

CLYDE LOUIS PATCH

1887 - 1952

HOYES LLOYD

Rockcliffe Park, Ont.

CLYDE PATCH came to the Victoria Memorial Museum, later named the National Museum of Canada, on May 1st, 1913. He was born in Hiawatha, Kansas, June 30th, 1887, and grew up in northern Ohio and southern Michigan. After serving as an apprentice to a taxidermist and in commercial taxidermy for four years in Washington, D.C., he was employed in that capacity by the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., and by The American Museum of Natural History, New York.

He reversed a common procedure by seeking his fortune in Canada, bringing with him to his new work as Chief Taxidermist of the National Museum, great skill and artistic ability; for advanced taxidermy had by then ceased to be a mere ugly stuffing of creatures and had become an art, basically more closely related to sculpture than to any other.

Because of his great interest in herpetology, his title was changed to Chief Taxidermist and Herpetologist in 1918 and, in 1947, to Biologist.

He understood perfectly that our National Museum is a laboratory 3,000,000 square miles in extent and that, within this laboratory, living creatures, plants, fish, birds, reptiles, and other animals, including man himself, react upon each other in ever-changing patterns. To discover and record the happenings among living things in this great laboratory which is Canada, to preserve examples of its creatures, to show these artistically and naturally to all who come to learn about them are some of the aims of a National Museum. The building is but the heart of the research laboratory: the laboratory itself is Canada.

Patch did his best to advance Museum aims at every opportunity. If he tired of endless outside lecturing, he never showed it. A perennial member of the Museum lecture committee, he helped keep Museum lectures to the fore and spoke to many of these audiences himself.

In exhibits, there were heartbreaks: shortage of space, accommodation for Parlia-

ment after the 1916 fire, shortage of funds because of wars and depressions. Nevertheless the Museum advanced, some great habitat groups were completed, and many smaller ones now adorn the exhibition halls. The talented team of Patch and Johnson created exhibits that in quality are second to none — only the quantity lags. Tens of thousands see them yearly. When circumstances prevented the construction of many large habitat groups, he built models of these groups as he pictured them. They would be hard to improve upon — some day they will be enlarged to life size. He was dissatisfied with most beaver mounts, the beaver being a difficult subject, and he kept a live beaver to study its every action before embodying what he had learned in the large beaver habitat group now on exhibit. Schools have made steady use of the travelling bird and mammal exhibits ever since he prepared a special collection for lending to them.

When he came to the Museum, herpetology had been neglected. Today, this collection comprises hundreds of specimens from all parts of Canada. He collected many himself and received many others from correspondents whom he had interested in the subject. The illustrations for a book on the subject are prepared; the text is partly written. His gardening activities were brought into the Museum one summer by establishing an indoor botanical exhibit of wild plants and flowers, all labelled, and growing in almost natural surroundings.

He was a member of the Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, and served as Councillor, Secretary, and First Vice-President of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. In addition, he acted as editor of Herpetology for *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* till his death.

Expeditions to Point Pelee, Frontenac County, and Algonquin Park, Ontario; Percé, Quebec; Vancouver Island and Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C., were his major field activities.

In Ottawa, the Gastronomic Club, an informal luncheon group of professional civil

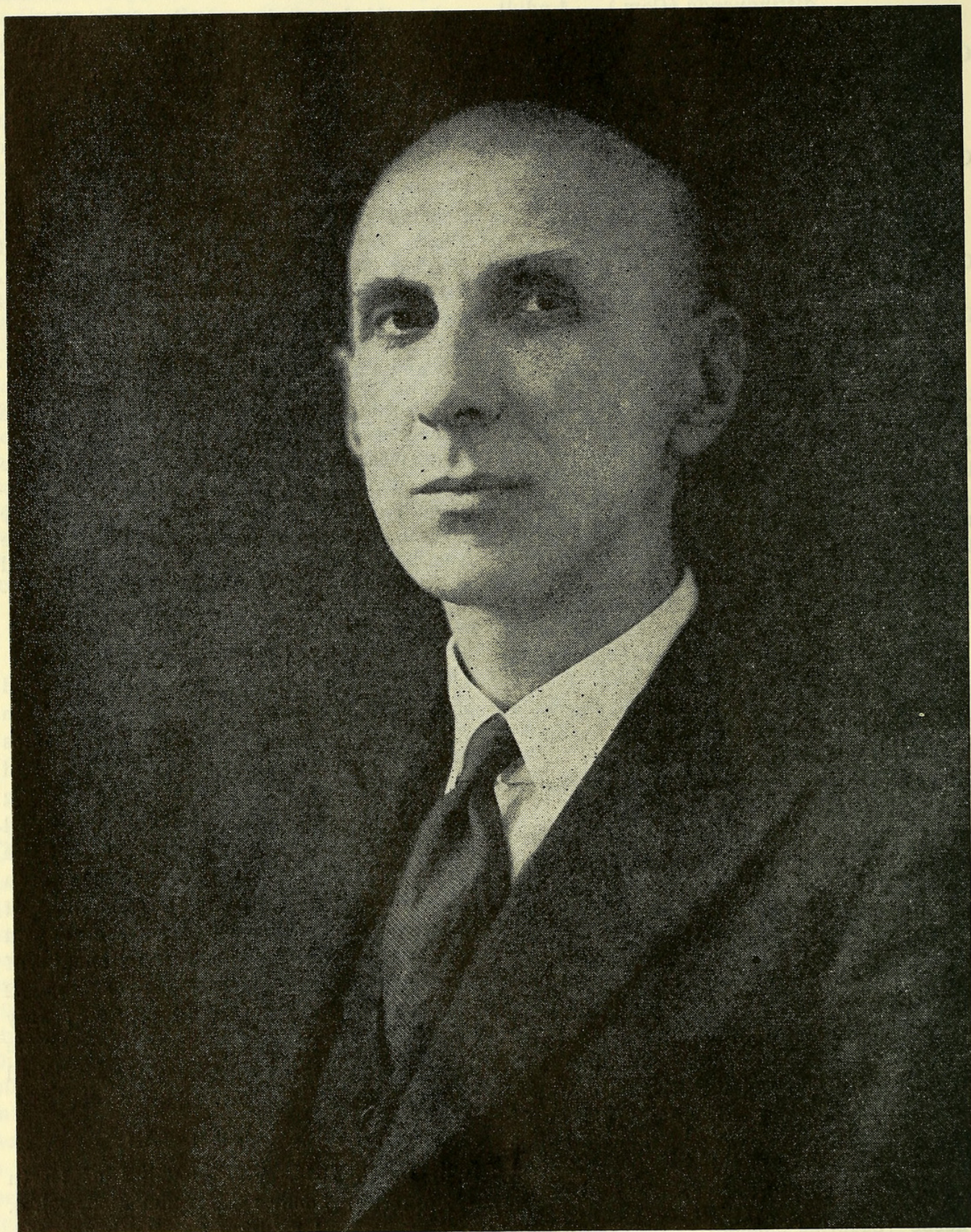
servants with natural history tendencies, met for many years under his chairmanship and guidance. It was an instructive center for linking together allied interests in many of the services.

