

A Tribute to William George Dore, 1912–1996

STEPHEN J. DARBYSHIRE

Eastern Cereal and Oilseed Research Centre, Wm Saunders Building #49, Central Experimental Farm, Agriculture and Agri-Food, Canada (Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C6, Canada)

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William George Dore was born in Ottawa, 17 April 1912, to Charles Francis Dore and Evelyn Beeman Storr. His siblings included Jackson Ira Dore, Richard Francis Dore and Beatrice Maud Moore. In 1942 he married Doris Annabella Robbie of Aberdeen, Scotland. Bill Dore died on his 84th birthday, 17 April 1996, a few kilometres from where he was born.

An interest in science came at an early age and Bill excelled in the subject at high school. No doubt encouragement and stimulation came from his two brothers who had similar interests; Jackson became a chemist for the National Research Council and Richard a consulting engineer. His mother was fascinated by photography and took many photographs of Ottawa in the early decades of the century. Early childhood summers were spent at the cottage built by his father at Danford Lake, Quebec, which was called The O-Kum-Inn. Long days of boyhood rambling brought Bill an intimate knowledge of the natural history of this area. He continued visiting the cottage until the 1980s when it became physically difficult to do so. Until the cottage was finally sold by the Dore family in the 1980s, it remained one of the last dwellings on Danford Lake without electricity or plumbing.

In September 1930 Bill enrolled in the biology department at Queen's University in Kingston. A few months later, in February of 1931, he bought a copy of *Gray's New Manual of Botany* (7th edition, by B. L. Robinson and M. L. Fernald) and began his study of the Canadian flora in earnest. In 1933 he received his BA (Honours) from Queen's University with the Gowan Foundation Award in Botany. In 1934 Bill began a post-graduate degree in bacteriology at Queen's University but this was not completed. In his early under-graduate days Bill worked as a leader at the Y.M.C.A. boys' camp at Shirley's Bay (west of Ottawa). This brought him into close contact with another active participant of the camp, Herb Groh (1883–1971). Mr. Groh was a weed biologist at the Division of Botany of the Dominion Experimental Farm in Ottawa (now Central Experimental Farm, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and no doubt assisted in getting Bill a summer job there in 1932. From 1933 to 1937 he was employed by both MacDonald College and the Dominion Experimental

Farm on pasture studies. In 1935 he received a M.Sc. degree in Agronomy and Botany from McGill University (MacDonald College). Another formative event of this year was a lecture given at MacDonald College by Marie-Victorin (1885–1944). At the end of the lecture Bill managed to acquire one of the first available copies of *Flore Laurentienne*, which Marie-Victorin kindly inscribed. Subsequently Bill rapidly filled the large margins of the first edition with critical comments and notes. From 1937 to 1946 he was Lecturer, and later Assistant Professor, in Botany at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. At Dalhousie Bill taught courses in botany, bacteriology, ecology, physiology, and the flora of Nova Scotia. In 1946 he moved to the University of Guelph as assistant, and later associate, lecturer in botany for two years. In 1947, he returned to the Dominion Experimental Farm in Ottawa where he worked until his retirement in 1976. He had begun his Ph.D. studies at Ohio State University in 1938 under the famous grassland ecologist Edgar N. Transeau (1875–1960). The war and the domestic demands of a young family interrupted his studies, but in 1948 he completed his thesis, *Pasture Associations of Eastern Canada*, and was awarded a Ph.D. in Ecology.

During his career Bill pursued many aspects of botany. He was interested in anatomy, physiology, phytogeography, ethnobotany and ecology, but all these aspects of botany and their ramifications lead him back to systematics and identification. His interest in pasture studies and the difficulties in field identification of plants grazed by cows, lead to his participation in the production of one of the first publications specifically on the identification of grasses by vegetative characteristics (Nowosad, Newton Swales, and Dore 1936). The preface to the second edition (1938) begins with "The fact that the first edition of this modest bulletin, designed only to meet a local need, met with a profuse and world wide demand, is evidence of the rising interest in grassland research. Combined, however, with a steady stream of letters of appreciation from pasture workers everywhere and even from leading taxonomists, this unexpected response has led the authors and sponsors of the bulletin to believe that a new revised edition may prove useful." This was characteristic of many of the publications of Bill Dore. In



William (Bill) G. Dore. Ottawa, January 1949.

