



Mary Isabel McCracken (1866-1955)

Biographical Sketch by Hany Abdoun, Archives Intern

Mary Isabel McCracken was born in 1866 in Oakland, California. She taught in Oakland's public schools for a decade before enrolling in Stanford University, where she became interested in natural history, particularly in entomology. She received her A.B. Degree in 1904, M.A. in 1905 and Ph.D. in 1908. As a graduate student Dr. McCracken began field observation and laboratory experiments on the genetics of beetles and published several papers based on these investigations. She also conducted field observation on numerous birds in the Sierra Nevada.

After serving as Assistant Professor in Entomology at Stanford University, Dr. McCracken was Professor of Zoology at the same university until her retirement in 1931. She was a Research Associate at the California Academy of Sciences from 1931 through 1945 and worked on the birds and insects in the collections of the Academy.

Dr. McCracken spent some of her time volunteering in organizations such as the Children's Museum in Palo Alto, the Stanford Convalescent Home and other organizations that cared for the unfortunate. She also assisted both students and colleagues by opening her home and garden for their research and studies in entomology. She was also a member of the California Academy of Sciences (since 1915) and named a Fellow in 1929. Dr. Mary Isabel McCracken died on October 29, 1955.

Sources Consulted:

Memorial Resolution, Stanford University.

San Francisco Chronicle, November 1, 1955.