

# Annie Rivers Faver

BILL FAVER

Annie Rivers Faver lived most of her life in Richland County, S.C., within one-half mile of where she was born on 25 February 1909. Her childhood ramblings with her country-doctor father instilled an early love of the out-of-doors and an appreciation of flowers, butterflies, and birds. Love of reading poetry and history added to her skills in writing and in relating her birding enthusiasm to friends. It was her father who gave her the nickname "Toncie" because she was such a tiny girl.

Toncie's father was Wilfred Jeannerette Rivers, who spent some of his boyhood in Columbia when his father, William James Rivers, was professor of Greek Anthology and acting president of South Carolina College, now the University of South Carolina. Wilfred Rivers collected bird eggs, as did many boys of his time, and his descendants recently donated his specimens to the Charleston Museum. He also had a talent for sketching butterflies. Following graduation from Johns Hopkins, Dr. Rivers came to lower Richland County to practice medicine along with Doctors Hayne and Claytor. Toncie's mother was the former Annie Druscilla Wilson of Baltimore, Maryland.

In April 1931 Annie Rivers married William H. Faver, a merchant and oil distributor in Eastover. Their children are William H. (Bill) Faver Jr. and Anne, who married Gerald P. Wiener and now lives in El Paso, Texas.

The home in which Toncie Faver reared her children was on a hillside in lower Richland County in the sandhills above the fertile lands where the Congaree and Wateree Rivers come together. The swamps, fields, ponds, hardwoods, pines, shrubs, and hedge-rows offered varying habitats for wildflowers and birds. Toncie knew every corner of the area and guided many visitors and friends to new birding finds in the vicinity of Eastover. On the 10 acres of her homeplace, some 44 years of records of daily sightings and nestings attest to her diligence in observing bird life and migrations in her yard. The hillside of natural plantings, tall pines, poplars, gums, shrubs, and wildflowers was supplemented with bulbs and daylilies, hollies, and other berry-bearing shrubs to entice the birds. The spring and branch at the bottom of the hill—surrounded by sweet shrubs, wild azaleas, and ferns—was a warbler paradise!

The bird feeders were an important part of Annie Faver's sanctuary. Her "regulars" were recorded along with the special visitors, and many became the subjects of her regular weekly articles in the *Columbia Record* and the *Columbia State* newspapers. Her writings invited correspondence with other bird lovers, and many of their stories found their way into her articles. These interests led to the regular "Backyard Birding" feature in *The Chat*, which she also served as co-editor with Kay Curtis Sisson from mid-1953 through 1958.

Toncie loved to have visitors. She gladly entertained students, garden clubs, and anyone interested in knowing and appreciating birds. She presented many programs on birds for schools and organized and directed a Junior Audubon Club for Eastover School for many years. Garden Clubs throughout South Carolina invited her to talk about birds and illustrate her narratives with color slides.

Several trips to visit family offered birding experiences to the Florida Everglades, Texas, and Germany. In the Everglades she saw her first Everglades Kites, Painted



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Buntings, Scarlet Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills, and Sandhill Cranes. Her Texas visits brought Whooping Cranes, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, American Avocets, and several other birds to add to that life list. She learned some of the European birds on her trip to Germany.

Among her birding thrills were seeing her pear tree filled with Evening Grosbeaks, her mulberry adorned with Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Northern Orioles, and her yellow jasmine decorated with Carolina Wrens. On three occasions she sighted the rare Kirtland's Warbler in her yard (*Chat* 13:79-80, 15:83, and 31:98).

There were interests other than birds, such as her work in local history, photographing and documenting dwellings of historical interest in lower Richland County. She was a faithful communicant of Zion Episcopal Church in Eastover and was a member of Pineland Garden Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, and United Daughters of the Confederacy. The Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy, and other nature-oriented groups gained her support. With Gilbert Bristow, Mrs. G.E. Charles, Mrs. P.B. Hendrix, Kay Sisson, and others, she was active in the Columbia Natural History Society.

At the time of her death on 28 May 1973, Toncie had returned to the staff of *The Chat* as editor of "CBC Roundtable." In all, she served the journal in an editorial capacity for 17 years.

Annie Rivers Faver personified the unique contribution to be made by amateur ornithologists in keeping accurate and complete records, in constantly learning more and

more about the birds she loved, and in sharing her concerns and enthusiasm for the environment with all who would listen to her or read her writing.

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*About the Author.* Bill Faver shares his mother's and his grandfather's interests in nature. A graduate of Clemson University and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, he has worked as director of education in Presbyterian churches in Orlando and Miami, Florida; Corpus Christi, Texas; and High Point, N.C. He developed a Presbyterian camp and conference center in the Florida Everglades and the Environmental Education Center for the City of High Point. Currently he is director of management services for Comprehensive Home Health Care in Wilmington, N.C. Bill and his wife Catherine have two children. "Borrowed Images," an exhibit of his nature photographs, was at the Blue Dolphin Gallery in Southport, N.C., in December 1986 and January 1987.

## A WORD OF THANKS

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