

## **Dr MINTER JACKSON WESTFALL, Jr: A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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A brief biographic outline and appreciation of odonatological work of M.J. WESTFALL, Jr, Emeritus Professor of Zoology (University of Florida, Gainesville), Director of the SIO International Odonata Research Institute (Gainesville), Member of Honour and Past President of the International Odonatological Society, Chairman of the SIO National Office in the United States, Editor of *Selysia*, Associate Editor of *Odonatologica*, etc., are followed by an annotated checklist of new taxa he has introduced in Odonata, and by his bibliography (1936-1985). Most of his odonatological work is devoted to the fauna of the New World, particularly in the areas of systematics and taxonomy, life-history studies, and larval morphology. During the past few decades, his work and his personality have significantly contributed to the popularisation of dragonflies and greatly influenced the development of odonatology in the United States.

It may sound ironic, but work on Odonata taxonomy will be accelerated now that Professor Minter J. Westfall has retired. I say this because certain job responsibilities can hinder us from accomplishing as much as we desire in our chosen field. While Minter Westfall's research at the University of Florida expressly involved Odonata, his teaching duties in biology and entomology limited the amount of time he could devote to dragonflies. The late-night phrase he used most during the years I worked with him was, "If there were only more hours in a day!" More hours are now free for dragonfly study, as Minter officially retired from the teaching profession on April 30, 1985, culminating a 38-year career at the University of Florida.

MINTER JACKSON WESTFALL, Jr was born on January 28, 1916, in Orlando, Florida. His father was a teacher. Minter grew up with a great fondness for natural history and animals, especially birds. At the age of 20 he was the youngest person to become a U.S. Game Warden. He worked at the Brevard

Reservation on Merritt Island, studying and banding birds, especially young pelicans, in the area now occupied by the Kennedy Space Center. His only companion was a dog which was acquired by a plea from a radio announcer who knew that Minter was alone on the island. After this he worked for the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit in southern Alabama for 8 months, banding mourning doves and other birds. He then returned home to attend Rollins College, and with the help of his parents banded birds in Orlando. This early work on birds provided the material for his first four publications. His interest in birds has stayed with him throughout his life, and his knowledge of birds and their biology warrants him the title ornithologist.

That dragonflies came to occupy such a large part of his life is due mainly to influence by EDWARD M. DAVIS, then Director of the Thomas R. Baker Museum of Natural Science at Rollins College, in Winter Park, Florida. Although Minter had been awarded a scholarship in engineering because of his excellent academic record, he elected to major in Biology (Pre-Med). While working toward his undergraduate degree at Rollins College, he amassed and curated a very fine collection of mollusk shells. He also collected insects.

Davis, who had been collecting dragonflies for several years, kindled Minter's interest in Odonata. He told Minter that collecting early spring blue enallagmas would be a worthy endeavor. Minter took this advice to heart and in March, 1941, discovered a new species that inhabits sandy, central Florida lakes, which he later named *Enallagma davisii*. While he was enrolled at Rollins, Minter continued as a leader in scouting. He served as counselor in charge of the Nature Workshop for four summers at Camp



Fig 1. The earliest portrait of Minter in the S.I.O. Archives. — (Courtesy of Mrs. M.L. Westfall).



Fig. 2. As a Game Warden, at the Brevard Reservation on Merritt Island, 1936. — (Courtesy of Mrs. M.L. Westfall).



Figs 3-7. From Minter's S.I.O. album: (3) With Drs S. Asahina (left) and M.A. Lieftinck during the Second International Symposium of Odonatology, Karlsruhe (Sept. 20-23, 1973); — (4) With Dr T.T. Macan, in the Symposium Office during the Third International Symposium of Odonatology, Lancaster (July 14-18, 1975); — (5) With Dr J. Belle, at the formal Banquet of "Minter's" (Fourth International) Symposium, Gainesville (August 1-5, 1977); — (6) Starting off at the famous Tubing Party on the Ichetucknee River, Florida, during the Fourth Symposium; — (7) With Margaret, waiting to board the bus for the Banquet of the Fifth International Symposium, Montreal (August 5-11), 1979). — (Photo: Figs 3-4: B. Kiauta; — Fig. 5: R. Rudolph; — Fig. 6: J.M. Van Brink; — Fig. 7: M. Kiauta).

