

# James Chester Bradley

*February 11, 1884 — February 25, 1975*

The death of James Chester Bradley shortly after his ninety-first birthday brought to a close nearly seventy years of devoted service to Cornell University.

Professor Bradley was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where he attended Friends Graded School, and in 1903 he graduated from Philadelphia Central High School. He early showed an interest in the natural sciences and is said to have collected spiders at the age of three. He was fifteen and still in high school when he published his first scientific paper. When he was sixteen, he became editor of *The Entomological Student*.

He entered Cornell in 1903 and received his A.B. degree in 1906. He received his M.S. from the University of California in 1907, returned to Cornell, and received his Ph.D. in 1910. From 1905 to 1909 he held various assistantships and fellowships at Cornell and the University of California. He served as special assistant to the state entomologist of Georgia in 1909, 1910, 1911, and 1913. He was in Georgia when Professor John Henry Comstock wired him an offer to return to Cornell as an assistant professor. Bradley said, "I didn't walk, I ran to the nearest telegraph office to wire acceptance." He served as assistant professor from 1911 until 1920, when he was appointed professor of entomology and curator of invertebrate zoology. He became professor emeritus in 1952.

Professor Bradley was a true field biologist, and his extensive trips to collect insects began in 1905 when he went to the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. He was on the Cornell expedition to Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia in 1912 and on the famed joint Cornell-Harvard transcontinental trip in 1917. He, with the late Professor W. T. M. Forbes, led the Cornell Entomological Expedition of 1919-21 to South America. Species new to science are still being found among the vast collections made on this last trip. Specimens collected by Bradley throughout North and South America as well as in Europe and Africa did much to enhance the stature of the already extensive Cornell University Insect Collection. After World War I he purchased with his own funds a number of collections of European insects, which he turned over to Cornell.

His grasp of the subjects he taught was phenomenal, and his expectations of the knowledge students were to acquire made his courses a challenge. Graduate students found Bradley a hard taskmaster. His concern with detail and insistence on a complete grasp of the subject and related subjects caused many to fall by the wayside. Those who survived are leaders in their fields.

His scientific publications began in 1899, continued in an almost unbroken stream until his death, and consisted of about 260 titles; at least one paper was in press at the time of his death. Since he was primarily a hymenopterist, the majority of his papers deal with wasps, but he was by no means restricted to this field. His book, *A Manual of the Genera of Beetles of America, North of Mexico*, was a standard text and reference work for many years. Others of his works cover insect morphology and evolution and biogeography. A few years before his death he developed an interest in the Phasmidae, a family of insects related to the grasshoppers, and was preparing an extensive paper on this group.

Professor Bradley had an abiding interest in young people. He founded and for many years was scoutmaster of Troop 15 in Ithaca and was chairman of the committee that secured the site for Camp Barton. He was a member of the National Council and the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He was coauthor, with the late Professor E. Laurence Palmer, of the manual *Insect Life* for the Boy Scouts.

He was a member of numerous scientific societies in the United States and abroad, many of which made him a fellow or honorary member. He was president of the Entomological Society of America in 1951. He served on the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature from 1944 to 1963 and was its president from 1953 to 1963. For many years he was on the executive committee of the International Congress of Entomology. In 1972 he was asked to be a guest of the International Congress held that year in Australia, and it was an occasion of deep regret to him that he was not well enough to travel that far.

In 1940 Professor Bradley married Ruth Stephens Baker, a childhood friend who had made a distinguished career in education. Mrs. Bradley died in 1965.

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