

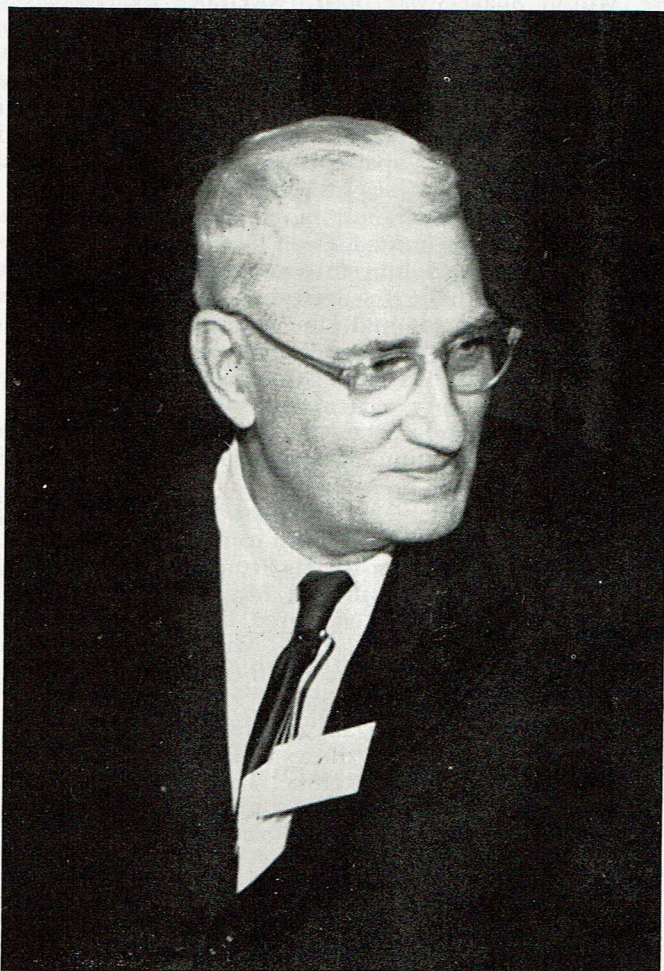
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DOCTOR JESSE MILTON SHAVER



*Photograph by Joseph Houston,  
Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, Inc.*

**JESSE MILTON SHAVER<sup>1</sup>**

CLAUDE S. CHADWICK<sup>2</sup>

*Professor of Biology  
George Peabody College for Teachers  
Nashville, Tennessee*

Jesse Milton Shaver was born November 29, 1888, on a farm near Lula Lake on Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, Tennessee. His early schooling was in a one-room school; later he attended the Lookout Mountain school for the seventh grade and first year of high school. He transferred to Central High School of Hamilton County for the last three years of high school, and he carried a newspaper route all the time he attended this school. After graduating from high school he wrote to several colleges of his desire for more education telling them that his means were very limited. Dean Hoskins of the University of Tennessee encouraged him to come and told him of loan funds that were available to deserving students. He entered the College of Engineering and later transferred to the College of Agriculture. He made the honor roll consistently during all of his university years. He earned membership in Phi Kappa Phi and in the honorary agriculture society, Alpha Zeta, of which he served one year as president. He served also as president of Philomathesian Debating Society. He received the B.S.A. degree in June, 1915.

George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville had just completed its move from the old south campus to a new location adjacent to Vanderbilt University. Its President, Bruce R. Payne, needed a biology teacher. Although Mr. Shaver had only the bachelor's degree, Dr. Payne employed him for the 1915-1916 school year. On September 18, 1915, Mr. Shaver was married to Daisy Hannah Rule of Concord, Tennessee; there are six children, two sons and four daughters.

In the fall of 1918 he began graduate work at Vanderbilt University. While carrying his duties at Peabody he was to take a course a year with Dr. E. E. Reinke. To speed up his graduate work he went to the University of Chicago in 1920 and took a full summer's work. Vanderbilt allowed him to transfer this graduate credit toward his Master of Science degree, and he received this degree from Vanderbilt in 1921.

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Jesse M. Shaver was editor of this *Journal* from 1928 to 1954. He died July 7, 1961. The April, 1955, issue was dedicated to him, with several research papers by his former students.

<sup>2</sup>Claude S. Chadwick succeeded Dr. Shaver as head of the Department of Biology at Peabody College in 1953.

With the help of a General Education Board grant of \$2,000 Professor Shaver spent the 1924-25 year at the University of Chicago, completing the residence requirement for the doctorate. During this year he came under the influence of such men as J. M. Coulter, Henry Chandler Cowles, Charles Barnes, William Crocker, and W. C. Allee, and also an outstanding lady teacher, Dr. Libbie Henrietta Hyman.

He was attracted to the field of ecology and petitioned the faculty to let him do a problem on the ecology of birds. He was discouraged from this particular problem because no one on the faculty knew enough about birds to give him the guidance graduate students are supposed to need. He persisted, however, and his petition was granted.

He used Knapp Farm as his laboratory and his graduate students as assistants while working up the material for his dissertation.

As the busy months passed Professor Shaver accumulated a tremendous quantity of data on bird ecology. The meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Nashville at Christmastime, in 1927, brought Dr. Allee to Nashville. When there was time, he said to his doctoral student,

"Let me see this bird work you have done."

When he had reviewed it he picked up a handful of sheets from the top of a pile and said,

"Here is your thesis. Bring the rest out for publication a bit at a time throughout your life. There is enough to last."

