

This is a PDF version of PECKHAMIA 2(1): 1-2, December, 1980. Pagination of the original document has been retained. Editor's note (39.1): No author was associated with this article. It should be attributed to G. B. Edwards, editor of Peckhamia at the time.

1

ELIZABETH GIFFORD PECKHAM: OBITUARY

Since the Peckham Society was named after the early pioneers of jumping spider classification, it is only proper that any relevant information on their lives be included in this publication. A short biography of the couple, primarily on George Peckham, was published by Dr. David B. Richman in Peckhamia 1(1). Dr. B. J. Kaston kindly supplied further information on Elizabeth Peckham in Peckhamia 1(2). Ms. Joan P. Jass, Assistant Curator of Invertebrate Zoology, Milwaukee Public Museum, has been equally gracious by providing us with a copy of Elizabeth Peckham's obituary, from the Milwaukee Journal, February 13, 1940 (less than a year after she had corresponded with Dr. Kaston).

Led Suffrage Fight in State

Mrs. E. G. Peckham, Dead at 85, Also was Librarian, Worker in Science

2

The death of Mrs. Elizabeth Gifford Peckham recalls the fight she led in Wisconsin for woman's suffrage in the early 1900's and the Recognition Milwaukee received as an entomological research center through studies made by her and her late husband George W. Peckham, former superintendent of schools here.

Funeral services for Mrs. Peckham, who died Sunday of pneumonia, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at Forest Home chapel. She was 85. Her husband died in 1914.

Mrs. Peckham battled for woman's rights before legislative committees for many years. Her daughter, now Mrs. J. William Gross, a county civil service commissioner, used to accompany her to Madison. Gray haired and only slightly over five feet tall, Mrs. Peckham attracted much attention as she spoke. She was known as the "little woman with the vigorous voice."

Aided Husband's Research

Mrs. Peckham assisted her husband in his research work on spiders and wasps. They collaborated in scores of scientific papers and books on the insects. Noted biologists and zoologists consulted them.

Born in Milwaukee, Mrs. Peckham attended the old Seventh Ward school here and was graduated from Vassar college in 1876. Her father was Charles Gifford, Milwaukee's first landscape architect, who came here from Hudson, N.Y. She was the first local president of the early organization of college women and for many years was a member of the national women's suffrage board.

Mrs. Peckham was one of this city's first librarians.

Old-Fashioned and Comfortable

"The library used to be over the old Academy of Music on Milwaukee street," she recalled a few years ago. "There was a big base burner stove in the center, which attracted the youth of the neighborhood. There was always a crowd of boys on cold winter nights."

"Records of books issued were kept in a huge volume with many entries and erasures. Although everything was simple, primitive and old-fashioned, there was a cozy, comfortable air about the library."

Mr. Peckham was principal of the old East Division high school, and in 1892 was elected superintendent of schools, a position he held for four years before resigning to become city librarian. He was librarian from 1900 to 1910. Peckham Junior high school, built in 1927, was named in his honor.

Our thanks again to Ms. Joan P. Jass for sharing this information with us.