

### ROBERT SWIFT

Through the kindness of Mr. A. F. Gray, the following obituary notice of Mr. Robert Swift was placed in my hands for our records. It is a newspaper clipping, dated in Bland's handwriting, as July 13, 1872, and no doubt written by T. Bland. Though his main collection is now in the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, most of the larger museum collections contain shells collected by Mr. Swift.—W. J. CLENCH.

“Another gap in the ranks of American students and patrons of natural history has been made by the death of Mr. ROBERT SWIFT. This gentleman was born in Philadelphia in 1796, and studied law for a short time in his native city, but subsequently was engaged in mercantile affairs. In about the year 1824 he went to Laguayra and several years later removed to Porto Cabello, where he resided as agent of the Bolivar Mining Association. In 1835 Mr. Swift established himself at St. Thomas, where he continued in business as a merchant until his retirement in 1866, when he removed to Philadelphia; but finding the climate unsuitable, returned to St. Thomas in October, 1867, remaining there until his death, on the 5th of May, 1872, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

“Mr. Swift, at an early period of his residence in Venezuela, acquired a taste for natural history, and commenced the collection and study of the mollusca, which he pursued with increasing interest to the end of his life. In 1852 he became acquainted, in the United States, with the late Professor C. B. Adams, who contemplated another visit to the West Indies (he had already been in Jamaica, and also at Panama), and invited by Mr. Swift, went to St. Thomas as his guest, where he died in 1853.

“From that period, more especially, Mr. Swift became greatly interested in the subject of the geographical distribution of the mollusca in the West Indies. In correspondence with conchologists in the islands and elsewhere, Mr. Swift, by purchase, exchange, and collecting personally, became possessed of an extremely valuable cabinet. Always liberal and hospitable, he did much to aid and encourage others of similar scientific tastes.

“His friend and intimate correspondent for upward of twenty years, Mr. Thomas Bland, of New York, in his various publica-



tions on the geographical distribution of terrestrial mollusca in the West Indies, gratefully acknowledges his obligations to Mr. Swift.

"In March, 1863, Mr. Swift published a book of (marine) "Researches of the Virgin Islands," and took great interest in the preparation and publication, by his friend Mr. Henry Krebs, of a catalogue of the marine shells of the West Indies. With the view of better determining the ornithology of St. Thomas and Porto Rico, Mr. Swift, about the year 1865, employed a native collector in gathering an extensive series of specimens, which he presented to the Smithsonian Institution, and which was made the basis of a systematic report by Dr. Bryant, of Boston, who himself subsequently fell a victim to his zeal for science in the last-mentioned island.

"Mr. Swift was, we believe, a contributor to the fund raised in his native city for the purchase, in behalf of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, of the Morton collection of skulls; and we learn that his valuable cabinet of shells, now the property of his only daughter, will be by her presented to the same institution."

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### NOTES AND NEWS

MISS CARLOTTA JOAQUINA MAURY, formerly paleontologist for the Brazilian government and from 1912 to 1915 professor of geology and zoology at the Huguenot College of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, died on January 3 at the age of sixty-four years.

DIMENSIONS OF FLORIDA CHAMAS.—In a recent letter Mr. Frank B. Lyman reports finding specimens larger than measurements given in NAUTILUS for January of this year. *Chama macrophylla*, 80 mm. long; *C. sinuosa firma*, over 100 mm.; and *Pseudochama radians variegata*, many more than 70 mm.—H. A. P.

EDITOR NAUTILUS. Sir:—It is generally believed that fresh-water molluscs like some other species wear away the front portion of the radula and that it is constantly being replaced by posterior rows of teeth, as is believed to occur in land species.



Clench, William James. 1938. "Robert Swift." *The Nautilus* 51, 142–143.

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