Short Notes

HISTORY OF A MT. DAVIS BOG

by Paul McMillan
(2155 Old Patagonia Rd., Nogales, AZ 85621)

An extremely interesting bog, now unfortunately flooded, existed 15 miles from my birthplace and former home in Meyersdale, Somerset Co., Penna. It was 15 miles from Meyersdale at the foot of Mt. Davis, (3,000 ft. plus), Penna.'s highest mountain. It occupied a small portion of a much larger marsh which was nearly two miles long in a deep valley between two parallel ridges. It, too, was considered to be a Cretaceous relict bog and bordered the central stream of the entire huge marsh, Glade Run. The ecological conditions here were quite different though than those at the Chalk Hill Bog. The bog was on the 2,500 ft. level and this was considered to be the same level as the remnants of the old Schooley Peneplain of the Cretaceous in this area. This bog harbored a large population of *Sarracenia purpurea gibbosa* which was natural and not introduced, abundant *Drosera rotundifolia* and *Utricularia geminiscapa* and many other rare bog plants and orchids. The presence of the coastal plain (essentially) aroid, *Orontium aquaticum,* the Golden Club at its highest known station in the Penna. Appalachians was considered a strong indication floristically of the peneplain nature or origin of the bog. A friend of mine, Dr. Alta Schrock, did her master's and doctoral thesis on the ecology, flora and origins of this bog. Some sections were extremely dangerous and long poles in excess of 12 feet could be inserted into dark pools in some quaking mat sections and not begin to touch bottom. This bog was very deep and evidently was derived from a small lake or large pond with shallower edges leading out into the sedimentary, tall grass marsh adjoining it. At one end, it had a large colony of dead trees which had been destroyed by a *rising* water table. This very peculiar situation gave Dr. Schrock one of her first keys to the unique set of ecological factors that were operating in this particular bog.

Dr. Schrock found, in taking core samples of the bog soil in the Mt. Davis Bog that layers of white sand occurred intermittently with layers of sphagnum peat and the indications of her studies on pollen analysis and other factors were that the springs feeding the bog from underground periodically varied their water output and raised the water level in the bog high enough and often enough to kill off encroaching climax vegetation like red maples, hemlocks and shrubs like rhododendron which would have shaded and crowded out the carnivores and other typical bog plants. The layers of white sand between the peat layers indicated the increased force and volume of water flowing out of the feeding underground streams. Remains of large preserved tree trunks in the bog peat itself where these trees no longer survived showed how peculiar local conditions had operated over tremendous periods of time to preserve this bog for abnormaly long periods of time. The Western Penna. Botanical Society tried to purchase the bog as did Dr. Harned, a well-known deceased conservationist of the area but the owners of the whole marsh opted in favor of the dam in which many have subsequently drowned.

I mention all of these details just to illustrate how peculiar local factors can determine the ultimate longevity of a particular bog.