

BOOK REVIEW

Herpetology in Ohio — Fifty Years Ago, by Roger Conant, Special Publication of the Toledo Herpetological Society, Toledo Zoological Gardens, Toledo, OH 43609, 1982, 65 p. \$5.40 postpaid, paperback.

This delightful booklet began as an article for the newsletter of the Toledo Herpetological Society and expanded into a full-fledged memoir of the early career of a distinguished contemporary American herpetologist. Roger Conant's Ohio career spanned a period of 1929 to 1935, based in Toledo, where he served first as a keeper and curator of reptiles and later as general curator at the Toledo Zoo. More importantly, during this period he did extensive field work all over Ohio which resulted in a preserved collection of reptiles and amphibians now housed in the American Museum of Natural History. This material provided the basis for the publication of the *Reptiles of Ohio* originally published by the American Midland Naturalist in 1938 and revised with an addenda in 1951 (the latter largely done through the efforts of Ohio herpetologists of that period).

The book is chiefly anecdotal, uses common names, and documents much of the study of natural history of Ohio of the 1930s and '40s. The book was reviewed by Milton Trautman and Craig Adler who are also significant contributors to the study of Ohio natural history.

Some of the highlights recalled by Conant are the problems of trapping turtles, being stranded overnight on Green Island in Lake Erie and being subsequently rescued by the Coast Guard, investigations of southeastern Ohio slab and sawdust piles, the discovery of the plains garter snake in Ohio, and spending the night in a hotel which also served as a brothel on a turtle trip to extreme southern Ohio.

Conant recounts his association and field experiences with Professor Edwin Mosely, Ed Thomas, Otto Ehrhart, Ralph Dury, Charles Walker, Woodrow Goodpaster, Karl Maslowski, Arthur Stupka, Malcolm Murphy, Milt Trautman, and a host of other naturalists and scientists of the period.

The author indicates that the book is really a companion to the *Reptiles of Ohio* (which is now out of print), and he is correct. These two together do more than record Ohio reptiles; they very interestingly recall a simpler period of collecting and documenting Ohio's natural heritage. For those fortunate enough to have a copy of the *Reptiles of Ohio*, this is a logical companion, and for those who do not, this is not a substitute but will make very interesting reading.

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