

## Quotes from Frances (1907-1998) & Frederick (1909-1990) Hamerstrom

FRANCES: “My parents were very much against the idea of me getting out. They didn't want me to have anything to do with creepy crawly animals. When I was 11 years old, however, I had bird and mammal specimens in the National Museum. Those people didn't know that it was just a little girl sending in specimens. I hid some guns secretly so that I could continue to collect specimens. I had a BB gun, then a .22, and then a 20-gauge shotgun. You see, I was raised very strictly. I had a governess and tutors and rather powerful parents, aunts, and grandmothers. They all tried to force this little girl to have the proper skills of a real lady so that she could become an international hostess and play the piano. I had lessons in almost everything: walking, talking, dancing, tennis, horseback riding, skiing, lace-making, knitting. You name it—there were lessons. I couldn't go out and do just anything; there always had to be a lesson. And so I pursued my real interests in secret. I climbed out of my window and slept in the woods at night and got back with my specimens in time to be awakened in the morning.”



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FREDERICK: “When Leopold accepted us [as graduate students], our research headquarters was up here about eight miles from this Plainfield house. We used our car because prairie-chicken research required a lot of automobile travel. For instance, we had to check a 30-mile trap line twice a day. We only went down to Madison for seminars and periodic consultations with Leopold. We had \$50 a month for our food, shelter, mileage, and everything else we wanted to splurge on.

“Leopold had a wonderful relationship with his students. He'd come up and stay in these abandoned farmhouses, and we'd sit outside if it was warm enough, otherwise around the stove. We'd develop ideas. Leopold formulated his 'land ethic' and was writing *A Sand County Almanac* while we were his students. He gave us a lot of his time. He'd come up every autumn and go hunting with us.”

FRANCES: “Leopold was superb. He knew how to reduce concepts to simple principles, and he knew how to communicate. All of his students had to write, give public talks, and give radio talks; we couldn't get by only doing good biological work. I got my master's under Leopold. I was the only woman who ever got a degree under him. He never held my sex against me.”

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FRANCES: “I think the real land ethic we need to consider is: What are we leaving to our children? People must learn to look farther ahead. I try to look 300 years ahead in my thinking.... I think the greatest hazard we face is overpopulation. I feel very deeply about this. I think that we have got to learn not to overpopulate the world. We decided that in 1935 the world was overcrowded and to have only two children. I keep trying to get in my two-bits worth on such matters. I'll walk right up to a pregnant woman

with two babies in the laundromat and ask her if she knows about birth control. I do everything I can. I try to get in the overpopulation message in everything I write. I think that we have got to be hard right now because it's kind in the long run both to our earth and to people."

FREDERICK: "We mustn't look at our species as being apart from the rest of nature, and most particularly, we must rid ourselves of the notion that we are not subject to its rules. We damn well are. We should know that and live by it. If we continue to exploit our natural resources ... with little regard for the consequences, it certainly doesn't look very good for tomorrow, and tomorrow is there."