And so Professor Shaver prepared a dissertation under the title: AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIRD FAUNA OF A DEPOSITING CREEK BANK. This was published in Ecological Monographs, and the Ph.D. was awarded him in 1928.

By the time Jesse had become Dr. Shaver in 1928, he had become professor and head of the Department of Biology which had grown very greatly in students and staff.

The year 1928 closes the first period of Dr. Shaver's career — that of his formal education and of his introduction to teaching and research. The year 1929 opens the second period. From the beginning honors and recognition came. He recently had been elected secretary of the Wilson Club, a national bird organization, and had been elected editor of the *Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science*. After three years as secretary of the Wilson Club, he was elected president. Only one other southerner had ever served in this capacity in the 49 years of its existence. Not just once, but in three successive years he was elected president of this society. It was written of him, "Largely through the initiative of Dr. Jesse M. Shaver the programs of the annual meetings have attained an excellency worthy of much larger meetings." During the twenty-five years he served as editor of the *Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science*, he made it one of the best of the state academy journals.

In 1937 Dr. Shaver was elected to active membership in the American Society of Zoologists, and in the same year became president of the Tennessee Academy of Science, serving with distinction in this position.

In the period from 1936 to 1940 Dr. Shaver had become interested in amateur photography and ferns. The two hobbies went hand in hand, for with the camera he made illustrations of high quality and adequacy for the long series of publications on ferns soon to follow.

In the period from 1928 to 1940 Dr. Shaver had directed over fifty students in the writing of theses and dissertations. Twelve students earned the doctorate under his direction. Much field work was done, and it is probable that Dr. Shaver and his students covered more of Tennessee than any professor previously had covered, or is likely to cover again. In this period he was much in demand as a speaker at garden clubs, men's clubs, and high school and college commencements.

With the coming of World War II and gasoline rationing, the work he had begun on ferns was held in abeyance. He was assigned the job of teaching organic chemistry to aviation cadets, which he did adequately and without complaint. He kept the Tennessee Academy of Science going through his editorship of the *Journal*.

At the end of the war the biology department grew tremendously in accommodating returning veterans. With plenty of gasoline for his Ford he renewed his exploration of Tennessee for ferns. Over twenty papers were published, which culminated in what is regarded as the definitive book on Tennessee ferns. Of the interest and importance of this work one is convinced by the comments of such reviewers as Dr. Weatherby of Harvard University and Dr. C. V. Morton, Smithsonian Institution, in the *American Fern Journal*. Dr. Morton calls attention to Dr. Shaver's careful descriptions, beautiful drawings and photographs, and especially to the extensive discussions of variations.

Dr. Shaver had to adjust to two changes in the administration of the college in his teaching career — in 1937 and in 1945. His last president, Dr. Henry H. Hill, stated on many occasions that he regarded Dr. Shaver as the ideal gentleman and scholar.

Once as Dr. Shaver was returning to the biology laboratory after a trip in the field, Dr. Hill asked him what he had in the jars. On being told that they were fairy midges, Dr. Hill asked,

"What are they good for?"

"Oh, they like to run around, and eat, and reproduce, just like people," was the smiling reply.

Dr. Hill used this little anecdote in many speeches. In stressing the fact that great men are usually humble, he stated of Dr. Shaver that he was the only teacher, professor, or official he had ever known who consistently tipped his hat and bowed when he met him on the campus.

One of Dr. Shaver's closest friends and associates through most of his years as a college professor was Dr. Frances R. Bottum. She wrote this tribute to Dr. Shaver: "He has made his own life an ideal which young teachers could well follow; a grand purpose becoming clearer with the passage of time, persistence against odds in the pursuit of this purpose, devotion to duty and capacity for self-discipline, complete respect for truth at all times, high moral courage, respect for human individuals whatever their estate, loyalty to his colleagues, continuous effort to bring out the best in all young people, to inspire them, to instill them with love for the truth, together with respect for their own ideas when they are worthy of respect, and to start them on their own careers."

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### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF AAAS RESEARCH GRANT**

Limited funds are available from the American Association for the Advancement of Science to assist students in their research projects. These funds are to be granted preferably to high school students, although grants may also be made to undergraduate and graduate students at the college level. The grants are not to be used as prizes or awards for completed work. The emphasis is primarily on the encouragement and assistance of students with ideas they wish to develop.

Applications should be sent to the Chairman of the Research Committee, Dr. Charles S. Shoup, Research and Development Division, P. O. Box E. Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The application should include the following:

- (1) name of the applicant,
- (2) his address and institution,
- (3) his research project,
- (4) the special purpose for which he intends to use the fund,
- (5) the amount of the grant,
- (6) the sponsoring teacher or professor.

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### **NEWS OF TENNESSEE SCIENCE**

A Public Health Service graduate training grant of \$80,000 for the year 1961-62 and an additional \$50,000 annually for the four succeeding years has been awarded to the University of Tennessee Institute of Radiation Biology. The Director of the Institute is Dr. J. Gordon Carlson, who is also Head of the Department of Zoology and Entomology. This grant provides for the training of five predoctoral candidates the first year and eight predoctoral and one postdoctoral trainee each of the four succeeding years. In addition to stipends for trainees, the grant includes funds for visiting professors and research and teaching equipment. Students may do their research at the Biology Division of ORNL, the UT Memorial Research Center, the UT-AEC Agricultural Research Program at Oak Ridge, or on the Knoxville campus of the University. The UT program in radiation biology was begun in 1946 when Dr. Carlson came to the University as Head of the Zoology and Entomology department. It developed

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