Dore. In his writing he was attentive not only to a specialized scientific audience, but also to a wider, less technical readership. Other landmark publications written in this vein which have enjoyed great popularity include *Wild-rice* (Dore 1969) and *Grasses of Ontario* (Dore and McNeill 1980). These important references are not just compilations of the work of others, but full of unique observations made over many years of careful field observation and backed up by laboratory and cultivation studies.

From his earliest collections Bill showed a strong preference for grasses and grass-like plants. No notebooks documenting his plant collections were made prior to 1945, although he collected widely in southern Ontario, Quebec and especially Nova Scotia. In 1945 he travelled widely in the Maritime provinces with ecologist Eville Gorham (1925-) collecting a broad range of plants, including lichens and mosses. Part of this work resulted in a paper by Gorham on the occurrence of mosses and lichens in pastures (*Proceedings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science* 22: 1-10, 1947). Mosses were a secret love of Bill, which unfortunately, he was unable to pursue with much vigour. In addition to collecting widely in the Maritime provinces, southern Quebec and southern Ontario, other collecting areas included southern Manitoba and western Ontario (1948), Churchill,

Manitoba (1949), the southern Prairie Provinces (1950), New York and Wisconsin (1953), Vermont (1961), Manitoba (1961), Alberta (1963), southern Saskatchewan (1974) and British Columbia (1974). After retiring Bill continued to collect valuable specimens, making trips to southern Alberta, southern Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and western Newfoundland, as well as to old stomping grounds in eastern Ontario and western Quebec.

Bill's collections of plant specimens, which populate most herbaria in Canada and many herbaria around the world, form a lasting contribution to Canadian botany. The significance of these collections is difficult to fully evaluate. An idea of their value can be seen by the many citations of his collections in the botanical systematic literature and by the inclusion of his collections among the type material for at least 25 names of Canadian plants. With collections numbering in the tens of thousands, most of



Bill Dore examining giant wildrye (*Leymus cinereus* (Scribn. & Merr.) A. Löve) in his experimental nursery at Ottawa. Growing plants in the nursery was a critical part of Bill's research. This allowed observations on phenology and growth characteristics not easily seen in the field and an assessment of the environmental influence on genetic expression. Ottawa, July 1963.



A formal portrait of Bill Dore working on wild-rice (*Zizania palustris* L.) at the William Saunders Building, Central Experimental Farm. Wild-rice was one of Bill's major interests and through his work we have gained a much greater understanding of the taxonomy and biology of Canada's only native cereal. Ottawa, August 1969.

which included duplicates, there are few Canadian botanists who have collected the Canadian flora as broadly, either taxonomically or geographically. There are few vascular plant species known for Canada for which there is not at least one Bill Dore specimen in the collection at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Canadian Department of Agriculture) herbarium in Ottawa (DAO). These specimens are of excellent quality and frequently document unusual distributions or poorly known life history traits. As the years of collecting went by, Bill's labels tended to get longer and longer. His specimen label data are often supplemented with ecological observations, photographs, letters, drawings, historical notes, humorous anecdotes, or other "value-added" notations.

As a phytogeographer Bill was acutely interested in documenting the absence of plant species as well as their presence. The imprecision of documenting absences was a problem to which he gave much attention. Possibly as a result of his training with Transeau, Bill was never satisfied with establishing a pattern of occurrence and absence. Present distribution patterns have causal events and circumstances which he continually sought to uncover. As he maintained, Canada is probably the most interesting and fruitful area for the research of plant distribution and migration because of the "clean slate" produced by the Wisconsin glaciation less than 10 000 years ago.

Combining his interests in phytogeography, history with ethnobotany, Bill is well known for his hypotheses of aboriginal and early European influ-

ence on the distribution of plants in Canada. Explanations of unusual distributions of plants were postulated based on the deliberate utilitarian use and accidental transport. Each case was linked to the biology, dispersal properties and potential usefulness of the plant species involved. Although many people have been quick to reject these explanations of present day plant distribution, few have offered contesting hypotheses to explain "how" and "why".

