
January 1997

In Memoriam: Samuel A. Grimes, 1906-1996

Peggy Powell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

Recommended Citation

Powell, Peggy (1997) "In Memoriam: Samuel A. Grimes, 1906-1996," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 25 : Iss. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol25/iss2/12>

This Field Observations is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

IN MEMORIAM

SAMUEL A. GRIMES, 1906-1996



Sam A. Grimes in the early 1950's.

Samuel A. Grimes was known worldwide as a pioneer in bird photography and an expert field ornithologist although his career was in photo-engraving. He was born 5 May 1906 in Carlisle, Kentucky, and moved to Jacksonville in 1912, where he died on 2 Nov. 1996.

His interest in birds began at an early age, and he conducted one of the first Christmas Bird Counts in Jacksonville on a bicycle, recording 39 species on Christmas Day, 1924. Long days in the field produced the numerous photographs that appeared in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *World Book Encyclopedia*, *National Geographic*, the *Bent Life Histories*, and many other publications. Kodak sent him their early color films to test, and his shot of a Roseate Spoonbill with young was the first color photograph of a bird published in *Bird Lore* in 1937.

Sam and Glen Chandler found the first known Cattle Egret nest in North America at King's Bar Rookery, Lake Okeechobee, on 5 May 1953. In the early 1950s he made one of the last accepted sightings of Ivory-billed Woodpecker in west Florida. Over a hundred of his outstanding photographs were published in 1958 as *An Album of Southern Birds*, a book that is a collector's item today. Most are of birds at the nest, a testament to his great skill at finding even such difficult nests as that of the Black Rail.

Sam had joined the American Ornithologists Union in 1925 and was made an elective member in 1951. He was also a member of Wilson Ornithological Society since 1924 and a long time member of National Audubon Society. He was a charter member of the Florida Ornithological Society and in 1979 was voted their first Honorary Member. Sam became a charter member of the Board of Directors of Tall Timbers Research Station in Tallahassee in 1958 and later served as President of the Board. Hundreds of his slides have been deposited there.

On his birthday in 1984, Sam was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of North Florida for his many contributions to Florida ornithology. As he stood on the platform in his gown, two ospreys, the mascot of UNF, circled overhead calling in a fitting tribute.

In later years, Sam turned to recording bird songs in the field. His favorite bird was the mockingbird, and from over two miles of taped song, he produced a phonograph record, *The Vocally Versatile Mockingbird*. Each year he made some of his best pictures into a full color calendar which he distributed widely to his friends. Sam was a kind and modest man, never dwelling on his own achievements, but always advising and encouraging those who were truly interested in the birds he loved.—**Peggy Powell**, 2965 Forest Circle, Jacksonville, Florida 32257.