

Review of Kofalk's *No Woman Tenderfoot: Florence Merriam Bailey, Pioneer Naturalist*

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H. KOFALK. *No woman tenderfoot. Florence Merriam Bailey, pioneer naturalist*. Texas A & M University Press, College Station: 1989. Pp xx, 225, [2]; illustrated. Price: US\$19.95. ISBN: 0-89096-378-9.

Two traditions exist side by side in the literature of natural history: the scientific tradition, running through Linnaeus and Darwin to the evolutionary biologists of today, and the romantic tradition, passing from Gilbert White to John Burroughs and today's conservation and nature movements. The American naturalist Florence Merriam Bailey (1863–1947), the subject of this engaging biography, was one of those rare individuals who was at home in both traditions. In her early years Bailey was active in the crusade against feather hats, and we see her vigorous work “in the trenches” of Smith College and of Washington society. On the scientific side, as sister to C. Hart Merriam and as wife to Vernon Bailey, pioneer figures in the U.S. Biological Survey, Florence Bailey was an explorer of the American West, and her many expeditions provided material not only for her technical *Handbook of Birds of the Western United States* (1902) and her *Birds of New Mexico* (1928), but for dozens of travel and life history accounts in the popular press as well. Ample quotations from Bailey's writings give a vivid picture of the early West, and make it easy to understand why her works were appreciated by both professionals and amateurs.

The greatest weakness of this biography is that, unlike Bailey, its author is at home only in the romantic tradition. We are told on three occasions, for example, that the scientific method of bird study was to “shoot first and ask questions later,” a derogatory characterization Bailey would probably not have made inasmuch as her brother and husband were among the greatest collectors of their generation. Florence Bailey comes through as an admirable figure, but the manner in which her story is here told will sadly reinforce the prejudices that members of both the scientific and romantic traditions have toward each other today.

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