Carolina, near Brevard, North Carolina, inspiring many boys to develop nature study as a hobby. During this time he found opportunity to feed his appetite for knowledge of Odonata. One of his favorite stories involves the young boys and *Tachopteryx thoreyi*. He had told the boys that for their insect studies, there

would be extra credit for anyone who could capture an adult *Tachopteryx*. One day while the group was walking a trail, a *Tachopteryx* perched on one boy's head. Minter called to him and said, "On your head, a *Tachopteryx*!" The boy froze, and it was pretty clear what he was thinking. Down over his own head came the boy's net, and he captured the dragonfly! One wonders whether this experience was as memorable for the youth as it was for the counselor.

E.M. Davis introduced Minter to Dr JAMES G. NEEDHAM, who made frequent winter trips to Florida, usually staying at Archbold Biological Station. At that time, Dr Needham was working on a new book covering the Anisoptera of North America. Needham was so impressed with the young Westfall that he invited him to come to Cornell University, attend graduate school and help with preparing the Manual.

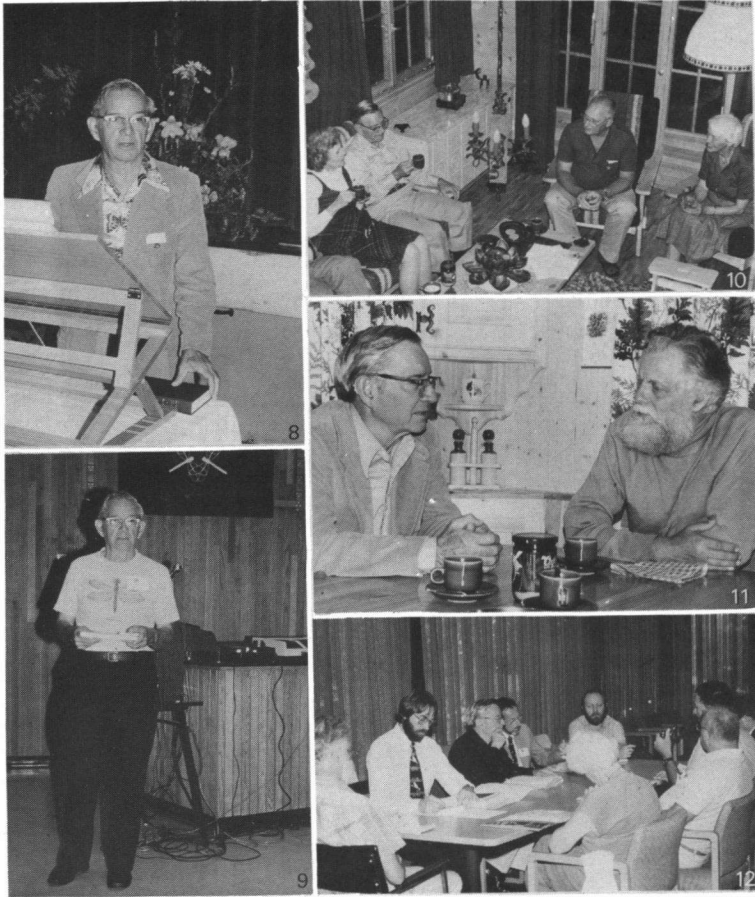
Minter received the Bachelor of Science degree from Rollins College in 1941. Shortly afterward, he moved to New York and entered graduate study at Cornell. He taught various courses in biology for his financial support, and started working on photographs, keys, and descriptions for the Manual. In 1943 he joined the U.S. Army. He served limited duty as a medical technician because of an injury to his left eye when he was 7 years old. He was honorably discharged from the Armed Service in 1944 and promptly returned to Cornell to resume work toward his doctoral degree. His research problem was an ecological study of a woodlot, with emphasis on squirrels and birds. He chose a problem which required a minimum of microscopic work because of the constant strain of examining so many slides in the Army. He had originally proposed to do a systematic study of the arrangement of spines on the legs of various dragonfly groups. Work on the Manual also continued. The Ph.D. degree was conferred in August, 1947.

While at Cornell, he met MARGARET L. SHEPHERD, a native of Ithaca and also a student at Cornell University. She was especially attracted to him because of his outstanding ethical character. They were married September 29, 1945. In 1947, he published the description of *Macromia margarita* in her honor, from specimens he had collected six years earlier at the Little River near Brevard, North Carolina.

The Westfalls moved to Florida in the fall of 1947, as Minter was hired as an assistant professor of Biology at the University of Florida by Dr CHARLES FRANCIS BYERS. His research duties were to continue work on Florida Odonata which Byers had abandoned. A few years later he named *Telebasis byersi* in tribute to Dr Byers for his studies on Florida Odonata. However, much was yet to be done in conjunction with Needham in order to complete the Manual. Minter worked painstakingly to finish the work and to rid the manuscript of errors and to add many details. So as not to delay publication further, the manuscript was sent to the University of California Press and the book printed in 1955. His excellent work on photographing wings and various taxon-

omically important structures are to be highly commended. It has been a desire of Minter's for years to revise the Manual because of the large amount of information and taxonomic changes in the Anisoptera that have accrued since 1955.

