

Correction of an Illinois Great Gray Owl Record

by C.T. (Ted) Black

This corrects the date, collector's name, and location of collection of the Illinois Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) specimen cited by Smith and Parmalee (1955) and repeated by Bohlen (1978, 1989). Smith and Parmalee stated: "One bird was collected near Rockford by Dr. Lambert, Carthage College, about 1930 (Musselman)." "Dr. Lambert" is Earl L. Lambert, formerly a biology professor at Carthage College, Carthage, Illinois. "Musselman," the source of the report, is the early Illinois bird authority Thomas E. Musselman of Quincy, Illinois.

Between 1935 and 1937, when working with Professor Alvin R. Cahn of the University of Illinois on a proposed Birds of Illinois book, I received a communication from Lambert about this owl, stating that a Martin J. Reed collected it, and that he (Lambert) only saw it. Further, it was collected two miles southwest of Rock Grove, Illinois, (about 30 miles northwest of the Musselman location) "between the years of 1905 and 1911" (not "about 1930," the

Musselman date). The uncertainty of Lambert's date stemmed from his attempt to recall the date after a lapse of 25 to 30 years, when he wrote to me.

Lambert and Reed were farm youths at the time. Reed, a hunter and taxidermist, shot and mounted the owl. Lambert was much impressed by "this huge owl with its large rounded face studded with its comparatively small yellow eyes." He added that Reed "also had a mounted Barred Owl, and recalled "the difference in size...and in color of the eyes." The fate of the specimen is unknown.

Lambert went on to obtain a M.S. college degree, taught biology and mounted birds at Carthage College, and became aware of the significance of his youthful Great Gray Owl experience. He apparently informed Musselman (who lived at Quincy, only 35 miles distant) about the Great Gray Owl. As to the discrepancy between the Musselman and Lambert dates, one can only assume that Musselman, in repeating the record to Smith and Parmalee (1955), erred in his recollection of the date.

Literature Cited

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