Bill's interests in phytogeography and plant migration lead to a number of interesting studies. A war-time need for milkweed fluff as a substitute for kapok lead to his development of a rapid survey technique of populations in southern Ontario and southwestern Quebec. Many miles of driving roads and rapidly estimating densities resulted in a landmark publication with Herb Groh on milkweed distribution. The introduction of new weeds to Canada suggested unique opportunities to Bill for the study of plant migration. The work on Persian Darnel (*Lolium persicum* Boiss. & Hohen. ex Boiss.) in the prairies and Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* L.) in Ontario and Quebec provided unique baseline information on these specific weed problems as well as the more general phytogeography aspects of establishment and spread into new areas. Interests in relating plant distribution to past events stimulated Bill to initiate several far-sited floristic studies. Most important among these were the inventories of the flora of Mont Ste.-Marie (Quebec) prior to development of the area and a study (with J. M. Gillett) of the plants of the St. Lawrence River Seaway area prior to the major flooding of the area in the 1960s.

The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club records state that Bill joined in 1944, remaining an active member for the next 52 years. Other sources of information, however, indicate that he was attending club activities as early as 1930. From 1948 to 1958 he served the club as a member of council and from 1950 to 1966 he acted as associate editor (for botany) for *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*. His many contributions to both *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape* are given in the list of his publications in Appendix 2. In 1972, Bill was awarded a honorary membership in The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the knowledge of Canadian botany, his service to the club, as well as the many extremely popular field trips which he lead.

Bill Dore will be known to most members of the Canadian Botanical Association (CBA) as one of the founding members and as an enthusiastic participant in the association, attending all the annual meetings until the Victoria meeting in 1988. After 1988, Bill's health was not stable enough for extended travel. He had a major role in helping to develop the CBA logo where he took great pains to insure botanical accuracy of the sugar maple design. As the most eminent

authority of Canadian botanical history it was Bill who suggested that the CBA's most prestigious honour be named for George Lawson (1827-1895), a formative figure in Canadian botanical science (Rouseau and Dore 1966).

The love that Bill had for history and his native town can be seen in his poem *Bytown Chantey*. This poem, or chantey, was submitted for the "Heritage Competition" on the event of the 150th anniversary of the City of Ottawa in 1976. Although it was Bill's first attempt at this sort of writing, he won first prize.

Bytown Chantey (In droll monologue with appropriate Irish, Scottish and French accents; Chorus to fiddle and handclap).

Champlain, he liked le rideau,
Brebeuf bore Croix for all,
Sarg French did make the survey -

But, John By did it all!
But John By did it all, my Boys,
And John By did it all.
It cost The Crown a pritty poun(d) —
But, John By did it all!