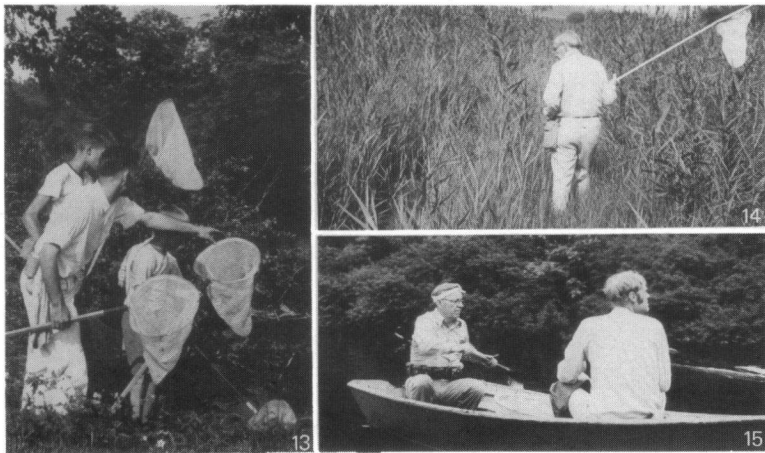
Minter's research on Odonata has moved in two major directions, in addition to Florida Odonata, since the 1955 Manual was finished: (1) writing a Manual of



Figs 8-12. From Minter's S.I.O. album: (8) Giving a paper at the Sixth International Symposium of Odonatology, Chur (August 17-21, 1981); — (9) The same, Seventh International Symposium of Odonatology, Calgary (August 14-21, 1983); — (10-11) With Margaret, Jean-Guy Pilon and Janny Van Brink (Fig. 10) and with Philip Corbet (Fig. 11) at the Kiautas' home nr Chur, after the Chur meetings; — (12) President of S.I.O., chairing a meeting of the Council, Calgary, attended by (clockwise around the table): P.S. Corbet, G. Pritchard, M.J. Westfall, M.J. Parr, J. Legrand, S. Asahina (almost invisible), B. Kiauta, J.-G. Pilon, and J.M. Van Brink. — (All photographs: M. Kiauta).

the Zygoptera of North America, and (2) contributing to the taxonomy and faunistic knowledge of Neotropical Odonata. The book on the damselflies of North America, which is sorely needed, is in the final stages of preparation. Coverage is similar to that done for the Anisoptera. Much research was needed on the damselflies to bring knowledge to a point where keys, figures, descriptions and distributions could be presented. Larvae especially had been ignored, as genera and many species were unknown. Minter travelled to the southwestern United States, concentrating on Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1956 and 1958, to Cuba in 1959, to Jamaica in 1960 and to Haiti in 1960. On these trips he collected thousands of adult damselflies and his rearing success was phenomenal. Adults of both sexes of many poorly known species were collected, and the unknown larvae of genera such as *Microneura*, *Phylolestes*, and *Diceratobasis* were positively associated. Margaret accompanied him to Cuba, and her urging him to explore a certain small, densely overgrown stream in the Trinidad Mountains was the reason he discovered *Microneura caligata*. He collected many mated pairs and reared several larvae. These discoveries plus all the distribution data will make the Zygoptera Manual an extremely useful and valuable addition to the North American literature.

In the 1970s, many trips were taken, usually with students, to the panhandle of Florida, as collecting there became increasingly rewarding. Many new records for Florida resulted, some of little known species such as *Stylurus potentulus*. I was



Figs 13-15. Dragonfly collecting at every opportunity: (13) Nature Workshop, collecting with scouts at Camp Brevard, North Carolina, early 1940s; — (14) In the Nature Reserve "Ruggeller Ried", Principality of Liechtenstein, looking for *Somatochlora flavomaculata* (1981); — (14) With Ulf Norling, in an attempt to collect *Aeshna constricta* exuviae on a lake in the area of the Field Biological Station of the University of Montreal (1979). — (Fig. 13 courtesy of Mrs. M.L. Westfall; photo: Figs 14-15 M. Kiauta).

fortunate to go with him a number of times. On one occasion, we were walking a sandy trail near Torreya State Park in Liberty County. I looked ahead and saw a large dragonfly coming directly toward us. "Here comes a *Macromia*!" I yelled, and fixed all attention on the path of the rapidly approaching dragonfly. I stood

