

**Albion Academy Historical Society**

# Ludwig Kumlien's far-reaching life

Submitted by the Albion Academy Historical Society

Thure Kumlien, an internationally renowned ornithologist who emigrated to the U.S. from Sweden, lived west of Busseyville overlooking the marsh with his wife, Christina. Their second child, Aaron Ludwig Kumlien (who preferred the name Ludwig to his first name), born March 15, 1853, graduated from the Albion Academy in 1876. His father, Thure, was a beloved teacher of natural science from 1867-75.

Ludwig traveled with the Howgate Polar Expedition as their naturalist for a year beginning in August 1877. During the one-year expedition, the scientists planned to study the Arctic, cataloging the flora and fauna. The crew also planned to hunt whales to make some money during the cruise.

Their ship, the Florence, was anchored on the western side of Greenland, where the crew went on a whale hunt. Then the scientists set up an "observatory" made of a tent and snow blocks on land at their winter quarters in Annanactu Harbor in the Cumberland Sound on the eastern side of Baffin Island. Every hour of the day they made observations with instruments supplied by the government. We suppose they waited until spring to try to

get to the North Pole, but with so much ice passing them that season they were positive that there was no land at the Pole.

"Photographs were made of the natural scenery, the heavens, the huts and the natives." Ludwig produced "a portfolio of drawings of birds, insects, fishes and animals." He also collected specimens of natural history. The drawings showed birds familiar to Long Island, NY, residents, but others were from Asia that had never been seen in polar regions by other explorers.

As summer was ending, the ship was unable to keep in contact with the rest of the world and Ludwig's father, Thure, was becoming concerned about the expedition. They were supposed to return in August 1878, but did not! Had the ship sunk? Were all personnel lost at sea? What was a father to do? Because he was aware of the storms off the New England coast that fall, Thure was sure Ludwig was lost!

Finally, news was received that the expedition had returned to New London, Conn., on Oct. 30 in a driving rain. Natives told the explorers that "during the past winter the cold has been more intense than they ever knew it to be, and vast quantities of ice have drifted down."

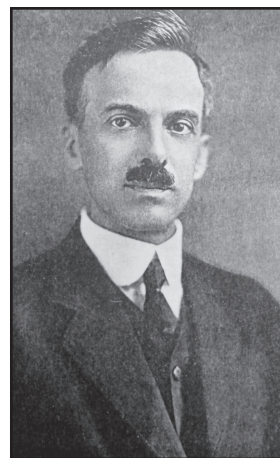
Ludwig returned home as a special agent of the 10th census to investigate

the nation's fisheries, contribute his knowledge of birds to several publications and ultimately teach as a professor at the Albion Academy from 1889 to 1891. An article about the Native Eskimos he observed on the Howgate Expedition was serialized in the Academy's publication, *The Albion Campus*. Ludwig then became a Professor of Natural History and Physiology at Milton College in 1891. He married Annabel Carr from Milton in 1892 and they had three children. His work included preparing specimens for Normal Schools throughout Wisconsin and other schools as well.

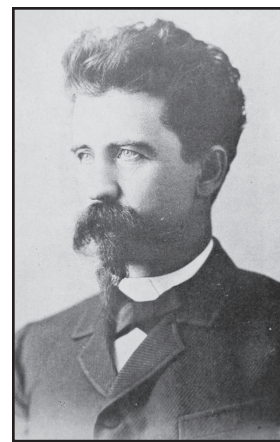
Then there was Ned Hollister from Delavan. Born in 1876, he was introduced to Ludwig at age 11 after completing a taxidermy correspondence course. Ned was reading college-level books on birds and intensely interested in natural science. He quit school and spent the summer of 1891 on nature field trips with Ludwig. He studied advanced natural history texts and professional society publications on his own and attended naturalist lectures at Milton College at Ludwig's invitation. At age 16 he authored two technical articles that appeared in national professional magazines.

Ned's concern about the demise of passenger pigeons caused him to write to elected officials.

He also recommended state and federal purchases of wetlands to protect plants and animals. Ludwig invited him to sit in on lectures at Milton College given by well-known naturalists and Ned read every book and professional journal he could find. Even though Ludwig was diagnosed with cancer, he continued



NED HOLLISTER



AARON LUDWIG KUMLIEN

Continued on page 34



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