



Willis Cyrus Day (1894-1965)

Biographical Sketch by Hany Abdoun, Archives Volunteer

Willis Cyrus Day was born on November 18, 1894, in Los Angeles, California. He became interested in natural history as a young boy and graduated from Los Angeles Polytechnic High School in 1912. During World War I, Day served in the U.S. Army and was commissioned in the field in France. He was discharged as a First Lieutenant in 1919 at the Presidio in San Francisco, and remained in the Bay Area, working in various cities.

After working in the lumber business and then in for a charcoal manufacturing firm, Day entered the advertising business. He began by advertising space on streetcars for the Leon Livingston Advertising Agency. He became Vice President of the agency and later became a partner. After the death of Mr. Livingston, the agency was sold to Honig-Cooper Harrington Advertising Agency, where Day handled the Levi-Strauss account. In 1965 the Levi-Strauss Company made him an Honorary Director.

Day spent much of his spare time studying and researching aquatic insects. He investigated the Ephemeroptera, short-lived insects such as the mayfly, and was assisted by Edward S. Ross, E. C. Van Dyke and Hugh B. Leech from the Entomology Department of the California Academy of Sciences. Leech also accompanied Day on most of his collecting trips and assisted him with his collection.

Day was a member of many scientific organizations including, the Society of Systematic Zoology and the California Academy of Sciences (beginning in 1948) where he became a fellow in 1960. He was also Vice President of the Pacific Coast Entomological Society in 1954 and President in 1955.

Willis Cyrus Day died on October 9, 1965. His Ephemeroptera collection, publications and collecting equipment were donated to the Entomology Department of the California Academy of Sciences.

Sources Consulted:

Pan Pacific Entomologist, Vol. 42, No. 3, July 1966.

Index Cards of the California Academy of Sciences Staff and Members