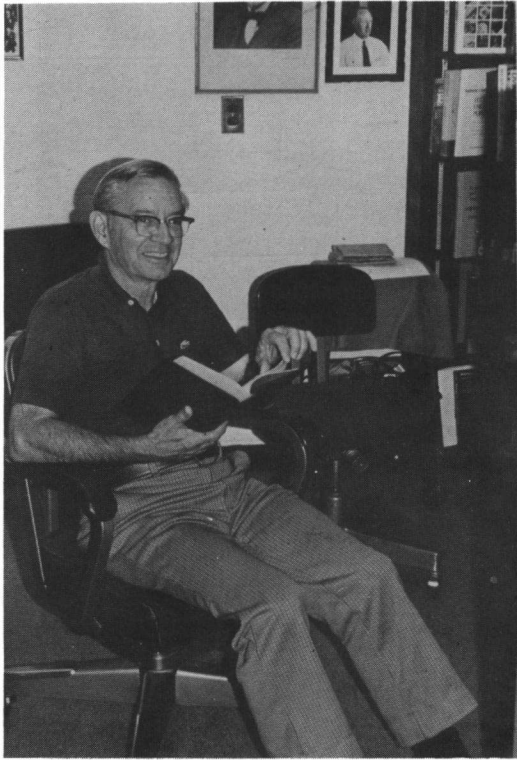


Fig. 16. Director of the S.I.O. International Odonata Research Institute in his office, with the portraits of Calvert, Fraser, etc. on the walls. (On the date the present issue of *Odonatologica* had to go to press, our Odonata Research Institute was hardly one month in operation, therefore we did not yet have the chance to acquire a formal portrait of the Director at the spot. This photograph was taken by M. Kiauta, in 1978, in Minter's old office at Bartram Hall of the University of Florida).

facing it squarely and readied my net for a back-handed swing, as it was bearing slightly to my left. I had forgotten completely that Minter was to my left, and let go with a furious swing, the kind necessary to nail a speeding *Macromia* from behind. I hit Minter full blast, knocking his glasses off and almost knocking him out, I think. Or so I feared. The embarrassment of the moment left me at a loss for words. Needless to say, the *Macromia* escaped. For a while I wondered if I would make it through graduate school.

Minter's interest in neotropical Odonata began long before he was able to collect in the Neotropics himself. In 1967 however, he traveled to Costa Rica, financed by the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society. He stayed there for almost three weeks, accompanied by his son David. He greatly furthered his knowledge of the Central American fauna, and collected several new

species, provided new life histories, and added many species to the country's list. In 1977 he went to Guatemala to begin research on the feasibility of using damselfly larvae for the biological control of black flies which transmit parasites

that cause blindness in native workers. Although this part of the control project was later halted, Minter managed to come home with a goodly number of Odonata for the collection. In 1980 he was able to go for the first time to South America. Accompanied by Margaret, he traveled to Venezuela, staying from early September to the middle of October. Many profitable field trips yielded specimens of Odonata, but he also gave two lectures on curating and taxonomy at the Universidad Centro Occidental at Barquisimeto, Lara. He then went to Ecuador, collecting first in the highlands, especially near Quito, and in November at lower jungle elevations near Limoncocha. Two highlights of this trip were the first-time associations of larvae of the genera *Polythore* and *Heteragrion*.

But even more than his own travels to the Neotropics, Minter's study of materials collected by others, his familiarity with the literature, and his urging and helping others to visit Central and South American countries has greatly furthered our knowledge of the neotropical odonate fauna; he is one of very few such authorities.

In regard to S.I.O., Minter Westfall became involved early. He traveled to Karlsruhe, West Germany, in 1973 to attend the Second International Symposium of Odonatology, sponsored by the newly formed S.I.O. He has attended every one of the international symposia since then. In 1977 he organized the Fourth International Symposium of Odonatology, held in Gainesville, Florida, and hosted by the University of Florida. He has been S.I.O.'s North American representative, has served as an associate editor of *ODONATOLOGICA* and is on the editorial board of *NOTULAE ODONATOLOGICAE*. He was elected the society's President for 1983-1985, and has been the leading force in the recent establishment (August, 1985) of the S.I.O. INTERNATIONAL ODONATA RESEARCH INSTITUTE, located at present in Gainesville. This institution will serve as a base for odonatologists from all over the world to study all phases of dragonfly biology, and will house S.I.O.'s collections, library, and archives.

