

PROFESSOR ORLANDO PARK

1901 - 1969

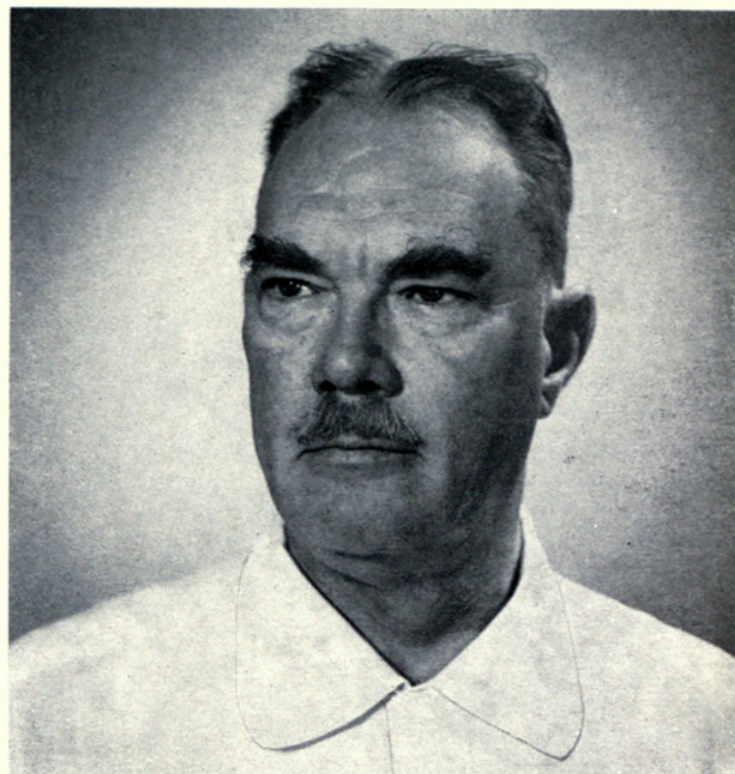
On September 23, Field Museum lost a distinguished Research Associate with the death of Orlando Park, Professor of Biology, Northwestern University. Prof. Park joined the faculty of Northwestern in 1934. He was made a Research Associate (insects) of the Museum in 1955. In 1968, he retired from the University to devote full time to his favorite research specialty, the systematics and biology of pselaphid beetles. He was internationally recognized as an authority on this family.

But Professor Park was best known to the scientific community at large as an ecologist, and most of the more than 100 papers that he wrote or co-authored dealt with ecology. He was a pioneer in the study of activity rhythms of animals in relation to nocturnal ecology of forest communities. He was co-author of two ecology books, including the classic *Principles of Animal Ecology* written with W. C. Allee, A. E. Emerson, T. Park, and K. P. Schmidt, and also wrote a textbook on entomology, soon to be published. His eminence in ecology was recognized by election to the Presidency of the Ecological Society of America in 1945. He was a member of more than a dozen other scientific societies, and was a Fellow of the Entomological Society of America, the National Speleological Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Since 1953, he served as a Consultant to both the Division of Biology and Medicine of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

While the professional achievements of a scientist may be impressive, they tell little about him as a person. "Lan" Park was an extraordinary person. To those outside his family he kept various facets of his life in separate compartments, and took some pleasure in keeping them so. Friends had to find out about him for themselves. Despite a bluff exterior, he was extraordinarily sensitive. His sensitivity extended to his concern for his family and to his students.

He was born in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, October 13, 1901. As a youngster he spent much time stalking and playing Indian in the forest, and he developed an enduring love of nature. At age 14, he wrote the first of a series of still unpublished nature stories, with such intriguing titles as "Bosky Beetle" and "Diana of the Forest". He continued writing these throughout his adult life.

When he was about 17, Park moved with his family to Ocean Springs, Mississippi. There he somehow came under the spell of Lil Hardin, wife of Louis Armstrong, who taught young Lan to play chord jazz piano. He not only came to know many of the great jazz pianists, but



*The late
Dr. Orlando Park*

during his University years, he helped defray his school expenses by playing himself. Most of his professional acquaintances knew nothing of his virtuosity until they heard him play with the "Academic Cats", a "combo" composed of scientists and professors from Northwestern University and the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Yet, Park could not read music.

One of the greatest surprises to his colleagues was the announcement in the Chicago papers, of a book entitled "Sherlock Holmes, Esq. and John H. Watson, M.D., An Encyclopaedia of Their Affairs", authored by Orlando Park and published by Northwestern University Press, in 1962. We had known "Lan" for nearly 30 years, yet knew nothing of this interest. He was an active member of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Professor Park is survived by his wife Betty, his daughter Patricia Englemann, his mother Mrs. Samuel P. Park, and his brother, Professor Thomas Park of the University of Chicago. His personal research collection of pselaphid beetles, second in importance only to those of the Paris and British Museums, has been willed to Field Museum, together with his library.

—Rupert L. Wenzel, Curator of Insects



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