked on the difficult topic of "Data Analysis", and luckily I caught the tail-end of that lecture. With all these technical manuscripts appearing in EBBA NEWS, ye editor has to be able to undertake much analyses to review such papers. Dr. Charles Blake's "Molt as a Guide to Aging" was also very interesting and was particularly apropos now that most of us have a copy of Dwight's opus on our shelves.

Another very interesting talk was on "Photographing Banded Birds" by Chan Robbins and Gladys Cole. They had a specially constructed box in which a bird could be placed against an ideal background. The camera could be attached, a certain distance from the bird, and there were flash brackets on either side, giving almost shadow-free light.

Paper sessions were held in the afternoon, after a delicious lunch. Glessner Hall is a beautiful domed auditorium where lighting and audio is excellent. I am pleased to say that although I was in the back of the hall, I heard every word, even those whispered by those on the podium. The first paper was presented by Trevor L. Lloyd-Evans, Biologist at Manomet Bird Observatory near Cape Cod. His theme was "Post-juvinal Passerine Molt in East Massachusetts with Emphasis on the House Finch" - a truly engrossing paper.

The second paper was presented by Dr. Mary Heimerdinger Clench and Robert C. Leberman of Powdermill Nature Reserve in the Ligonier Valley of Western Pennsylvania. "Range expansion of the Eastern Evening Grosbeak during the 20th Century" provided us with an insight into the data accumulated during the past 30 years. Vast numbers of this species have been banded during this time; since this is a feeder-bird, large numbers have been retrapped.

These two papers were followed by a very interesting and much less heard of topic: "Migration of the Syrphid Fly" presented by Ralph K. Bell, who bands at the Allegheny Front Mountain Station. George A. Hall followed Ralph with a most interesting and well-prepared paper on the "Diurnal Migration of Wood Warblers in the Appalachian Mountains". George bands with Ralph at the same station.

Jeff Swinebroad followed with "Estimated Bird Mortality in a Mature vs. Developing Stand of Vegetation". The final paper in the Paper Session was Bob McCullough's fine talk on "Mountain Top Banding Station" in Northwestern New Jersey.

The Annual Business Meeting followed. Minutes of the session can be found in EBBA NEWS 39(4), center insert. After a strenuous day, it was time to flock to the lobby for the traditional "Happy Hour" which was much deserved. Many of us held our own intimate "Happy Hour" in one of the rooms.

Around 7:00 PM all repaired to the Auditorium for the Annual Banquet. The food was excellent and I very much enjoyed the good company. It is so good to meet treasured friends at these meetings! Then came the highlight of the evening: "Expedition to Antarctica", a slide show presented to the diners, by George M. Jonkel, Chief of our Bird Banding Laboratory.

Sunday, April 6th - Breakfast was served early since most of us had a long drive ahead homeward; others selected one of the featured field-trips to enjoy on their way home. Since I had to catch a plane in Pittsburgh bound for New York, I took the trip to Ralph Bell's farm in Clarksville, Pa, east of Wheeling and South of Pittsburgh. Luckily I had a good guide, otherwise I wouldn't have found my way to Ralph's farm. In fact, on the way back, I got lost several times. It was good to see the area where Ralph's sorely missed "Bird Bander's Diary" stories took place, and even though I was there for the first time, I felt very much at home.

Soon, it was time to leave. The drive to the airport was uneventful. The plane-ride back full of kids and babies who were apparently going on to an overseas trip to Israel, didn't get much rest on that ride, but since it was short, it didn't matter much. It was nice to be able to come home at a decent hour; when driving to and from meetings, you always come back late and exhausted.

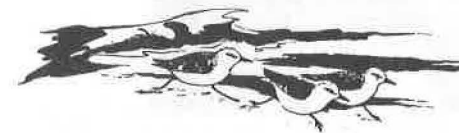
Unfortunately, just before leaving for Wheeling, my camera had broken down. The shutter-release housing fell apart. This is not surprising: I've had this Pentax Spotmatic for many years and it had been through some awful tortures - soggy bird-blinds in the marshes, stifling heat, salt spray at the beaches and a dozen inter-continental trips. However, despite attempts at some Rube Goldberg fixing, I wasn't able to get photos of this meeting. I saw two other people take pictures, and much to my regret one of them was unable to locate the pictures, the other's didn't come out.

In order to give you some photographs, I've searched through EBBA NEWS' files and found some from the 1968 meeting at this location. I am not sure who took them, most likely one of the Fraziers. The reason this story was so delayed in publication is because I was still trying to get more recent photos of this fine event.

Hope to see all of you in April at the 1976 Annual Meeting! Word has it, this is going to be another great one!

--84-55 Daniels Street (#1k), Jamaica, New York 11435

(September 1975)





Above left: Glessner Hall Auditorium.

Above right: Ralph K. Bell

Left: Exhibits



Birders on one of the many field trips