

A. B. Brooks

by George H. Breiding



Alonzo Beecher Brooks (May 6, 1873-May 16, 1944) was a conservationist and nature educator. He was born at French Creek and attended local one-room schools, completed a business course at West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1900, and received a bachelor's degree in agriculture at West Virginia University in 1912. He married Nellie R. Coburn on June 22, 1899. Brooks was a surveyor, 1890–1902; for two years assistant clerk of Upshur County; served as forester for the West Virginia Geological Survey, 1910–1911, and for the West Virginia Experiment Station, 1911–1916; a forest pathologist in West Virginia and New York, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1916–1921; and first chief state game warden for West Virginia, 1921–1928.

A. B. Brooks was part of a family of outstanding West Virginia naturalists, including his brothers, Fred and Earle, and nephew, Maurice. He is best remembered for his work as Oglebay Park naturalist, 1928–1942, where he established the Nature Leaders Training School in 1928. He wrote numerous publications related to forestry and natural history, most notably *Forestry and Wood Industries*, 1911, and *West Virginia Trees*, 1920. The Brooks Bird Club was named in his honor; Brooks Hall on WVU's main campus is a tribute to him and his brothers.