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George Britton Vogt (1920-1990)

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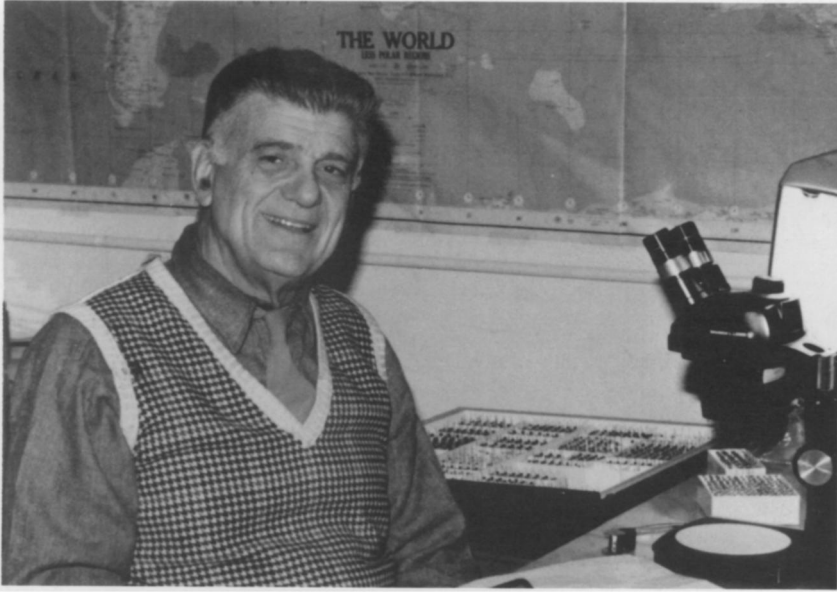
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**GEORGE BRITTON VOGT (1920-1990)**

To quote George "... because of a tendency toward being a reticent loner, I have pursued these [my] studies on a grand scale and as if the world were standing still." This in many ways describes George, even at the beginning of his career. Throughout his life, George called himself "an aspiring naturalist." Interested in natural history from childhood, he often talked of the encouragement he received from his mother when he brought her countless gifts with six or eight legs and she would assist in fashioning small cages so that he could continue to observe the small animals which held his attention.

Originally George, as with many of us, was interested in many groups of insects. While a student at the University of Maryland (B.S. 1941, M.S. 1949), George concentrated on both Coleoptera and Hemiptera (especially Scutelleridae). His formal studies were interrupted while he was stationed in Brownsville, TX, with the U. S. Public Health Service during 1946-47. During these two years, George spent his weekends collecting at a number of sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and built an extensive collection of beetles and bugs. By the time he was doing his Masters degree at Maryland and employed by the university as an assistant professor (1947-49), George had an impressive knowledge of both the systematics and biology of most of the Coleoptera occurring in eastern North America.

George began his employment with the U. S. Department of Agriculture (ARS) in 1949. During 1950-52, George was assigned to Burma to work on mosquito-related problems. It was during this time that an impressive collection of Burmese insects was made, most of which was mounted in the field, and still remains unlabelled in Schmidt boxes.

In 1956, George explored Spain and southwestern Asia looking for potential biological control agents for the chenopod weed *Halogeton*. During his travels in the eastern Himalayas he first discovered that the leaf-mining buprestid *Pachyschelus* was associated with oaks, something that would intrigue him throughout his life.

He was part of the Systematic Entomology Laboratory and stationed at the U. S. National Museum for a number of years. In 1972, he was reassigned to the Southern

Weed Science Lab in Stoneville, MS, and led the team that successfully controlled alligatorweed. George traveled extensively in South America from 1960–62; this led to the importation of the natural enemies of alligatorweed. His five trips led to the discovery of three insects that ultimately were released in the southeastern states; two of these were new to science and the most voracious and thus effective control agent was a small moth subsequently given the generic name *Vogtia*. George retired from SWSL in 1978, but remained very active in his prime research interests and divided his time between SWSL and SEL by maintaining residences in Leland, MS, and Washington, DC.

George's studies of leaf-mining Buprestidae and leaf-rolling attelabids and their thief weevils (Pterocolinae) began during his youth and became the focus of much of his personally elected research throughout his various travels and diverse assignments. A comprehensive rearing program was initiated in 1953 and included a small study of leaf-mining Tachygoninae and Hispinae. To date, at least 300 species of neotropical buprestid leaf-miners have been reared and ecologically studied. As George once reported, "the studies of these diverse groups of beetles were undertaken because of the remarkable ease with which their comprehensive field study could be made. Besides, these groups tie together from the standpoint of their ecologies and/or phylogenies."

George was proud to call himself a protégé of the late H. S. Barber and he demonstrated many of the techniques, methods and attributes of Barber. While George recognized the need to publish (his two 1949 papers on buprestids from southern Texas helped in obtaining his first position in USDA at the USNM), he had little desire in that direction. He was, for his entire life, totally dedicated to his field studies and never lost his wonderful enthusiasm for new observations. When asked why he didn't publish some of his exciting observations, he would say that there was no hurry and that if he did publish he would then deprive others of the pleasure of working out a particular life history.

In later years he realized that many of the habitats in which he worked had been destroyed, but by then his backlog of observations and specimens (over 25,500 lots by 1980!) was essentially self-defeating. This was particularly true as George was unwilling to give up his extensive field program to do the more mundane job of writing up his notes. His lack of interest in publication was most unfortunate for our science, as much of the wealth of information that George had had died with him. George did, however, publish much of his work concerning the control of alligatorweed with one large co-authored work appearing in 1979 (Probable evolution . . . in S. American disomychine flea beetles . . . USDA Tech. Bull. 1593) and another one currently in press. There is also a contributed chapter in an upcoming book on Mesoamerican insects dealing with attelabids and their thief weevils.