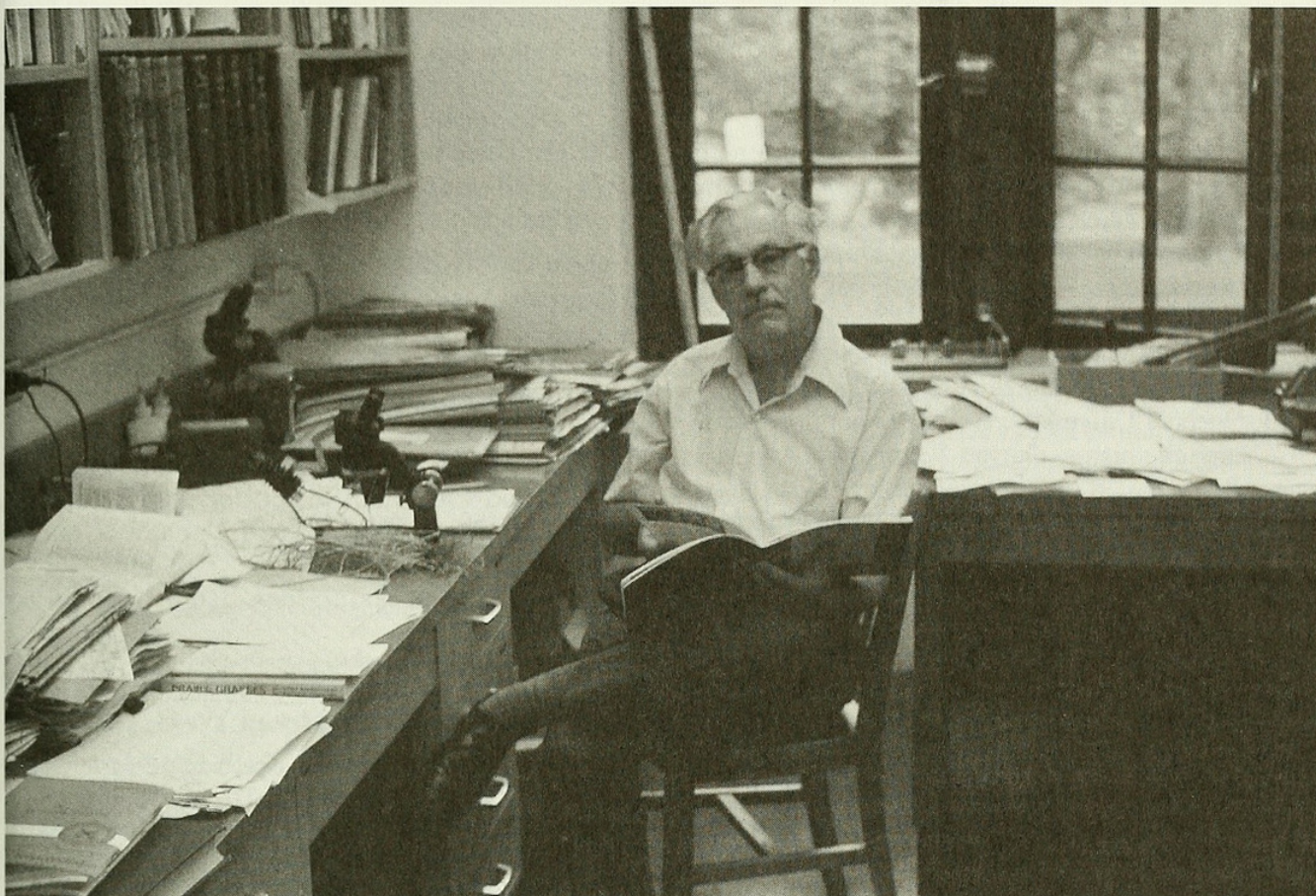
Wright rigged up his sawmill,
Brad Billings helped him saw,
Nick Sparks tracked off his cowpath lot —

But, John By did it a' !
But John By did it a', my Boys,
And John By did it a'.
It cost The Crown a pritty poun(d) —
But, John By did it a' !

MacKay sat Christmas in The Swamp,
LeBreton raged in awe,
The Queen, she smiled on Shantytown —

For, John By did it a' !
But John By did it all, my Boys,
And John By did it all.
It cost The Crown a pritty poun(d) —
But, John By did it all!

Like his greatly respected and long-time colleague at the federal department of agriculture, Bernard Boivin (1916-1985), Bill was an independent thinker. His work always showed great originality even when his unique style and approach was tempered by reviewers and editors. As a keen observer, Bill sought patterns in a context of space and time. Observations of patterns were always followed by the question "Why?" The next step was to develop hypotheses for which he frequently devised his own tools to test. Although he had great respect for colleagues, he was properly sceptical, challenging and always seeking empirical evidence to support or refute conclusions of others. This critical nature and desire for completeness was a great strength, but sometimes a hinderance throughout his career. As the world renowned grassland ecologist R. T.



Bill Dore as he was to be found in his office at the William Saunders Building, Central Experimental Farm. His wealth of botanical and historical knowledge, as well as the usual enthusiastic reception, brought many colleagues and students to the spot where this photograph was taken. Ottawa, August 1971.

Coupland (1920-) has said of Bill, "That man thinks deep."

Canadian botanists will remember Bill as a warm and delightful individual with a unique sense of humour. The work of most contemporaries pursuing phytogeography, floristics, horticulture, botanical systematics, history or ecology in Canada will have benefited at one time or another from his vast knowledge and kind generosity. Colleagues and friends will miss his enthusiasm, persistence, unique powers of observation, penetrating insight and keen wit.

