

OBITUARY

HAMILTON ALDEN TYLER (1917-1983)

Hamilton A. Tyler, a versatile scholar, died at his home in Healdsburg, California, on 14 December 1983. He was born in Fresno on 20 October 1917, the son of Hazel Tyler and John G. Tyler, the latter having been a well-known ornithologist of the Fresno area.

Tyler was known in recent years for his studies of the Papilionidae of the New World: "The Swallowtail Butterflies of North America" (1975). At the time of his death he was writing, with Paul Spade, an article on Colima swallowtails. This manuscript is being prepared for publication by Michael Parsons under the title of "Notes on the Biology of Seven Troidine Swallowtail Butterflies (Lepidoptera: Papilionidae) from the State of Colima, Mexico."

Hamilton Tyler's first entomological studies were on the Tenebrionidae, especially the beetles of the genus *Eleodes*, of which he had a large collection. As a young man, after studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and an episode as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War, he returned to the University as an English major and published papers on the poetry of Milton and Donne.

In 1955 he became interested in the Southwest and began a study that resulted in three books on Pueblo myths that were published by the University of Oklahoma in their *Civilization of the American Indian* series.

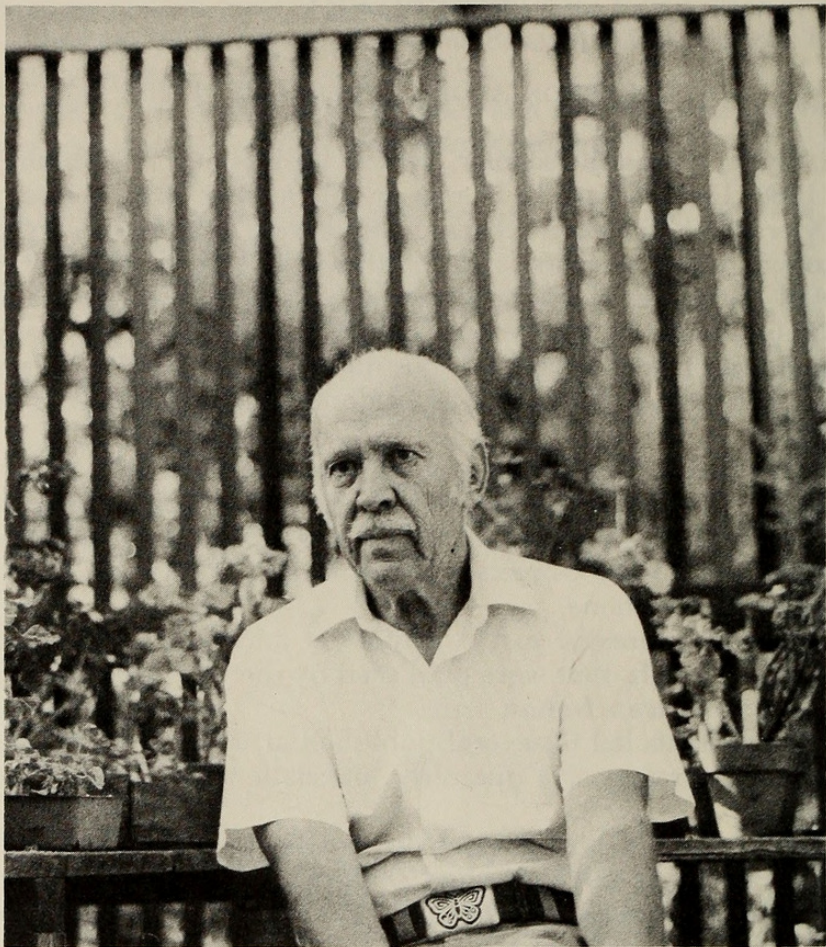
Tyler's interest in plants led to several published articles on geraniums, two books on gardening and the editorship of a quarterly international publication called "The Pelargonium Breeder."

He was also interested in birds, which led to the publication of *Owls by Day and Night* with Don Phillips in 1978. He and Phillips had also prepared, but had not yet published, a detailed manuscript on the owls of the Southwest and Mexico.

Following his death, his collection of swallowtails and reference materials pertaining was given to the University of California at Davis. Of this collection, Dr. Arthur M. Shapiro writes: "Hamilton Tyler was an extremely active amateur lepidopterist who did much to foster research on the biology and systematics of his favorite group, the Swallowtails (Papilionidae). His collection, obtained by collaboration, purchase, and exchange, represents one of the largest accumulations of this family in private hands in North America. It is most notable for containing specimens with full data of many very rare and prized entities."

Dr. Shapiro also writes: "Basically, acquisition of the Tyler collection allows scholars and researchers in the region and in general to pursue evolutionary and phylogenetic studies of this important group without having to go to the British Museum, U.S. National Museum, or Allyn Museum (Sarasota, Florida). Mr. Tyler was working on a book of the Papilionidae of the Americas at the time of his death; most of the documentation is in the collection. He knew the group well enough to be a connoisseur and to obtain the 'key' species for his work, which are likely to be critical for future workers as well."

The variety of publications by Tyler is best explained in the following statement by him: "Almost all of my books have been on topics of my own choosing and were thereby expressions of deep personal interest rather than material written to fit a publisher's demands. By good fortune on this chancy route, all completed titles have eventually reached publication despite some tortuous turns and delays. My interests have been diverse, as the varied titles indicate, and I have dug in some unusual corners but I think there is an overall logic which relates the works. My primary interest is in examining the different views men may take of the world about them, especially as these concern birds, mammals, insects, and plants, or relationships in the realm of nature. These approaches seem to fall into two great and familiar divisions which are often held to be mutually exclusive—but they are not so for me. On the one side there is the scientific attitude which distinguishes the species of bird, mammal, insect or plant, by describing its form, life history, and habitat. On the other side there are views, such as those held by the Pueblo Indians, which are more poetic. Collectively these can be called the



Hamilton Alden Tyler

mythologic approach to nature and on this side stand religions, at least until they become highly sophisticated. For me, both the mystic-poetic and the scientific outlooks illuminate man's place in nature and the cosmos and are thus equally valid. Indeed, the two views complement each other. Both aesthetics and science are needed to establish man's place, for they are the two hemispheres of the one world we all inhabit."

The following is a chronological listing of his publications:

PUBLICATION	PUBLISHER	DATE
Mr. Eliot and Mr. Milton	Circle, Berkeley	1944
Finnegan Epic	Circle, Berkeley	1946
Pueblo Gods and Myths	University of Oklahoma	1964
Organic Gardening Without Poisons	Van Nostrand Reinholt	1970
French Type of Tetraploid "Geraniums" in The Geranium Gazette Yearbook		1971
John Tyler (with John R. Arnold)	Auk, vol. 88:228-229	1971
Gourmet Gardening	Van Nostrand Reinholt	1972
Pueblo Animals and Myths	University of Oklahoma	1975
The Swallowtail Butterflies of North America	Naturegraph	1975
Owls by Day and Night (with Don Phillips)	Naturegraph	1978
Pueblo Birds and Myths	University of Oklahoma	1979

JOHN R. ARNOLD, 199 Calistoga Rd., Santa Rosa, California 95405.



Arnold, J R. 1985. "Obituary. Hamilton Alden Tyler (1917-1983)." *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 38, 257-258.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/128065>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/80998>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In Copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.