On a more personal basis, George tried hard to be a mild eccentric, particularly with his fetish not to waste paper. Letters and field notes were often written on any old or odd piece of paper at hand, *i.e.*, laundry slips from hotels, paper from calendar pads, etc. His field notes often looked as if someone had emptied a waste paper basket! In the field he left a trail of forgotten or lost items, that miraculously turned up later through the help of friends. George was also quite proud of his old car, a 1964 Chevrolet, which was driven about 400,000 miles in the course of his many field trips, even as far as Panama. This perceived eccentricity was more a testimony to George's personal program of conservation and a tribute to the fact that, more than most people, George lived according to the principles in which he believed. Nothing really seemed to bother George for long and over the years his enthusiasm for insects never faltered.

True to form and with much of the accumulated material of insects and host plants increasingly demanding his personal attention, George instead realized the stuff of his dreams of nearly 40 years by returning to Southeast Asia for a six-week collecting trip in peninsular Malaysia and Sabah (Aug.–Sept. 1990). Once again, George was looking for *Pachyschelus* in the oaks near Mt. Kinabalu and elsewhere in the Malaysian highlands. Finally, one species was found after four weeks of looking, with the surprise being that it was not associated with *Quercus*. During this trip, his enthusiasm was in full swing and he was often tickled by his observations, collections and the similarities between the Malaysian and Burmese cultures (he spent two years in Burma many years before).

The sum of his accumulated collections is in the U. S. National Museum of Natural History, and this legacy must be seen to be believed. Evidence of his eccentricity abounds with the scattering of reared beetles, mined and annotated leaves and notes of varied

persuasions filling well over 100 drawers. Much detective work will be required to make most of this material available to other researchers. However, for whatever has been lost, George lived a rich life and gave much to those who knew him over the years. We have lost one of our truly dedicated coleopterists!

George was born on April 10, 1920, in Baltimore, MD, and died on December 12, 1990 in Washington, DC. He is survived by his brother John F. Vogt of Cape Coral, FL.

*DON ANDERSON, Washington, DC; CHUCK BELLAMY, Washington, DC; HENRY HOWDEN, Ottawa, ON; AND CHUCK QUIMBY, Bozeman, MT.*

### HUGH BOSDIN LEECH (1910–1990)<sup>1</sup>

Hugh Bosdin Leech was born on 10 May 1910 at Kamloops, British Columbia, and died on 8 November 1990 in San Rafael, California, at the age of 80. He was the son of Daniel Herbert Leech and Olive Roberta Shepherd. Hugh's father immigrated to Canada from Manchester, England. Hugh's mother's family still lives in Como and Montreal, Quebec, where they have been since the late 1700's.

Hugh's early years were spent in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, where the family had a farm. Hugh's early schooling was at Lakefield Preparatory School in Lakefield, Ontario, and Vernon Preparatory School near Vernon, British Columbia. At Lakefield, he showed keen interest in long-distance running, and because he was such a good runner, he was often pitted against boys several years his senior. It was during this time that he did serious injury to himself, and for the rest of his life he was not a strong man physically. Hugh attended the Salmon Arm High School. He obtained a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of British Columbia in 1933. In 1938, he obtained his M.Sc. from the University of California at Berkeley.

In 1932, he met Frances Orchid Quail of Fernie, British Columbia while both were students at U.B.C.; they married on 13 March 1936 (a Friday!). They have four children (Mary Kathleen Huffaker in Walnut Creek, California; Robin in Edmonton, Alberta; Tom in Novato, California; and Bill in Newport Beach, California), 8 grandchildren (2 of whom are adopted) living in both Albert and California, and 2 great grand children.

Hugh's interest in natural history, especially beetles, was apparent at an early age. When he was in his mid teens, he visited Ralph Hopping then in the Forest Entomology Laboratory in Vernon, British Columbia. Under Hopping's tutelage, Hugh's interest in and knowledge of beetles grew rapidly and, in 1930, he published his first paper on a new host record for a cerambycid, *Phymatodes vulneratus* LeC. in *The Canadian Entomologist*.

From 1930 to 1947, when he was not attending university, he worked at the Forest Entomology Laboratory in Vernon.

In 1947, Hugh joined the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. He was Assistant, then Associate, Curator in charge of the Coleoptera. Over the years, he completely revamped the beetle collection of the C.A.S. three times. In any given month, he handled up to 24,000 beetles—12,000 outbound and 12,000 inbound. He was a task master at making sure that the out-bound specimens were correctly packaged, and that incoming specimens were put in the correct places immediately in the collection.

In both Vernon and San Francisco, Hugh did all the writing for his research and publications at home. He reserved his "Academy Time," as he called it, for correspondence, curating and visitors. In Vernon, there was a wee room upstairs that he called "The Beetle Room." We children called it "The Bug Room." He kept all his beetles and library in this room. In Mill Valley, he made a space in the attic under the roof. Access to this attic hideaway was by a hand-made ladder.

These rooms are also where he worked on his stamps. He was an active stamp collector all his life, and gave many thousands of stamps to orphanages and needy persons. He

<sup>1</sup> For more information see Kavanaugh, D. K., and P. H. Arnaud, Jr. 1981. Hugh Bosdin Leech—A curator's curator. *Pan-Pac. Ent.* 57:2–42.