Many of Bill's working notebooks and field notebooks remain at the herbarium of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Ottawa. A large volume of his letters, papers, notes, un-published manuscripts and various reliquae will be deposited at the archives of Dalhousie University, including his extensive files on George Lawson.

Bill is survived by his three children: Kathleen Mary Layton (Winnipeg), David George Dore (Ottawa) and Evelyn B. Dore (Carp, Ontario).

Other obituaries:

Ceska, A. 1996. Bill Dore. Botanical Electronic Newsletter 135.

Darbyshire, S. J., and J. Gillett. 1996. Bill Dore. Trail & Landscape 30: 92-93.

Darbyshire, S. J. 1996. W. G. (Bill) Dore — 1912-1996. Canadian Botanical Association Bulletin 29: 51-52.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1

The employment history of Bill Dore during the early years of his career has been hard to determine with certainty. After graduating from McGill University in 1935 until 1947, when he joined the Canadian Department of Agriculture on a permanent basis, he was involved with many projects. Primarily he was a lecturer in botany at Dalhousie University, taking summer employment with the Canadian Department of Agriculture and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to work on various research projects.

Glebe Collegiate Institute (High School), Ottawa:
Junior Matriculation 1928

- Honour Matriculation 1929 with graduation award of "First in Science"
- 1929 and 1930, summers: instructor in Nature Study, Y.M.C.A. Boys' Camp, Ottawa.
- 1931, May-October: Canadian Department of Agriculture — student assistant in botany (weed eradication and pasture surveys).
- 1932, May-October: Canadian Department of Agriculture — student assistant in botany (weed eradication and pasture surveys).
- 1933, April-May: Canadian Department of Agriculture — student assistant in botany.
- 1933, Queen's University: B.A. (Honours) in botany and chemistry; Gowan Foundation Award in Botany.
- 1933-1935: Graduate Assistant, Macdonald College Pasture Project (southern Quebec).
- 1935, McGill University: M.Sc. in agronomy and botany (*cum laude*).
- 1935, September-1936, September: Canadian Department of Agriculture — graduate labourer (pasture Surveys at experimental farms in southern Quebec; identification of grasses).
- 1937, July-August: Queen's University, Instructor in Plant Taxonomy, Summer School 1937.
- 1937-1946: Lecturer (1937-1943), and later Assistant Professor (1943-1945), in botany Dalhousie University
- 1938, May-July: visiting worker, Welsh Plant Breeding Station, Aberystwyth, Wales, with Professor R. G. Stapledon.
- 1940, summer: Botanical survey of pastures in Nova Scotia.
- 1941, summer: Grassland Ecologist, Quebec Department of Agriculture.
- 1942, summer: Vegetation survey of King's County, Nova Scotia (under the direction of the Provincial Botanist).
- 1943, June-September: Canadian Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Assistant Grade 11, Native Rubber Plants Investigation-Milkweed survey of eastern Ontario.
- 1944, May-September: Canadian Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Assistant Grade 11, Native Rubber Plants Investigation-Milkweed survey of Ontario and Quebec.
- 1945, May-September: Canadian Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Assistant Grade 11, Floristic and ecological surveys in the Maritime Provinces with special reference to pasture vegetation.
- 1946-1947: Ontario Agricultural College, Assistant Professor of Botany.
- 1947, 15 May: joined the staff at the Canadian Department of Agriculture and went on leave to complete Ph.D. studies.
- 1948, Ohio State University: Ph.D. in ecology.
- University Scholarship 1940/1941; University Fellowship 1942/1943.
- 1950, 1 July: permanent staff at Canadian Department of Agriculture
- 1956, Promoted to Senior Scientist
- 1976, 29 December: retired from Agriculture Canada.
- Professional Associations:*
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- International Association of Plant Taxonomists (Charter Member)
- Canadian Botanical Association (Founding Member)
- Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturists, later called Canadian Society of Agronomy and Agriculture Institute of Canada (Charter Member)
- The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club (Honourary Member)
- Nova Scotia Institute of Science (Associate Member)

Appendix 2. Bibliography of W. G. Dore

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Appendix 3

A list of plants named in honour of W. G. Dore

× *Agroelymus dorei* Bowden, *Canadian Journal of Botany* 45: 715 (1967).

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