

Arthur Irving Ortenburger
1898-1961

Dr. A. I. Ortenburger, until his retirement in 1958, had been a member of the faculty in the Department of Zoology at the University of Oklahoma since 1924. He progressed from the rank of Assistant Professor to a Professorship which he held with distinction along with other appointments such as Curator of the Museum of Zoology.

Dr. Ortenburger received his Ph.D. degree in 1925 from the University of Michigan where he had done his undergraduate work. From there he went to the American Museum of Natural History in New York where he remained until coming to the University of Oklahoma.

In the early days of his tenure at the University of Oklahoma, he directed all of the field work for the Oklahoma Biological Survey and the basic collections of vertebrates and many of the invertebrates in the Stovall Museum at the University of Oklahoma were made under his direction. He was the author of some 150 scientific manuscripts based on his studies in the areas of Herpetology and Zoo-Geography.

As a member of the staff of zoology at the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Ortenburger was famous for his course in comparative anatomy and many medical students as well as professional biologists over the country remember him with much affection for the excellent courses which he gave not only in comparative anatomy, but embryology and zoo-geography as well.

Dr. Ortenburger was an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa, a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the American Society of Zoologists, the Ecological Society of America, and the Linnaean Society. He was a Fellow in the Michigan Academy of Science and the Oklahoma Academy of Science. He served the latter as Secretary and Vice President. He was a member of Sigma Xi, National Honorary Scientific Society, and Phi Sigma, National Honorary Biological Society. He served for many years as Secretary of the latter society, and edited its publications.

Dr. Ortenburger was married to the late Roberta Deam Ortenburger, also an alumnus of the University of Michigan, and who for many years taught the famous Zoology 17 in marriage relations at the University of Oklahoma.

The Ortenburgers had traveled extensively in the United States, Mexico and Canada and since his retirement in 1958 they had made their home on Galiano Island, B.C. It was there that he had the opportunity to study the Pacific whaling industry and do some work on the embryology of whales. Their cabin was located so that he was able to observe the sea at all times and he spent his last years observing the vertebrate faunas moving in and out of the waters of Vancouver.

J. Teague Self