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Robert L. Shipp

Gordon Gunter

Charles H. Lyles

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George Armytage Rounsefell 1905-1976

After "retirement", George Rounsefell planned to devote his efforts to publication of "Northeast Gulf Science". He was not able to see the first issue go to press. Therefore, there should be little question as to why Volume 1, Number 1, begins with a memorial to him.

George Armytage Rounsefell was born in Alaska. Before he was 20, he had begun his fishery studies that spanned more than a half century and most of North America.

It would be inappropriate for me, who knew him but a tiny fraction of his life, to comment at length on him as a fishery scientist and as an individual. Suffice to say that during this last decade "Doc" provided our "younger team" with a model that both amazed and challenged. His productivity never required apology due to age. Furthermore, that barrier of years never impeded development of friendship, warmth and mutual respect.

For a truer testament of Doc's place in our scientific society, his career experience and 89 publications speak for themselves. A complete list follows this memorial. In addition, Dr. Gordon Gunter and Mr. Charles H. Lyles have kindly provided the following two personal, unedited cameos of George Armytage Rounsefell.

—Robert L. Shipp

George Rounsefell - An Appreciation

By

Gordon Gunter
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

George A. Rounsefell was willing to take a stand on most questions and he

was never backward about stating his views. Therefore he hassled with a good many people and I was one of them. Nevertheless, we maintained a mutual self-respect and cooperated whenever we could to the end of his life. What I liked was the fact that he was a good fishery man and he worked hard. He mixed himself in quickly with several fishery projects on the Gulf Coast and in his own way he benefited them all. He saw quickly that there was not much to the high seas fishery and that all of the important matters stemmed from the inshore shallows and the Continental Shelf. One of his last reports concerned a design for a fishway for the proposed Sutton Lake Lock and Dam on the Apalachicola River.

When Rounsefell came to the Gulf Coast he liked it and he expected to stay. However, when the federal Fisheries Service saw fit to remove Albert Collier from the directorship of the Galveston Laboratory and replace him with Rounsefell, the first Collier knew was when it was ineptly announced in an open staff meeting of the Laboratory. A long series of similar inept moves, some of which I watched for over 45 years has caused the relative decline of this branch of the Government, which should be big and strong and flourishing. Be that as it may, the whole thing did not set well with Collier's friends both in and out of the Service and they took it out on Rounsefell. I finally became convinced not too long ago by people who were in the know at the time, that Rounsefell had nothing to do with the way the administrative change was presented in Galveston. Even so he bore the blame for it and was handicapped during his whole administration there. When the animus against him had built up for that and other reasons until he was relegated to the innocuous position of editor and

assigned to California, Rounsefell resigned after nearly 40 years with the Service.

He remained on the Gulf coast and was employed from 1963 to 1975 by the University of Alabama variously as Professor of Biology, Marine Biology, Marine Science and Director of the Alabama Marine Resources Laboratory, and the Marine Science Institute of the University. During this time he published 24 papers and research reports and encyclopedia articles; he also published five book reviews, and gave two addresses and four special reports to various commissions. Finally in 1975 right after retirement from the University he published his major text, *Ecology, Utilization, and Management of Marine Fisheries*, which is undoubtedly the leading American text on this subject.

In summary, George Rounsefell worked hard and thought deeply and he never went about trying to get ahead by being a big buddy to anybody. He stated his view and defended it. He came to the South in 1957 and was on the Gulf Coast for 20 years, where he contributed a great deal to fishery science and scholarship. He was a scion of the Stanford fisheries school and he was a good disciple and representative of the school in fisheries and academic circles on the Gulf Coast. He was recognized as a world authority on fisheries because of his published works. His influence will be felt for a long time to come.

He was born in Alaska and raised in the State of Washington and was finally laid to rest in Washington, Vermont, his wife's home, for as she told me at his funeral, "We were always fisheries people and had no roots." This highlights one of the sacrifices that fishery people have to make. George Rounsefell paid that sacrifice and did well by the world.

George A. Rounsefell

By

Charles H. Lyles

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

I was employed by the old Bureau of Fisheries, Department of Commerce in 1938 in a position to gather statistical data on the fisheries in New York and New England. Shortly after entering on duty I met George Rounsefell. I found we shared a common belief, that in order to manage our fisheries we must develop an adequate data base. This not only meant statistics on catch and effort but such other basic research as life history, stock identification, predation inter-relationship, etc. George was very blunt and factual about the need for these requirements and he also believed that you must have a fundamental understanding of mathematics to properly evaluate these data.

During the ensuing 35 years our paths crossed frequently and each time we served in the same general area I found George most helpful. While serving in the North Atlantic with the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, George Rounsefell, who was then at Woods Hole, was most helpful with the Commission problems. Later when he was transferred to the Galveston, Texas laboratory, I too, was in the Gulf area. In that position he was given an impossible task and was not fully backed in carrying out the mandate.

The unfortunate matter in no way diminished his zeal as a fishery research scientist. He was indeed a fisheries man. He never lacked the courage to tell one of poor quality work and he was adept at it since his standards were high. On the other hand, I found his criticisms

extremely helpful for I knew he was in reality only offering help.

The fisheries world has lost a tireless, capable and honest researcher and many of us in fisheries work have lost a true friend.

George A. Rounsefell

CAREER EXPERIENCE

- 1924: Scientific Assistant, California Fish and Game Department, Terminal Island Laboratory - albacore and sardines.
- 1925-34: In charge of Alaska herring investigations, U.S. Bureau of Fisheries.
- 1934-38: In charge of Fraser River salmon investigations, U.S. Bureau of Fisheries.
- 1938-44: In charge of groundfish abundance, Cambridge, Mass., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 1944-45: Assistant Coordinator, Defense Fisheries Administration, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.
- 1946-48: Chief of Branch of Anadromous Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- 1948-51: Chief of Atlantic Salmon Investigations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Orono, Maine.
- 1951-52: Reviewer of biological reports and conducted independent research. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.
- 1953-54: Leader of Fishery Mission to Turkey, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- 1955-56: Reviewer of biological reports and conducted independent research. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.
- 1957-63: Director of U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory, Galveston, Texas.
- 1963-64: Professor of Marine Science, University of Alabama.
- 1966-69: Director, Marine Sciences Institute, Professor of Marine Sciences Institute, and Professor of Marine Science, University of Alabama.
- 1969-75: Professor of Marine Science, Marine Sciences Institute, University of Alabama.

1973-75: Professor of Marine Biology, Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium, Dauphin Island, Alabama.

1975-76: Professor Emeritus, University of Alabama.

PUBLICATIONS

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- fishery, by George A. Rounsefell and George B. Kelez. U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, Special Report, 49 p., 12 figures, 1935, Washington.
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 15. 1941 Haddock tagging. Year Book of the Fishing Masters' Association, Boston, pp. 15.
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