

4 May 1929 (T. D. Burleigh, *Birds of Georgia*, Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1958. See p. 224.).

I am grateful to Mr. John W. Taylor for preliminary sketches of Purple Gallinule displays.—BROOKE MEANLEY, *Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland*.

An early record of the Cattle Egret in Colombia.—The capture of a Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis ibis*) near Buxton, British Guiana, on 27 May 1937, by Emmet R. Blake (*Auk*, 56: 470-471, 1939) initiated a flow of reports that have recorded the steady spread of this heron of the Old World throughout the Americas. Bond (*Second supplement to the Check-list of birds of the West Indies*, Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, 1957; p. 3) has published notes received from Mr. Vincent Roth, Curator of the British Guiana Museum, which indicate that the bird had become established there long before, since Sir Everard im Thurn had observed it between 1877 and 1882 on the Courentijne River, and A. W. B. Long of Georgetown had found it in 1911-1912 on the Essequibo coast. To these early reports there may be added one from northern Colombia that has not been brought to the attention of ornithologists.

During the latter half of World War I, R. B. Cunninghame Graham made a survey of the cattle industry in the Department of Bolívar, Colombia (partly in the western section now separated as the Department of Córdoba), on behalf of British interests that had under consideration the establishment of a meat-packing plant. In an interesting narrative of the travel concerned with this mission, Graham (*Cartagena and the banks of the Simú*, London, 1920; p. 239) includes the following observation made during a journey on horseback along the lower Río San Jorge, en route from the small settlement of San Benito to the town of Jégua above Magangué:

"Sometimes the road ran on a narrow causeway between deep swamps where alligators basked in the sun. As we rode by they swam off sluggishly. At other times the trail passed shallower swamps on which fed cattle, standing up to their hocks in water and in mud.

"White ibises sat on the cattle's backs, swaying to keep their balance, as a sailor sways upon a deck. Others stood at the water's edge so motionless and sacramental-looking that one saw at a glance why the Egyptians worshipped them."

Anyone who has seen cattle feeding in the tropical swamps and ciénagas of northern South America will be certain that the "white ibises" were in truth Cattle Egrets, and that Graham, in graphic prose, has recorded an occurrence in the lower Río Magdalena drainage of Colombia much earlier than the recent reports of the writer (Wetmore, *Smiths. Misc. Colls.*, 117: 1, 1951) and de Schauensee (*Caldasia*, 5: 1144, 1952) that were thought to be the first for this country.

Graham in his account does not give a definite chronology, but from some of his statements it is possible to establish an approximate date. He indicates in several places that the war was in progress, though the country people did not seem unduly curious regarding it. And in a casual outline of the types of conversation held with his hosts at various haciendas he includes as one item (p. 209) "how Don Marcos Fidel Suarez' chances were looking for the approaching presidential election," and adds in a footnote "This gentleman eventually became president." Colombian friends inform me that Don Marcos Fidel Suarez was president from 1918 to 1922, and that his campaign for election would have begun about two years previous to its successful conclusion. This would place the date of observation of the Cattle Egrets in 1916 or 1917.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution, Washington 25, D. C.*