

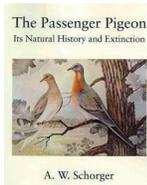
Arlie (Bill) Schorger (1884 - 1972)



Arlie (Bill) Schorger

As a man of many talents, insatiable curiosity and boundless energy, Arlie Schorger excelled in multiple careers as a chemist, inventor, businessman and wildlife conservationist. His career in chemistry, focusing on cellulose and wood, resulted in 41 patents that enriched him and his companies, and fueled his philanthropic interests in conservation.

In conservation circles, he is most well known for his work as a nature historian and for his life histories of Wisconsin's wildlife and man's impact on them. His 1955 award winning book *The Passenger Pigeon: Its Natural History and Extinction* and his 1966 book *The Wild Turkey: Its History and Domestication* are classics and helped advance a global concern for wildlife management, biodiversity and the new field of conservation biology.



As a co-founder of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, he played a leading role in telling the story of the Passenger Pigeon and wrote the famous inscription for the 1947 Passenger Pigeon Monument at Wyalusing State Park, the first monument dedicated to the demise of an extinct species.

Schorger had a lifelong interest in nature since his childhood in Ohio, and pursued his interest in wildlife research and writing for most of his adult life. After retiring from a long career in chemistry

and business, he was able to focus full time on his avocation. In 1951 he became a Professor of Wildlife Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-M) and devoted the rest of his life to his research and writing on wildlife and conservation.

In addition to his major books, he was a prolific author of over 250 journal articles, book chapters and reports, and kept a lifelong journal of natural history observations and insights. Working in an era before copy machines and computers, he was renowned for his encyclopedic memory and for his ability to sift through, hand copy, digest and synthesize mountains of obscure facts, reports and books to extract insights, patterns and new understandings about wildlife.

"Dedicated to the last Passenger Pigeon shot at Babcock, Sept. 1899. This species became extinct through the avarice and thoughtlessness of man."

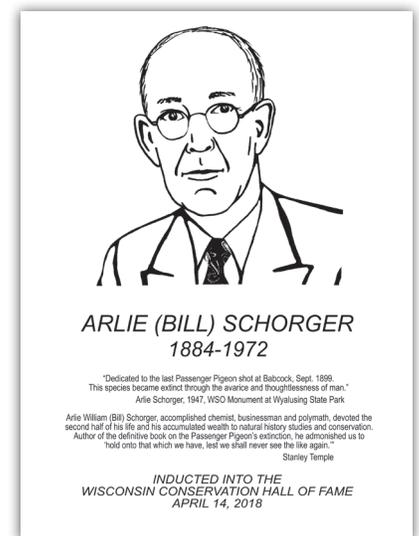
— Arlie Schorger, 1947, WSO Monument at Wyalusing State Park

A little known fact is that Schorger also helped launch the wildlife career and Conservation Legacy of Aldo Leopold. When Leopold left the USDA Forest Service to pursue his new career as a wildlife consultant, Schorger helped persuade UW-M to hire Leopold – an up-and-coming wildlife conservationist – to a faculty position in 1933. And, again, in 1938 he helped to persuade the University to retain Leopold by offering to create the world's first academic department devoted to the new field of wildlife management. Without Bill Schorger and his friends, Wisconsin's tie to the Leopold Conservation Legacy may have slipped away.

Schorger was also known for his public service, philanthropy and leadership in other key conservation organizations

such as the American Ornithologist's Union and the National Audubon Society. He served on the Wisconsin State Conservation Commission (now the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Board) and as President of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Art and Letters.

Using his patent royalties and business investments, he contributed to many conservation, literary and civic programs. A lover of books, he donated his extensive personal library to the University and its Wildlife Department. He received many honors for his achievements and contributions from a variety of conservation organizations, civic groups and universities.



"Arlie William (Bill) Schorger, accomplished chemist, businessman and polymath, devoted the second half of his life and his accumulated wealth to natural history studies and conservation. Author of the definitive book on the Passenger Pigeon's extinction, he admonished us to 'hold onto that which we have, lest we shall never see the like again.'"

— Stanley Temple