At the Y.M.C.A. Boys' Camp, Golden Lake, and at other camps, Mr. Patch was a welcome visitor and instructor who helped to place in growing minds a keen interest in nature and a love of it as the Great Naturalist has created it. W. A. Milks, long the Director of the Camp, describes him as one of nature's gentlemen and one about whom the boys flocked as he unravelled the mysteries of snake, frog, and salamander. It never took him long to dispel the fear of snakes and to have the boys making pets of the snakes instead of killing them. Continuing, Mr. Milks says that he made a great contribution to Canada in his chosen field and that life for many of the boys, now men, was richer because Clyde Patch opened their eyes to many wonders of nature.

Mr. Patch died at his Ottawa home, February 11, 1952, closing thirty-nine years' service for Canada and for Canada's National Museum.

A bibliography of his natural history articles, which does not include numerous newspapers items, is given below.

- 1917—*Reconnaissance in Barkley Sound, on the West Coast of Vancouver Island*. Summary report of the Geological Survey, Department of Mines, 1916, pp. 353-357.
- 1917—*Deer Mouse Devours Her Young*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 5 and 6, p. 63.
- 1917—*My Bird Houses*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXX, p. 155.
- 1917—*The Rough-winged Swallow near Ottawa*, The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 46.
- 1918—*A Crow Polygamist?* The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, p. 6.
- 1918—*Unusual Nesting Material Used by Purple Martins*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, p. 28.
- 1918—*The Economic Value of Batrachians and Reptiles*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, pp. 29-30.
- 1918—*A List of Amphibians and Reptiles of the Ottawa, Ontario, District*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, p. 53.
- 1918—*Another Record of the Rough-winged Swallow near Ottawa, Ontario*. The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXXII, p. 77.
- 1919—*A Rattlesnake, Melano Garter Snakes and Other Reptiles from Point Pelee, Ontario*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 60-61.
- 1922—*A Biological Reconnaissance on Graham Island of the Queen Charlotte Group*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXVI, No. 6, pp. 100-105; No. 7, pp. 133-136.
- 1923—*Report of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club for the Year 1922*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 159-160.
- 1923—*Report of the Wild Life Photographic Exhibition Committee*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXVII, No. 9, p. 170.
- 1923—*Birds of Ottawa. Christmas Week, 1922-1923*, The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 18-19.
- 1924—*The Tiger Salamander at Ninette, Manitoba*. By Clyde L. Patch and D. A. Stewart. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6, p. 81.
- 1925—*The Frog Eats the Bird*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. XXXIX, No. 6, p. 150.
- 1925—*Graptomys Geographica in Canada*. Copeia, No. 149, Dec. 22, pp. 95-96.
- 1934—*Eumeces in Canada*. Copeia, No. 1, p. 50.
- 1934—*Die Arbeiten des Bibers*. Natur und Volk, Band 64, Heft. 8, August, pp. 307-315.
- 1939—*Northern Records of the Wood-frog*. Copeia, No. 4, p. 235.
- 1942—*A Backyard Beaver*. The Canadian Field-Naturalist, Vol. LVI, No. 3, p. 46.
- 1949—*Further Northern Records of the Wood-frog*. Copeia, No. 3, p. 233.



Chas. L. Patch



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