Minter took over the editorship of the newsletter *SELYSIA* in 1970, when Dr B. ELWOOD MONTGOMERY, the newsletter's originator, could no longer continue it. He was assisted by Dr CLIFFORD JOHNSON until 1978 when Margaret became his helper in typing, proofreading and arranging the articles. *SELYSIA* was made the official newsletter of S.I.O. in 1984, still compiled and edited by the Westfalls. Their undertaking of this task further attests to their dedication to odonatology.

Minter has received many awards and honors during his professional career. At Rollins College he was elected a member of the Rollins Key Society, the highest honor for superior scholarship. At Cornell University, he was awarded the Simon Henry Gage Fellowship in Animal Biology, worth \$500 plus free tuition. He was elected to Sigma Xi at the University of Florida. He is a lifetime member of the Florida Audubon Society, and is a member of the Florida Entomological Society, and of the Entomological Society of America. He was

made a Member of Honour in *Societas Internationalis Odonatologica* in 1979 at the Fifth International Symposium of Odonatology in Montreal, and was also on the Committee of Honour there.

To work with Minter Westfall is to be at the frontier of odonatology, yet it's a journey through an almost legendary past. To know him is to have experienced the remoteness of a southern Appalachian stream and the sting of its cold water in your ankles, yet it means knowing the heat and humidity of peninsular Florida and the weariness of a weed-choked pond. It means arranging series of specimens to search for minute differences, spreading out volumes of literature, then looking over the specimens again and yearning for a larger series. It's the power of paradichlorobenzene taking you on late-night excursions through more specimens, papers and an exchange of yawns, perhaps winding up 100 miles from the original destination but learning something on the way. It's the excitement of planning to collect some rare and poorly known species, sharing a small camper



Fig. 17. A recent family photograph: Carol, Holly, Margaret, David, Minter, with the nine (grand)children. — (Courtesy Mrs. M.L. Westfall).

in northwest Florida, and listening to stories of famous odonatologists. It's dreaming of collecting in the tropics when there are exams to give, deadlines to meet, and ever-needy general biology students to counsel. Most of all, he shows by example that there is no substitute for hard work and perseverance. Through the years I have found in him a teacher, an advisor, and a friend.

Minter Westfall, whose name is almost synonymous in the scientific world with the word dragonfly, is a devoted family man. He and Margaret have a son, DAVID, and two daughters, CAROL and HOLLY. They have all collected dragonflies. There are now nine grandchildren. Minter's thoughts and actions are governed by his devotion to Christianity. He is a member of the Community Evangelical Free Church in Gainesville, where he holds the office of Elder. He retired after 38 years as Faculty Advisor in the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship at Cornell University and at the University of Florida.

Retirement can be a time of stagnation or a time of vitalization. With Minter Westfall's energy and high standards, it will be a very productive time. There are

many papers to be prepared for publication, especially descriptions of new species and larvae, and, of course, finishing the Manual of Zygoptera. His office is now in the Doyle Connor Building, provided by the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (F.S.C.A.) of the Division of Plant Industry. The F.S.C.A. Odonata Collection, which he has so greatly expanded over the years and to which he has given most of his personal collection, is housed there. Besides continuing his research, he will teach a course in the Biological Sciences Curriculum one semester a year. We in S.I.O. wish him a most joyous 70th birthday and the best in the fruitful years ahead.

**ANNOTATED LIST OF TAXA INTRODUCED IN ODONATA BY Dr M.J. WESTFALL, Jr**  
(up to and inclusive of December 31, 1985)<sup>1</sup>

**Protoneuridae**

*Protoneura viridis*, 1964b: holotype ♂, Virgin Islands, FSCA

**Coenagrionidae**

*Enallagma davis*, 1943a: holotype ♂, Florida, FSCA

*Philogenia leonora*, 1956a: holotype ♂, Panama, FSCA

*P. zeteki*, 1956a: holotype ♂, Panama, FSCA

*Telebasis byersi*, 1957a: holotype ♂, Florida, FSCA

**Gomphidae**

*Gomphus ozarkensis*, 1975b: holotype ♂, Arkansas, FSCA

*G. septima*, 1956b: holotype ♂, Alabama, FSCA

**Macromiidae**

*Marcromia margarita*, 1947: holotype ♂, North Carolina, CU

**Libellulidae**

*Celithemis bertha leonora*, 1952: holotype ♂, Florida, EBW

*Libellula needhami*, 1943b: holotype ♂, Florida, CU

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<sup>1</sup> Museum collection acronyms: CU: Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; — EBW: E.B. Williamson Collection, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; — FSCA: Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville.

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